



THE CITY OF LAKE JACKSON

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NEWS RELEASE

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Lake Jackson, Texas

COVID-19 CASES, IMPACT, AND OPENINGS UPDATE

Since our last update, we were notified that we had another positive case reported in Lake Jackson. This was a male over the age of 80. This brings the total of positive cases in Lake Jackson to 14 since the pandemic began. We also were notified of 3 more recoveries of Lake Jackson residents, bringing our total of recoveries to 11. This leaves 3 active cases in our city.

As of 5/5/20 Brazoria County has had a total of 570 positive cases of COVID-19. Seven (5 residents and 2 inmates) have passed away from the virus. The County reports that 291 have recovered. There are still 272 active cases in the county. Of these active cases 98 are residents and 174 are inmates in the various prison units in our county.

Two free testing sites are opening in Lake Jackson for people who have symptoms and want to be tested. We have posted the information for these sites on our Facebook page and our website. The first site will be on this Saturday May 9th from 9am to 6pm at MacLean Park. This testing is from the State of Texas and is operated by the Texas Military. This is a one-day event and you must call to make an appointment. The second site will be at Brazosport College and is hosted by the Community Health Network. This will be open Tuesday May 12th through Friday May 15th. Times are listed on the posting. These tests also are free, but you must call ahead and be pre-screened. We understand more testing options and opportunities should be available to us in the future. We will keep you informed as we learn of these opportunities.

The Governor has issued new orders allowing more businesses to open under various guidelines for the types of businesses involved. These are too detailed to list in this news release. So, we will be posting a link to the Governor's orders and what is and what is not allowed and under what conditions these businesses may operate as decreed by the Governor.

Because our city is very dependent on sales tax, the City rises and falls with our business community. Sales tax is and has been our number one source of revenue for decades. We have one of the lowest property tax rates in the state of Texas for cities over 10,000 population. Our property tax is our third highest source of revenues, right after our Industrial District revenues. So, as our businesses have struggled under the various closings ordered by the Governor, so have City sales tax revenues. We also had to close our Civic Center, Recreation Center and Jasmine Hall. For a few weeks the Governor's orders had the golf course closed. With these closings revenues generated by these operations fell dramatically. So, we are facing revenue short falls for the current fiscal year (FY19-20) somewhere in the neighborhood of \$1.5 million to \$2.0 million. We have taken steps to mitigate these revenue losses by reducing our costs where possible. We have a hiring freeze in place for positions that were open at the time this all started. We have directed all City departments to cut and reduce costs for the remainder of the year. We are cancelling various events such as the concerts on the plaza,

the July 4th fireworks and we will not open the outdoor pool this summer. We are still debating canceling or paring down the Festival of Lights.

One thing that will help is that before all this began, we were in the best financial shape in our City's history. Our fund balances are strong. We will be using some of these fund balances to help us balance this year's budget. We will not be doing a number of scheduled capital projects this year or next. But, as always, we need to be prudent in use of fund balances because we are about to enter hurricane season and we must be prepared in the event we get hit by a storm. Just like we lowered the budget during the great recession, we will be doing the same for the upcoming year (FY 20-21).

So, we are grateful that more businesses are being allowed to open. We just encourage these businesses operate safely. We simply ask residents and business operators alike to continue to follow the safety, distancing, sanitation recommendations in place. This virus is no respecter of persons.

We pray for the health and safety of each and every one of you.

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