



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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FAYETTE COUNTY GOES 'GREEN' TODAY

Uniontown, PA – Fayette County officially entered the “green” phase of reopening today, following a lengthy shutdown during the worldwide Coronavirus pandemic.

Gov. Tom Wolf announced last week that Fayette would join other southwestern Pennsylvania counties in easing his restrictions from the “yellow” category, for their efforts in “flattening the curve” and combating COVID-19.

Fayette County spent the required two weeks in the yellow phase, during which it was closely monitored for increased risk, including significant outbreaks. According to Wolf’s guidelines, Fayette’s overall risk remained mitigated enough to open further.

Under the green phase, the Stay-at-Home and business closure orders are lifted, “to allow the economy to strategically reopen while continuing to prioritize public health,” Wolf’s website states.

Gatherings of more than 250 will be prohibited. Continued telework is strongly encouraged while green, and businesses with in-person operations must follow the state’s updated business and building safety requirements.

Restaurants and bars may open with 50 percent occupancy. All other businesses which operated at 50 percent occupancy under the yellow phase may increase to 75 percent under green.

Personal care services, such as hair salons and barbershops, may reopen at 50 percent occupancy, but operate by appointment only.

Childcare services may open under compliance with strict guidelines, and congregate care will still have restrictions in place. Prison and hospital restrictions will be determined by individual facilities, while schools will be subject to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and state guidance.

Indoor recreation, health and wellness facilities and personal care services, such as gyms and spas, may open at 50 percent occupancy, but appointments are strongly encouraged. All entertainment venues, including casinos, theaters and shopping malls, may open at 50 percent occupancy.

Construction may return to full capacity with continued implementation of appropriate protocols. All businesses must follow all CDC and state Department of Health guidelines for social distancing and cleaning.

Wolf reopening the state in phases “prioritizes the health and welfare of Pennsylvanians” by using a combination of factors to gauge how much movement a location can handle before COVID-19 becomes a threat.

"I'd like to emphasize that this plan is not a one-way route. We are closely monitoring the 24 counties (currently) in the yellow phase and will reimpose restrictions if danger arises," Wolf said. "Every contact between two people is a new link in the chain of potential transmission, and if the new case count begins to climb in one area, restrictions will need to be imposed to prevent local medical facilities from becoming overwhelmed."

Fayette County Commissioner Chairman Dave Lohr said the county has been "blessed to have fewer than 100 confirmed cases to date."

"This county is ready to get back to the business of doing business. Through this entire period, we've done what we needed to do to keep our residents safe and well," Lohr said. "It's time for us to pick up where we left off in March and move forward with a new sense of purpose. I'm looking forward to being wide open, not just going green."

Both Fayette County and the United States as a whole were "built by people who were not content to sit around and do nothing," Lohr added.

"Just look at all the inventions and innovations that have come out of the U.S. Like one television commercial says, we're 'doers,' and we like having a sense of purpose and accomplishment," he said. "It's that spirit that will drive us moving forward."

Commissioner Scott Dunn thanked Fayette County residents for doing their parts to mitigate the spread of COVID-19.

"We were asked to sacrifice to ensure our healthcare system was not overwhelmed, and we did just that," Dunn said. "However, this transition to 'green' is long overdue, as evidenced by the low case numbers since late April."

Dunn said safely opening our small businesses and putting people back to work is "paramount."

"Small business is the backbone of our local economy. Much of that lost revenue can never be recovered," he said. "The economic impact of this crisis will outlive the health crisis. Your support of local businesses is needed as we begin to recover."

As the official start of summer rapidly approaches, Dunn said seasonal activities in Fayette County should rebound quickly.

"There is an abundance of outdoor recreation that can be done safely and with social distancing in mind," Dunn said. "My family regularly takes advantage of our beautiful scenery in our mountains and on our trails, rivers and lakes."

Lohr said he hopes those who have been "cooped up and isolated" will "get out and reconnect" this summer.

"We're social creatures. Being isolated is not just alien to our nature; it's actually detrimental to our spirit," Lohr said. "I want everyone who has been cooped up and isolated to get out and reconnect. I want summer to look and feel normal. That's my goal, and I believe it's a goal worth striving for - a sense of normalcy in a time that has been anything but normal."

Commissioner Vince Vicites said he believes Fayette County can safely move into the "green" phase, thanks to citizens' efforts to "flatten the curve."

“At this point, citizens need to continue to follow the state guidelines for social distancing, masks and more,” Vicites said. “However, I believe we can safely open up our businesses and get our economy moving forward again. We must continue to take precautions and follow the guidelines over the summer and into the fall, until we have a vaccine.”

Lohr said citizens must approach COVID-19 “sensibly” moving forward.

“It’s important that everyone does what they need to do to be safe. This is particularly important for anyone who is elderly or those with pre-existing conditions,” Lohr said. “But the time to be under lockdown is over, and I look forward to Fayette County being fully open in the near future.”

Dunn also reminded citizens that going “green” still comes with restrictions.

“The last thing we want is for the virus to make a comeback because we became lax in our hygiene or social distancing,” he said. “Stay vigilant and stay safe.”

As of Wednesday, the state Department of Health reported 95 confirmed cases of COVID-19 in Fayette County, as well as four deaths.

For more information on counties’ transitions to the green phase, visit www.governor.pa.gov.

For more information on COVID-19, including symptoms, treatments and outbreak updates, please visit the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention website at www.cdc.gov. For regular updates, visit www.facebook.com/fcema911 or www.health.pa.gov/topics/disease/Pages/Coronavirus.aspx.

To learn more about Fayette County, visit www.FayetteCountyPA.org.

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