# IVINS CITY'S RESPONSE TO THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

**MAYOR CHRIS HART**

Fellow Ivins residents, over the last few days I have been in communication via video conferencing with the Governor's Office, Senator Romney, our Washington County Commissioners, fellow local Mayors, County Health Officials and representatives of Dixie Regional Medical Center concerning our response to the current Covid 19 pandemic.

I commend you for remaining calm and following the guidelines that have been imposed thus far. Last check we were approaching a hundred known cases in Utah, none of them in Washington County except for the person who was quarantined on a cruise ship that has been released and is no longer contagious. We hope to keep it that way for as long as we can. Federal and State emergency actions combined with our adherence to the recommendations from Health Officials will surely help. A summary of those actions and guidelines are as follows.

Most important is that we keep our distance from others especially avoiding groups or gatherings larger than ten people. The virus spreads primarily by direct contact. It can also remain airborne for up to a few hours after a cough or sneeze and lingers on surfaces practically speaking up to 24 hours. It cannot survive in chlorinated water so our drinking water will remain safe. It's recommended that we stay at least six feet away from other people, avoid touching our faces, keep our hands clean and sanitized and sterilize surfaces that we regularly contact. Separation is our best defense so when possible just stay home, work from home if you can and eat at home for the time being. It's important to remain active and enjoy the outdoors to combat feelings of isolation or anxiety. We just need to be thoughtful and careful about what we do and where we do it.

The Corona Virus is especially severe with older people, those with pre-existing health conditions like Diabetes, high blood pressure or asthma and those whose immune systems are compromised. A number of us in those situations reside here in Ivins and we must be especially careful. If in a position to do so we might consider self-quarantining. The less exposure we have to others the better at a time like this. We can have food, medicine and other necessities delivered, call upon family members, neighbors and friends to assist when needed and limit our contact only to those we know and trust.

If you have an older or infirmed person living in your home please work out a plan to keep that person safe. Separating spaces and limiting physical contact can potentially be life-saving. For others in the community please be considerate of older neighbors or those with chronic illnesses. By all means call to check up on them often but don't drop by uninvited. Many younger carriers experience only mild symptoms or none at all. They may not even know that they have the disease and can unwittingly spread the virus just going about their daily routines.

Testing resources are limited at present but are increasing. It is recommended that we do not go to the emergency room unless we are seriously ill. It is best to call a doctor or use an online health service to review our symptoms and receive guidance as to whether testing is necessary. For those who do become ill with the virus, Dixie Regional Medical Center has terminated all elective surgeries, installed a triage tent next to the Emergency Room and has set aside a number of beds for Covid 19 patients. Mitch Cloward the Hospital Administrator assured us that they have taken this crisis very seriously and are making all preparations necessary to deal with it.

Local businesses are being forced to adapt to the crisis as well. As of 11:59 March 18th all bars and restaurants statewide will be closed to inside dining. Drive-through, pick up or delivery options remain available and we are urged to continue to patronize these businesses as they will be among the hardest hit. Delivery services like Grub Hub or Uber Eats provide another means of continuing to enjoy our favorite restaurant foods. Meals on

Wheels may also be an option for self-quarantining individuals. Some grocery stores are setting aside separate shopping hours for seniors to help with the social distancing effort. Many businesses are allowing employees to work from home where possible and taking other measures to limit exposure to their employees.

As far as Ivins is concerned we have cancelled all City sponsored events through April and will be "soft closing" our City Offices on Friday March 20th restricting access to City Staff through screening and requiring appointments to meet with them. As much as possible we encourage you to pay utility bills electronically or deposit payments in the drop box or at the drive up window at City Hall. Please conduct other City business online in areas where that option is available. Interactions with City Staff should occur over the phone or by e-mail. City Staff will remain on the job. City services will not be interrupted but Staff will not be involved in athletic programs or events. Law enforcement along with fire and EMS services will continue as normal with certain precautions being implemented to protect our first responders.
Public meetings will be reduced in number with simplified agendas and will be held electronically with public input being received online using the contact form available on the Ivins City website at www.Ivins.com or by e-mail. To listen to a meeting live, go to www.ivins.com, click on the "Government" tab and scroll to the "current meeting" as if you were searching for the agenda. Under the date column click "In Progress" to connect. Public hearings will be postponed as much as possible but when one must occur public comment will be taken online via the aforementioned contact form and from individuals who come to City Hall at the appointed time who will sign up with the Law Enforcement Officer on site regulating access to the meeting and following the baseball model will be called in order on their phones to come inside where they will wait until directed to move into the Council Chambers to an "on-deck" chair and then to the podium that will be wiped down after each person speaks to make his or her comments to the Planning Commission or City Council not all of whom may be physically in attendance. No more than ten individuals will be permitted inside the Council Chambers at any given time. This new procedure applies to the Public Hearing to be held this evening March 19, 2020.

There are several excellent websites if you want to read updated and accurate information concerning the Covid 19 pandemic beginning with our own www.Ivins.com website where we have posted information and links to other helpful sites. Additional local information is available on the Southwest Utah Health Dept. website at www.swuhealth.org. Intermountain Health Care also has a website www.intermountainhealthcare.org where they post information and testing & treatment instructions regarding Covid 19. Their site also has a link to "Connect Care" where one can speak with a health professional regarding symptoms one may be experiencing and receive guidance. This action is highly recommended. The State Health Department website at health.utah.gov is another good source of information as is the Federal Center for Disease Control (CDC) site at www.cdc.gov.

We hope that these precautions will not be necessary in two or three months but they will be followed as long as Health Officials suggest they remain in force. This is an opportunity for us to band together as a community, to look out for and find ways to help our neighbors and to unite in doing our part to limit the impact of this virus on the residents of our City. Thank you for all you have done, are doing and will do to be part of the solution to this health crisis. Let's be smart, let's be careful, and let's be safe and stay well through this unusual and dangerous situation.

Mayor Chris Hart