COUNTY OF BELL, TEXAS
COUNTY JUDGE DECLARATION OF LOCAL STATE OF DISASTER
DUE TO PUBLIC HEALTH EMERGENCY

WHEREAS, a novel coronavirus, now designated SARS-CoV2 which causes the disease COVID-19, has been declared a global pandemic by the World Health Organization; and

WHEREAS, the symptoms of COVID-19 can range from mild to severe illness and cause further complications including death; and

WHEREAS, COVID-19 virus mainly spreads between people who are in close contact with one another through respiratory droplets produced when an infected person coughs or sneezes; and

WHEREAS, on March 13, 2020, the Governor of the State of Texas issued a proclamation certifying that COVID-19 poses an imminent threat of disaster in the state and declaring a state of disaster for all counties in Texas; and

WHEREAS, Bell County and the Bell County Public Health District are taking extraordinary measures to prevent the spread of this potentially devastating disease in our community; and

WHEREAS, said state of disaster requires that certain emergency protective measures be taken pursuant to the Texas Disaster Act of 1975 relating to Emergency Management and Public Health, pursuant to Chapter 418 of the Texas Government Code.

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT DECLARED BY THE COUNTY JUDGE OF BELL COUNTY , TEXAS:

SECTION 1. That a local state of disaster for public health emergency is hereby declared for BELL COUNTY , Texas, pursuant to Section 418.108(a) of the Texas Government Code.

SECTION 2. That pursuant to Section 418.108(b) of the Texas Government Code the state of disaster for public health emergency shall continue for a period of not more than seven (7) days from the date of this declaration, unless approved by the Commissioners Court of Bell County , Texas.

SECTION 3. That pursuant to Section 418.108(c) of the Texas Government Code this declaration of a local state of disaster for public health emergency shall be given prompt and general publicity and shall be filed promptly with the County Clerk.

SECTION 4. That pursuant to Section 418.108(d) of the Texas Government Code, this declaration of a local state of disaster activates the Bell County, Texas, emergency management plan, and authorizes the furnishing of aid and assistance under this declaration.

SECTION 5. That this declaration authorizes the County to take any actions necessary to promote health and suppress the virus, including, but not limited to, the quarantine of persons and occupied structures, examining and regulating hospitals, regulating ingress and egress from the County, regulating ingress and egress to occupied structures, establishment of quarantine stations, emergency hospitals, and other hospitals, and insuring compliance for those who do not comply with the County's rules and directives.

SECTION 6. That this declaration hereby limits the size of gatherings to not more than 50 people and mandates the cancellation of all such gatherings of more than 50 people until further notice. A "gathering" refers generally to a scheduled event or common endeavor where 50 persons are present in a confined space, room, or area.

SECTION 7. In accordance with Texas Government Code §418.173, a person who knowingly or intentionally violates this declaration commits an offense, punishable by a fine up to $1,000.00 a day and/or confinement in jail for a term that does not exceed 180 days.

SECTION 8. That this declaration hereby authorizes the use of all lawfully available enforcement tools.

SECTION 9. That this declaration shall take effect immediately from and after its issuance and, upon approval by the Commissioners Court, shall continue in effect until terminated by the County Judge. Pursuant to this declaration, additional directives may be issued by the County Judge at any time as deemed necessary.

DECLARED this 17th **day of March, 2020.**

D. Blackburn, County Judge
Bell County, Texas

Office of the County Judge

Local Disaster Declaration for Public Health Emergency

COVID19

Directive #1

18 March 2020

Summary: A Declaration of Local State of Disaster due to Public Health Emergency associated with COVID19 has been issued by Bell County Judge David Blackburn. In accordance with the Declaration, this Directive #1 is being issued.

The virus that causes the 2019 Coronavirus disease (COVID19) is easily transmitted through person to person contact, especially in group settings, and it is essential that the spread of the virus be slowed to protect the ability of public and private health care providers to handle the influx of new patients and safeguard public health and safety. Because of the risk that health care authorities have identified due to the rapid spread of the virus, and the need to protect the most vulnerable members of the community, this Directive #1 prohibits gatherings of persons of more than 50 persons anywhere in the County, under the specified terms and conditions set forth below, beginning at midnight tonight, March 18, 2020 and continuing until such time as a future Directive removes such prohibition.

For all gatherings and locations not included within this Directive, the Office of the County Judge and the Bell County Public Health District strongly recommends and urges actively practicing social distancing whenever and wherever possible. Additionally, the Office of the County Judge and Bell County Public Health District strongly urges individuals of high risk, those over 65 and with underlying health conditions, to cancel, reschedule or not attend events or gatherings that will have or will likely have 10 or more people.

Under the authority of Section 418.108, Texas Government Code, and Local Disaster Declaration of Bell County dated 18 March 2020, the following orders are hereby issued:

1. Public or private gatherings, as defined below, are prohibited anywhere in the County. Said gatherings are:
    a. A restaurant with or without drive-through services; drive-through restaurant; microbrewery, micro-distillery, or winery; however, any of these establishments may

continue to provide take out, delivery or drive-through or drive-up services as may be allowed by law;

b. A location with alcoholic beverage consumption for on-premise consumption, including a bar, lounge, or tavern or private club; and

c. Indoor recreational facilities, including gyms, health clubs, indoor amusement facilities, including, bowling alleys, pool halls and movie theaters.

2. For purposes of this Directive, a 'gathering' is any indoor or outdoor event or convening, subject to the exceptions and clarifications below, that brings together or is likely to bring together fifty (50) or mor persons at the same time in a single room or other single confined or enclosed space, such as an auditorium, stadium, (indoor or outdoor), tent, arena, or event center, music venue, meeting hall, conference center, large cafeteria, or any other confined indoor or outdoor space.
3. An 'outdoor gathering' is limited to events in confined outdoor spaces, which means an outdoor space that (i) is enclosed by a fence, physical barrier, or other structure and (ii) where people are present and they are within six (6) feet of one another for extended periods.
4. For purposes of clarity, a 'gathering' doe not include the following, or other similar uses, so long as social distancing is being practiced:
   a. Spaces where fifty (50) or more persons may be in transit or waiting for transit such as airports, bus stations, or terminals;
   b. Office spaces, public and private schools, child-care facilities, residences, or any type of temporary sheltering or housing;
   c. Grocery stores, convenience stores, shopping centers or malls, or other retail establishments where numbers might exceed fifty (50) or more, but where it would be unusual for people to within six (6) feet of one another for extended periods; and
   d. Hospitals and medical facilities.
5. Failure to comply with this Directive is an offense punishable by a fine of up to $1,000 per day or confinement in jail for a term not to exceed 180 days.
6. This Directive shall be filed in the Office of the County Clerk and posted on the Bell County website. In addition, every owner, manager, or operator of any facility that is impacted by this Directive is encouraged to post a copy of this Directive onsite.

DIRECTED & ORDERED this the 18th day of March, 2020.

D. Blackburn, County Judge