



Nacogdoches County

GREG SOWELL

County Judge

March 13, 2020

To the citizens of Nacogdoches County-

This is an update on the situation concerning the COVID-19 virus.

As of the writing of this letter, Nacogdoches County does not have a confirmed case of the COVID-19 virus. Since my last message, we have been reviewing emergency plans and participating in conferences with state and local health authorities and emergency management.

The main concern right now is to slow down the spread of this virus as much as possible. This includes the good hygiene practices that we have previously been talking about, social distancing, and discouraging large gatherings. The Center for Disease Control defines "mass gatherings" as events with an attendance of 1,000 persons or more. The medical experts we have talked with say that the more people that you have in an enclosed area, the greater the risk of spreading the virus. The object is to slow the progression so that local resources necessary to treat the sick are not overwhelmed. In order to be successful in this, everyone must do their part.

We have seen large events cancelled, schools and universities extend spring breaks, and hospitals and nursing facilities implement visitor screening. The Nacogdoches County Rodeo is scheduled for next week. This event attracts over 1,000 people a night, many of them from outside the area. As earlier said, the state, as well as our local health officer Dr. William Hairston has recommended that large, non-essential events not be held at this time.

The Nacogdoches County Commissioners Court met this afternoon at 2:30 pm in an emergency session. At that time, information was presented from the CDC and Texas Department of State Health Services. Dr. William Hairston, County Health Officer, made a presentation. Dr. Hairston made the official medical recommendation to the Court that the rodeo not be held. After deliberation, the Court voted unanimously to cancel the Nacogdoches County Rodeo for this year. A decision will be made in the coming days about the Steer Show by the show committee.

Please know that this decision is being made based on facts and recommendations of local and state health officials. Public health and wellbeing of all persons are top priority. We regret the situation, but feel that this action is necessary for the safety of the public.

Greg Sowell

101 W. Main, Suite 170
County Courthouse
Nacogdoches, Texas 75961

(936) 560-7755
Fax (936) 560-7841