



**Wilson County Government
Office of the County Mayor
MEDIA RELEASE**

Contact:
Susan Shaw
Office of the County Mayor
Room 104, Courthouse
228 East Main Street
Lebanon, TN 37087
shawsu@wilsoncountyttn.gov

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Wilson County Prepares to Reopen

(Lebanon, TN 4/27/2020)- Press Release from Randall Hutto, Mayor of Wilson County

On Monday, April 7, 2020, Mayor Hutto extended the Declaration of a “State of Emergency” due to COVID-19 until Monday, May 4, 2020 at which time the Declaration will be reviewed again. Wilson County will continue to honor Governor Lee’s Executive Orders for emergency management of COVID-19. We will hear more from the Governor later this week regarding guidelines for reopening.

As we prepare Wilson County for the eventual reopening of businesses, we realize it is important for our business owners and residents to be prepared for changes to current activities as we return to a new normal. Everyone should continue to follow procedures that safeguard personal health and welfare and be mindful of the most vulnerable population in our elderly.

1. Wilson County will continue to honor Governor Lee’s Executive Order No. 29 (Attachment A).
2. Wilson County respectfully requests all businesses to accept Governor Lee’s Tennessee Pledge on Reopening Tennessee Responsibly (Attachment B).
3. The “Tennessee Pledge” is a plan to help Tennesseans return to work in a safe environment, restore their livelihoods, and reboot the state’s economy (Attachment C press release).
4. Wilson County Government will continue to monitor this disease and track the number of cases in Wilson County. The county will push for increased testing for all Wilson County citizens and prepare for adequate healthcare capacity by working with Vanderbilt Wilson County Hospital and the State of Tennessee for surge facilities when and if needed. WEMA will continue to make sure our PPE levels are adequate and all long-term care facilities are equipped and maintained on all fronts possible.
5. We respectfully request all employers to screen all employees reporting to work for COVID-19 symptoms by asking the following questions upon entering the work place.
 - a. Have you been in close contact with a person who had a confirmed case of COVID-19?
 - b. Are you experiencing a cough, shortness of breath, or sore throat?
 - c. Have you had a fever in the last 48 hours?
 - d. Have you had a new loss of taste or smell?

- e. Have you had vomiting or diarrhea in the last 24 hours?

If they answer 'Yes' to any of the above questions, ask them to consider seeking medical attention or going to the Wilson County Health Department for a free test for COVID-19. They should call (615) 444-5325 for an assessment first, and schedule an appointment for the test. Testing will be conducted in their car through the drive-through process.

6. We respectfully ask all employers to also:
 - a. If at all possible, perform a temperature screening onsite with a no-touch thermometer each day upon their arrival at work.
 - b. Implement workplace cleaning and disinfecting practices according to CDC guidelines.
 - c. Mitigate exposure in the workplace or stations by implementing social distancing guidelines and modify scheduling.
 - d. Allow employees to work from home as much as possible.
7. We respectfully ask all employees to:
 - a. Stay home when feeling ill.
 - b. Increase hygiene practices.
 - c. Wear a face mask if possible.
 - d. Practice social distancing of 6 feet at all times.
 - e. Abide by the guidelines of your established employer.
8. We have attached in this declaration Governor Lee's Executive Order No. 29 (Attachment A) which will allow all restaurants to reopen Monday, April 27th at 50% capacity and all retail stores to reopen Wednesday, April 29th at 50% capacity.
9. We have also attached in this Declaration the safeguarding guidance data used to make the reopening decisions by the State in the Tennessee Pledge (Attachment B).
10. We have also attached in this Declaration the safeguarding Guidelines for Restaurants and Retail industry, detailed in the Tennessee Pledge (Attachment B). We are asking our Chambers of Commerce in Wilson County to assist all restaurant and retail stores with guidance to achieve the Tennessee Pledge. We have asked our Chambers to place a blue ribbon in every business they identify as accepting and complying with the TN Pledge. This will honor our businesses and notify their customers of their good efforts.
11. We have the understanding that before the Executive Orders No. 21 & 22 expire on April 30, 2020 the State will provide guidance addressing businesses that have been shut down from the previous orders such as Hair and Nail Salons, Healthcare and Dental Services, Gym and Fitness Centers, Bars and Entertainment Venues, as well as Sporting and other entertainment venues, and other activities.
12. We have also attached the latest order from the Supreme Court of Tennessee at Nashville regarding COVID-19 Pandemic court proceedings in Wilson County (Attachment E).

13. Our understanding for the Wilson County Libraries is they will open for curbside service for patrons on May 4th.
 - a. Patrons will be able to request books through the website, by email, and by telephone.
 - b. There will be a limit of 5 items per card.
 - c. Staff will pull the items requested and notify the patron by telephone when the items are available for pick-up.
 - d. Patrons are asked to call the library from the parking lot when they arrive.
 - e. Patrons wait in their vehicle while the staff place their items outside for them to pick up.

For additional information, please contact Alesia Burnley, Director of Wilson County Library System, 108 S. Hatton Avenue, Lebanon TN 37087 phone (615) 444-0632 ext. 203.

14. We understand that Tennessee State Parks are in a partial reopening plan as of April 24th for daytime visitors. For details and important information please see www.tnstateparks.com for COVID-19 information. Check their closures page before visiting any park.
15. We have also attached our press release for the reopening of Wilson County Government (Attachment D).
16. We understand that the City of Mt. Juliet will conduct a phased reopening plan in line with Governor Lee's plan. For details, please go online to www.mtjuliet-tn.gov and view their "Safer at Home" Reopening Plan.
17. We understand that the City of Lebanon has posted Business Reopening Information for phase 1 on their website at www.lebanontn.org.

We will continue to keep you informed and provide all the citizens of Wilson County with the best services possible. Although we are beginning to reopen, we must continue to be careful and stay the course on protecting ourselves and our loved ones. As we have said before, if you treat everyone as if they have it, you will protect yourself and those around you.

We are turning the corner, but as it is stated in one of Robert Frost's poems, "We have miles to go before we sleep". We believe there is still much to do before we are back to our "new" normal, so keep on keeping on.

For more information, please call the Wilson County Mayor's Office at (615) 444-1383 or visit www.wilsoncountyttn.gov.

Attachments to April 27, 2020 Wilson County Declaration

- A. State of Tennessee Executive Order No. 29
- B. Tennessee Pledge, Guidelines for Business, Reopening TN Responsibly
- C. TN Pledge Press Release
- D. Wilson County Government Phased Reopening Press Release
- E. Supreme Court of Tennessee at Nashville Re: COVID-19 Pandemic

###



STATE OF TENNESSEE
EXECUTIVE ORDER
BY THE GOVERNOR

No. 29

**AN ORDER AMENDING EXECUTIVE ORDER NO. 17
TO REOPEN DINING IN RESTAURANTS**

WHEREAS, on March 22, 2020, I issued Executive Order No. 17, which directed restaurants and similar food and drink establishments to offer take-out or delivery options only; and

WHEREAS, the efforts and sacrifices of Tennesseans, businesses, places of worship, and governmental and nongovernmental entities and organizations of all types in accordance with these measures have flattened, and continue to flatten, the COVID-19 curve in Tennessee; and

WHEREAS, though the measures taken to reduce the spread of COVID-19 have been and are necessary and invaluable in preserving the health and lives of Tennesseans, they have also damaged many businesses and livelihoods, with over 400,000 unemployment claims filed since March 1, 2020, and it is essential to their health and welfare to allow Tennesseans to return to work so long as progress in slowing COVID-19 makes it safe to do so; and

WHEREAS, because of the recent reduction in the spread of COVID-19 in Tennessee, it is now appropriate to allow more Tennesseans to return to work to support their families and communities, subject to guidelines for safe operation of businesses, trusting and expecting Tennesseans to continue to limit activity and follow the health and safety practices that have resulted in this progress; and

WHEREAS, in addition to the other emergency management powers granted by law, Tennessee Code Annotated, Section 58-2-107(e), provides that during a state of emergency, the Governor is authorized to suspend laws and rules regarding the conduct of state business if necessary to cope with the emergency, order evacuations from certain areas, make orders concerning entry and exit and the occupancy of premises within an emergency area, and take measures concerning the conduct of civilians and the calling of public meetings and gatherings, among other things; and

WHEREAS, the temporary suspension of selected state laws and rules and the other measures contained herein are necessary to facilitate the response to the current emergency.

NOW THEREFORE, I, Bill Lee, Governor of the State of Tennessee, by virtue of the power and authority vested in me by the Tennessee Constitution and other applicable law, do hereby declare that a state of emergency continues to exist in Tennessee and order the following:

1. Reopening of restaurants for on-site dining. Effective at 12:01 a.m., Central Daylight Time, on April 27, 2020, Executive Order No. 17, dated March 22, 2020, as extended by Executive Order No. 21, dated March 30, 2020, and Executive Order No. 27, dated April 13, 2020, is amended by:
 - a. Deleting in Paragraph 1b. the language “shall not eat or drink onsite at restaurants, bars, or other similar food or drink establishments” and substituting instead “shall not eat or drink onsite at limited service restaurants, as defined in Tennessee Code Annotated, Section 57-4-102(22), bars, nightclubs, and similar establishments”; and
 - b. Deleting in Paragraph 1c. the language “Restaurants, bars, and similar food or drink establishments, including nightclubs,” and substituting instead “Limited service restaurants, as defined in Tennessee Code Annotated, Section 57-4-102(22), bars, nightclubs, and similar establishments”
2. ERG Guidelines. Restaurants are expected to operate in accordance with, and to fulfill the spirit of, applicable operational guidance and measures adopted and/or issued by the Governor’s Economic Recovery Group (ERG), which are available at the following web address and may be periodically updated: <https://www.tn.gov/governor/covid-19/economic-recovery.html>. If a restaurant does not operate in a safe manner, or if health outcomes demonstrate that a particular business or industry sector is unable to be operated in a sufficiently safe manner, the Governor and/or other applicable state official(s) may issue additional health and safety orders as may be appropriate under the circumstances.
3. Take-out and delivery alcohol sales by restaurants remain permitted. To encourage carryout or delivery orders while restaurant capacity must be reduced, Paragraph 5 of Executive Order No. 17, issued March 22, 2020, allowing restaurants to sell for take-out or delivery alcoholic beverages or beer is not affected by this Order and remains permitted.
4. Suspension of laws that would limit application of this Order. Any law, order, rule, or regulation that would otherwise limit the enforceability of this Order is hereby suspended, pursuant to Tennessee Code Annotated, Section 58-2-107, including any provisions of Executive Order No. 22 that would limit the effectiveness of this Order.
5. Local orders. This Order shall supersede and preempt any emergency order, health order, or other order issued by a local official or local governmental entity addressing or otherwise related to COVID-19; provided, that the six locally run county health departments in Davidson, Hamilton, Knox, Madison, Shelby, or Sullivan Counties shall have the authority

to maintain any existing order or issue further restrictions regarding the operation of restaurants for the purposes of containment or management of the spread of COVID-19.

6. Effect of this Order. Subject to the expectation that restaurants will operate within ERG Guidelines, the effect of this Order is that on-site dining at restaurants will no longer be prohibited in Tennessee, unless a locally run county health department in Davidson, Hamilton, Knox, Madison, Shelby, or Sullivan Counties independently prohibits or otherwise regulates the opening, closing, or operation of restaurants within its respective county. Pursuant to prior Executive Order Nos. 17, 21, and 27, bars, nightclubs, and limited service restaurants shall continue to be closed to persons for the purposes of eating or drinking on-site.
7. Severability. If any provision of this Order or its application to any person or circumstance is held invalid, the invalidity does not affect other provisions or applications of this Order which can be given effect without the invalid provision or application, and to that end the provisions of this Order are declared to be severable.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have subscribed my signature and caused the Great Seal of the State of Tennessee to be affixed this 24th day of April, 2020.


GOVERNOR

ATTEST:


SECRETARY OF STATE



Guidelines for Businesses

Reopening Tennessee Responsibly



**Tennessee
*Pledge***

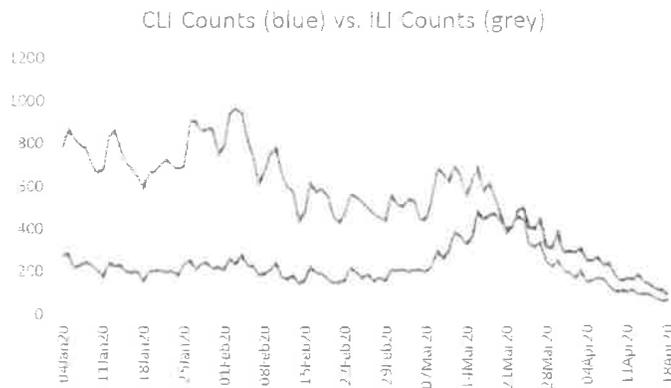


Our Health

In the weeks since Governor Bill Lee implemented the Safer at Home order, Tennessee mounted a significant effort to improve testing and healthcare capacity. The state has made steady progress to slow the spread of COVID-19.

Slowing COVID-19

- Influenza-like illness (ILI) has seen a steady decline since March 14.
- COVID-like illness (CLI) has seen a steady decline since March 25.
- (Source: Tennessee Dept. of Health)

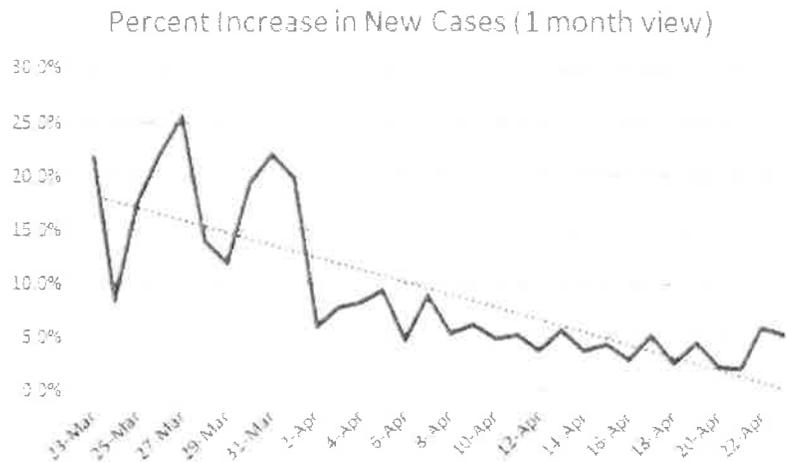


Our Health

In the weeks since Governor Lee implemented the Safer at Home order, Tennessee mounted a significant effort to improve testing and healthcare capacity. The state has made steady progress to slow the spread of COVID-19.

Slowing COVID-19

- Average daily growth rate has been stable for over 14 days
- Downward trajectory of positive tests as percentage of total tests since April 1.
- (Source: Tennessee Dept. of Health)



Our Economy

Even as the direct threat to Tennesseans' health has been mitigated, the threat to their livelihoods has increased. Research consistently demonstrates a strong association between unemployment and poorer health outcomes. Citizens have experienced devastating job losses across all 95 counties and diverse industry sectors.

413K
TN Unemployment
Claims

As a result of COVID-19 mitigation, Tennesseans filed 412,895 unemployment claims with the Department of Labor and Workforce Development between March 1 and April 18, 2020.

15%
of TN Workers
Filed Unemployment

While these challenges started first for many of the Tennesseans who work in entertainment, recreation and accommodation, they have now spread to impact almost every industry and every county across Tennessee.

Our Economy

Even as the direct threat to Tennesseans' health has been mitigated, the threat to their livelihoods has increased. Research consistently demonstrates a strong association between unemployment and poorer health outcomes. Citizens have experienced devastating job losses across all 95 counties and diverse industry sectors.

\$870M

**Net Sales Lost by
TN Retailers in March**

Some industries were impacted more dramatically than others, including: a \$408M decline in restaurant sales, \$177M decline in hotel and accommodation sales, \$218M decline in motor vehicle-related sales, and \$64M decline in entertainment and recreation sales year over year. April losses will be significantly greater.

\$5B

**of TN GDP
Lost in 2020**

Tennessee Gross Domestic Product is projected to decline \$5 billion during 2020 as a result of closures and joblessness related to the pandemic, assuming businesses begin to reopen on May 1, 2020.



Our Economy

Share of Jobs Impacted by County
Unemployment claims as a share (%) of total county employment



© 2020 Mapbox, OpenStreetMap

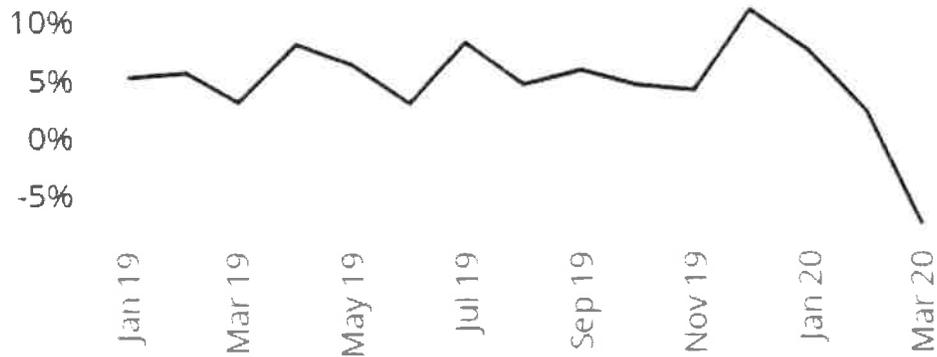
Source: Tennessee Department of Labor & Workforce Development, Initial Unemployment Insurance Claims (2017 to 2020) and Industry Employment (February 2020). Data updated by March 2020.



Our Economy

Sales by Retailers

Year-over-year % Change in Taxable Sales by Month



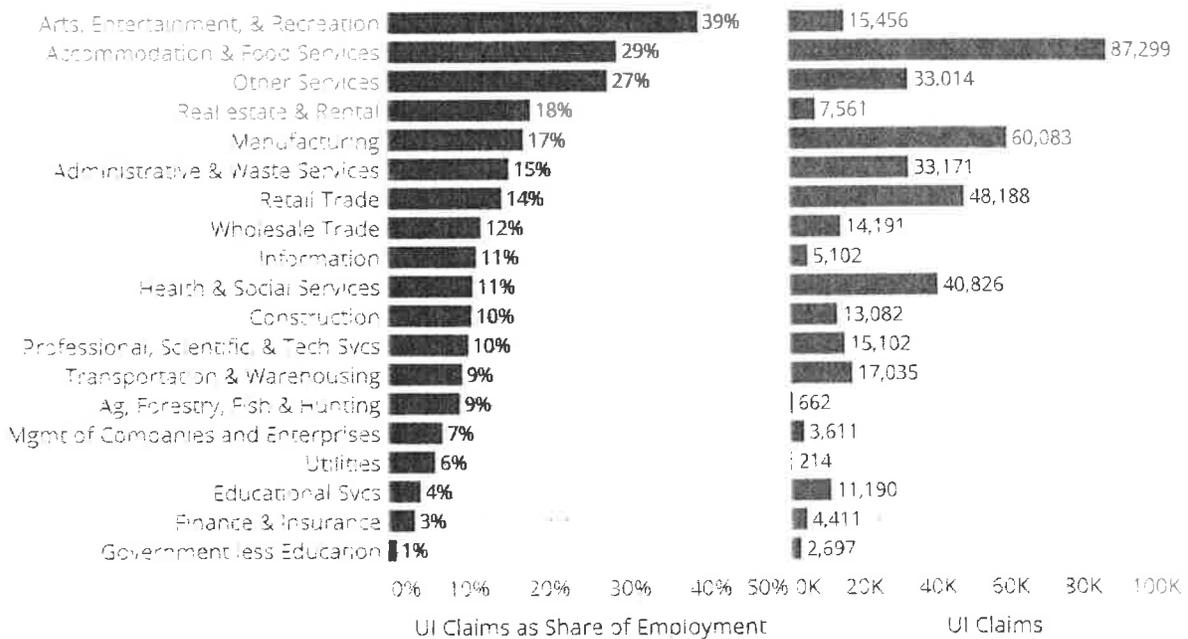
Source: Tennessee Department of Revenue, Sales Tax Collections 11-2019-4-2019



Our Economy

Share of Tennessee Jobs Impacted by Sector

Unemployment Insurance (UI) claims as a share (%) of sector employment



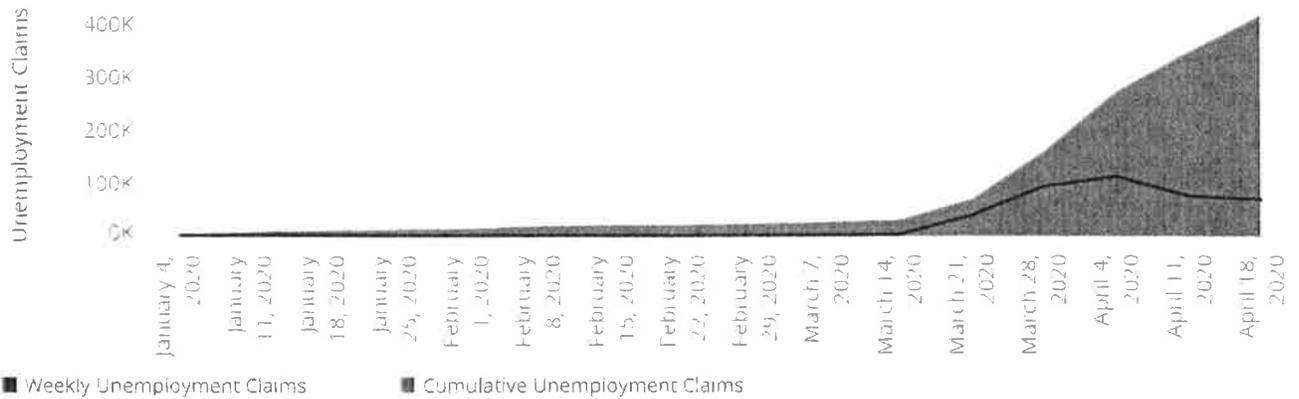
Source: Tennessee Department of Labor & Workforce Development, Initial Unemployment Insurance Claims (3/1/20 - 4/18/20) and Industry Employment (March 2020). Data reported by week ending.



Our Economy

Unemployment Claims over Time

Weekly total and cumulative total unemployment claims



Source: United States Department of Labor, Weekly Unemployment Insurance Claims (4/20-4/13/20). Data reported by week ending.

GUIDELINES

Restaurants

Restaurant Guidelines

It is vitally important to both the state's economy and the food supply chain that restaurants are allowed to begin some operations and put employees back to work. The State of Tennessee recommends the following best practices for restaurants at this time.

Protecting Employees

- Wear face coverings and gloves
- Report any symptoms of illness to supervisor
- Follow daily sanitation protocols

Protecting Customers

- Limit occupancy to 50% of seating capacity
- Space tables 6 feet apart
- Limit seating to 6 per table
- Use social distancing standards in waiting areas
- Keep bar areas closed
- No live music
- Screen customers with basic questions about COVID-19 symptoms

Restaurant Guidelines

Restaurant owners and managers should take additional steps to maintain heightened sanitation standards during this time particularly as it pertains to high-touch surfaces used by multiple customers and employees.

Business Operations

- Sanitize all front-of-house contact surfaces every two hours
- Use disposable menus or sanitize menus between each use
- Use rolled silverware/napkins stored in sealed bins
- Sanitize chairs and all tabletop items after each table turn
- Do not offer self-serve buffets, shared condiments, or beverage station re-use
- Provide ServSafe COVID-19 training for all food handlers

GUIDELINES

Retail

Retail Guidelines

Tennessee retailers are a trusted and important source of goods for our residents as well as a major employer base. The State of Tennessee recommends the following best practices for retail stores at this time.

Protecting Employees

- Wear dedicated cloth face coverings, gloves, and other personal protection items as recommended by the CDC
- Report any symptoms of illness to supervisor
- Provide training on personal protective equipment based on CDC guidelines
- Sanitize hands with soap and/or hand sanitizer
- Stagger shifts, breaks, and meals to maintain social distancing

Protecting Customers

- Limit customer occupancy to 50% of store capacity
- Customers should wear face coverings inside stores
- Consider shopping hours for the elderly, medically vulnerable, and health care workers
- Establish one-way aisles and traffic patterns for social distancing
- Increase curbside, pickup, and delivery service options
- Prompt customers regarding the importance of social distancing



Retail Guidelines

Business Operations

- Establish enhanced cleaning protocols that follow CDC guidelines
- Designate separate entrances and exits
- Use plastic shields or barriers at checkout between the customer and clerk
- Adjust store hours to allow time for enhanced cleaning
- Prohibit the use of reusable bags
- Suspend "self-service" food stations and dining areas
- Suspend the sampling of food and personal hygiene products
- Management-level employees should monitor compliance
- Add social distancing "reminder" signage and announcements



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

April 24, 2020

CONTACT: Gillum Ferguson
gillum.ferguson@tn.gov
615-253-4516

**Gov. Lee Issues Guidelines for Restaurants, Retail Stores to Reopen
Early Next Week in 89 Counties**

“Tennessee Pledge” plan encourages best practices for industries, continued social distancing

Nashville, Tenn. – Today, Gov. Bill Lee issued the first steps from the “Tennessee Pledge,” the state’s rollout of guidance and best practices for Tennessee businesses in 89 of the state’s 95 counties to keep employees and customers safe during the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. The first industries to receive guidance through the plan include the restaurant and retail industries.

“Tennesseans pulled together to flatten the curve, and it is time for people to begin to get back to work and back to their businesses,” Lee said. “We are pursuing a careful, measured approach to reopening our economy that does not depend on heavy-handed mandates but instead provides practical tools for businesses of all sizes.”

Lee underscored the Tennessee Pledge plan for safe economic recovery is supported by data showing Tennessee’s curve of novel coronavirus infections hitting a plateau. Lee also pointed to the unsettling economic reality COVID-19 has created in our state.

Tennessee has seen the average daily growth rate remain stable for 14 days, in addition to a steady downward trajectory in positive tests as a percentage of total tests since April 1. The state has also had a massive ramp up in testing, including open testing available to all Tennesseans across 33 sites over last weekend, 18 this weekend, and more the next.

On the economic front, 15 percent of Tennessee’s workforce filed unemployment claims as of this week – more than 400,000 people. State officials predict a \$5 billion loss in the state’s gross domestic product during 2020.

Lee said today's announcement is the first step in a phased reopening of the state's economy, which entails rebooting industries as they are safe to pursue in 89 of the state's 95 counties. The state is working with Shelby, Madison, Davidson, Hamilton, Knox, and Sullivan on plans to reopen businesses in those counties. Lee added that many Tennesseans are facing not just potential sickness but crippling financial hardship, particularly in the service industries.

Lee announced Tennessee restaurants are able to reopen Monday at 50 percent occupancy. Additionally, Tennessee retailers are able to reopen on Wednesday at 50 percent occupancy. The state recommends that employees in both industries wear cloth face coverings and that business owners follow federal guidelines for hygiene and workplace sanitation standards related to the pandemic. The full guidance offered by the state for both sectors can be found here. (insert hyperlink)

"Like the rest of the country, Tennessee has taken an unprecedented economic hit with families and small businesses feeling the most pain," Lee said. "We must stay vigilant as a state, continue to practice social distancing, and engage in best practices at our businesses so that we can stay open."

Lee's administration assembled the Tennessee Economic Recovery Group, pulling together the state's departments of tourism, economic development, and revenue, members of the Tennessee General Assembly, and business leaders to safely reboot Tennessee's economy. The group is chaired by Tennessee Department of Tourist Development Commissioner Mark Ezell

Ezell said the state's guidelines for restaurants and retail stores were developed in cooperation with business leaders in both sectors, mayors from across the state, and members of the legislature and health experts, as well as Unified Command which includes the Tennessee Department of Health. He added the reopening of future sectors would be accomplished with similar input from industry leaders and elected officials.

"We need Tennessee businesses, workers, and consumers to step up and pledge to follow these guidelines," Ezell said. "It is critically important that we maintain our commitment to social distancing and adhere to these new guidelines so that we can continue to reopen our economy."

###



**Wilson County Government
Office of the County Mayor
MEDIA RELEASE**

Contact:
Susan Shaw
Office of the County Mayor
Room 104, Courthouse
228 East Main Street
Lebanon, TN 37087
shawsu@wilsoncountyttn.gov

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Wilson County Government

(Lebanon, TN 4/27/2020)-from Randall Hutto, Mayor of Wilson County on reopening county government offices.

On April 2, 2020 Governor Lee issued a Stay at Home Executive Order, which remains in effect through April 30, 2020. That order will be lifted effective May 1, and Wilson County Government Offices will be moving toward a phased reopening of its offices, while continuing to do our part to assist in the protection of the health and safety of our citizens and employees.

For the duration of the Governor's mandatory Stay at Home order currently in effect through April 30th, Wilson County offices will remain closed to the public.

Starting Monday, May 4, county offices will expand to be open to the public by appointment only to the extent possible. Employees will be available in each county office by phone and email on Monday through Friday, but will be conducting in-person business by appointment only. We will reevaluate this process each week, with the goal (subject to change depending upon available data) of having county offices fully open to the public as soon as possible.

Offices that deal with time sensitive filings, such as County Trustee, County Clerk's office, and Register of Deeds, have secured drop boxes placed at the front entrance of the Wilson County Courthouse. On each weekday, items placed in the drop box prior to 4:00 PM will be stamped in as of that business day. Do NOT place any items in the drop box after hours for security purposes.

For the month of May, any business that can be conducted by phone, electronically, or by mail should continue to be conducted in that manner rather than in person. Each county office should strictly enforce that practice, so that only those activities that cannot be conducted in an alternative manner will be conducted in person.

This directive shall not apply to the buildings where judicial functions are conducted (including the judicial center and other court proceedings) or to the jail, but special rules may apply to the operations in those buildings by virtue of orders of the Tennessee Supreme Court and/or directives of the Wilson County Sheriff.

For those activities that must be performed in person, each office will develop a process for making appointments or otherwise controlling access to allow for social distancing, and will announce that to the public. In addition to posting on the County's website, signage at the external doors to county buildings will provide relevant information. Each public official or

department's website will include the number to call to make an appointment and what to do when the public comes to the building.

Entry to the building will be limited to the front doors. Doors will remain locked with entry controlled by law enforcement present at the Wilson County Courthouse. Patrons may be asked to wait outside or in a hallway with appropriate spacing until their turn to be served in order to facilitate social distancing. Signage will be posted directing patrons.

Members of the public are asked to wear courtesy masks when conducting business in Wilson County facilities for their own safety and for the safety of fellow citizens and our employees.

We thank our citizens for your patience as we transition through the month of May with the hope of being back to full operation as soon as possible.

Randall Hutto, Mayor of Wilson County

For more information, please call the Wilson County Mayor's Office at (615) 444-1383 or visit www.wilsoncountyttn.gov .

###

IN THE SUPREME COURT OF TENNESSEE
AT NASHVILLE

FILED

04/24/2020

Clerk of the
Appellate Courts

IN RE: COVID-19 PANDEMIC

No. ADM2020-00428

**ORDER MODIFYING SUSPENSION OF IN-PERSON COURT PROCEEDINGS
AND FURTHER EXTENSION OF DEADLINES**

On March 13, 2020, in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Chief Justice of the Tennessee Supreme Court declared a state of emergency for the Judicial Branch of Tennessee government and activated a Continuity of Operations Plan for the courts of Tennessee. See Tenn. Const. Art. VI, § 1; Tenn. Code Ann. §§ 16-3-501 to 16-3-504 (2009); Moore-Pennoyer v. State, 515 S.W.3d 271, 276-77 (Tenn. 2017); Tenn. Sup. Ct. R. 49. This state of emergency constitutes a “disaster” for purposes of Tenn. Sup. Ct. R. 49 and Tenn. Code Ann. § 28-1-116. On March 25, 2020, the Tennessee Supreme Court continued the suspension of in-person court proceedings and the extension of deadlines. Since that time, the State of Tennessee and its citizens have made progress in mitigating the risks associated with COVID-19 and preparing for a re-opening of various aspects of daily life. This includes a modification of the suspension of in-person court proceedings, with appropriate safeguards.

Under the constitutional, statutory, and inherent authority of the Tennessee Supreme Court, the prior suspension of in-person proceedings, except for jury trials, in all state and local courts in Tennessee, including but not limited to municipal, juvenile, general sessions, trial, and appellate courts, shall be modified as set forth in this order. Unless otherwise noted herein, the provisions of this order shall remain in place through Sunday, May 31, 2020.

1) The suspension of jury trials shall remain in effect through Friday, July 3, 2020. Any exceptions must be based on extraordinary circumstances and approved by the Chief Justice.

2) Courts should continue to conduct as much business as possible by means other than in-person court proceedings. Courts are encouraged to continue and even increase the use of telephone, teleconferencing, email, video conferencing or other means that do not involve in-person contact. All of these methods should be the preferred option over in-person court proceedings.

3) All courts within a judicial district shall continue to operate under the guidelines and restrictions set forth in this Court's March 25, 2020 order until the Chief Justice has approved a written plan for the judicial district within which the court is located.

The presiding judge or the designee of the presiding judge of each judicial district, in coordination with the designated judge or other designee of the general sessions, juvenile, and municipal courts within each judicial district, shall develop a comprehensive written plan to gradually begin conducting in-person court proceedings (other than jury trials) in some non-emergency matters. Each plan should contain guidelines and restrictions designed to minimize to the greatest extent possible the risk of the spread of COVID-19 from in-person court proceedings. The written plans may include different guidelines and restrictions for different courts or counties within a judicial district. The written plans should include guidelines and restrictions addressing matters including but not limited to admission into the courthouse, limitation of the number of persons in the courtroom, staggering of hearing times, management of social distancing in the courthouse and in the courtroom, and handling of witnesses (e.g., having witnesses remain in their vehicles or placing them in separate rooms). The use of personal protection such as face masks, as well as appropriate use of disinfectants, is encouraged in courthouses to protect court personnel and the public. Screening measures such as touchless thermometers and health questions relevant to COVID-19 may be used for entry into courthouses. However, factors such as availability and cost of such measures should be taken into consideration before inclusion as mandatory requirements in a written plan. Alternatively, a written plan may consist of an election to continue to operate under the guidelines and restrictions set forth in this Court's March 25, 2020 order. The presiding judge or the designee of the presiding judge of each judicial district shall submit its written plan to the Administrative Office of the Courts for approval by the Chief Justice.

4) Judges are charged with the responsibility of ensuring that core constitutional functions and rights are protected. Additionally, court clerks are charged with ensuring that court functions continue. See Tenn. Code Ann. §§ 18-1-101 (2009); 18-1-105 (Supp. 2019). Court clerks are to work cooperatively and at the direction of the presiding judge of each judicial district to fulfill the clerks' obligation to facilitate continuing court function. Nevertheless, all judges and court clerks should continue to minimize in-person contact by utilizing available technologies, including alternative means of filing, teleconferencing, email, and video conferencing.

5) Any Tennessee state or local rule, criminal or civil, that impedes a judge's or court clerk's ability to utilize available technologies to limit in-person contact is suspended through Sunday, May 31, 2020. See, e.g., Tenn. R. Civ. P. 43.01. With respect to plea agreements for non-incarcerated individuals, this suspension expressly applies to those provisions of Tenn. R. Crim. P. 11 which otherwise would require the proceeding to be in

person in open court. See, e.g., Tenn. R. Crim. P. 11(b)(1) and (2), 11(c)(2)(A). For purposes of implementing procedural matters during this time, the provisions of Rule 18(c) of the Rules of the Tennessee Supreme Court are suspended to allow judges to issue general orders.

6) Judges' offices and court clerks' offices may limit in-person contact with the public during the period of suspension, but must remain open for business. If it becomes necessary to restrict physical access to judges' or court clerks' offices during the period of suspension, these offices shall remain accessible by telephone, email and fax to the extent possible during regular business hours. If available, drop boxes should be used for conventionally filed documents.

7) Deadlines set forth in court rules, statutes, ordinances, administrative rules, or otherwise that are set to expire during the period from Friday, March 13, 2020, through Sunday May 31, 2020, are hereby extended through Friday, June 5, 2020. This extension does not apply to deadlines set forth in the Tennessee Rules of Appellate Procedure or the Rules of the Tennessee Supreme Court, except as otherwise provided by the orders of this Court entered March 27, 2020 (Order Suspending Board of Professional Responsibility's Proceedings and Extending Deadlines) (Order Regarding Continuing Legal Education), March 31, 2020 (Order Clarifying the Extension of Deadlines), and April 2, 2020 (Order Temporarily Modifying Certain Provisions of Tennessee Supreme Court Rule 7). This extension does not apply to deadlines set forth in pre-trial scheduling orders, but such deadlines remain subject to extension by the trial courts in their discretion. Statutes of limitations and statutes of repose that would otherwise expire during the period from Friday, March 13, 2020, through Sunday May 31, 2020, are hereby extended through Friday, June 5, 2020. See Tenn. Code Ann. § 28-1-116 (2017). Deadlines, statutes of limitations, and statutes of repose that are not set to expire during the period from Friday, March 13, 2020, through Sunday, May 31, 2020, are not extended or tolled by this order.

8) Attorneys and judges are encouraged to utilize the "Online Notary Public Act," Tenn. Code Ann. § 8-16-301, et seq., and the regulations promulgated by the Secretary of State at Sec. of State, Tenn. R. and Reg. 1360-07-03-.01. Additionally, Executive Order No. 26 issued by Governor Lee on April 9, 2020, addresses notary issues. With regard to court filings, declarations under penalty of perjury may be used as an alternative to a notary. The use of electronic signatures as provided under Rule 5B of the Tennessee Rules of Civil Procedure and Rules 46 and 46A of the Rules of the Tennessee Supreme Court is extended to any pleadings or documents to be filed or served by conventional means during the time that the state of emergency for the Judicial Branch remains in place.

9) Given the increasing economic issues caused by this pandemic, no judge, clerk, or other court official shall take any action to effectuate an eviction, ejection, or other

displacement from a residence during the effective dates of this order based upon the failure to make a rent, loan, or other similar payment absent extraordinary circumstances as determined by a judge in a court of competent jurisdiction. Nothing in this order affects the obligations, terms, or conditions for payment under existing contracts. Judges also are encouraged to work with court clerks and local law enforcement to develop policies severely limiting or eliminating any new garnishments during this time.

10) Orders of protection and temporary injunctions that would otherwise expire during the period from Friday, March 13, 2020, through Sunday, May 31, 2020, are hereby extended through Friday, June 5, 2020.

This order applies statewide to all courts and court clerks' offices except administrative courts within the Executive Branch and federal courts and federal court clerks' offices located in Tennessee.

Under the terms of this order, the courts of Tennessee remain open, consistent with the Judicial Branch's obligation to mitigate the risks associated with COVID-19. Judges should work with local law enforcement and other county officials to ensure that, to the extent possible, courthouses remain accessible to carry out essential constitutional functions and time-sensitive proceedings.

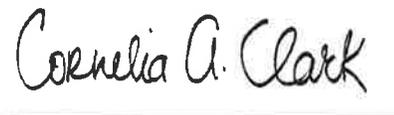
This order is intended to be interpreted broadly for protection of the public from risks associated with COVID-19.

It is so ORDERED.

FOR THE COURT:



Jeffrey S. Bivins, Chief Justice



Cornelia A. Clark, Justice

Sharon G. Lee

Sharon G. Lee, Justice

Holly Kirby

Holly Kirby, Justice

Roger A. Page

Roger A. Page, Justice