

## NEWS RELEASE

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**MEDIA CONTACTS:**

Mari Cockerell, Communications Director

Ph: 325.676.6677, Cell: 325.513.9381, Email: [mari.cockerell@abilenetx.gov](mailto:mari.cockerell@abilenetx.gov)

### **Extension of disaster declaration limits gatherings to 10 individuals** *CITY FACILITIES CLOSED TO PUBLIC BEGINNING TUESDAY, MARCH 24, 2020*

ABILENE, Texas – Abilene Mayor Anthony Williams has issued a disaster declaration, effective immediately after signing on Monday, March 23, 2020, limiting the gathering of individuals in our community to 10. This action makes it a criminal offence to hold a gathering of 10 or more people, and will be in effect for 7 days, with the potential for extension.

“Abilene’s ability to avoid a shelter in place arrangement requires people to actually practice social distancing,” adds Abilene City Manager Robert Hanna. “My hope is that Abilenians take the limiting of social gatherings seriously. If you’re sick, stay home. If you’re an employer and your employee calls in sick, let them stay home. These simplest of common sense procedures can help Abilene stay ahead of the curve, and avoid additional impacts on our local economy. We will prioritize public health over the economy if the public fails to heed these requirements,” said Hanna.

The March 23rd disaster declaration also directs residents to avoid eating or drinking at bars, restaurants, and food courts, and visiting gyms or massage parlors; provided, however, that the use of drive-through, pickup, or delivery options is allowed and highly encouraged.

In accordance with the guidelines from the President and the CDC, the declaration also states people shall not visit nursing homes, retirement homes, or long-term care facilities unless to provide critical assistance.

In order to comply with this disaster declaration and promote social distancing that will slow the spread of COVID-19, City Hall and all other City facilities with the exception of the Abilene Taylor-County Public Health District, will be closed to the public beginning Tuesday, March 24, 2020. City staff will be available to respond to citizen needs via phone and email during the business hours of 8 a.m. to 5 p.m., Monday through Friday.

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