

Greenville Mayor Takes Emergency Action to Halt Spread of COVID-19

Requires Restaurants, Bars to Close Dining Areas, Offer Curbside and Drive-Thru Only

Tuesday, March 17

City of Greenville Mayor Knox White took emergency action to stop the spread of COVID-19 by requiring bars, restaurants and breweries to limit service to curbside pick-up and drive-thru, closing indoor eating and drinking areas effective close of business March 17.

White declared a citywide state of emergency after hosting a teleconference with representatives of the local hospitality industry and medical professionals. Fifteen states have reported mandatory restaurant closures. The Department of Health and Environmental Control (DHEC) has reported 33 active COVID-19 cases and one death in South Carolina.

“It is not yet widespread in our community, but according to health professionals, it’s just a matter of time,” White said. “Social distancing is the absolute strategy according to physicians. Local leaders have the power to influence citizens and we must limit person-to-person interaction. We must take action that’s proven to be effective in prevention.”

Prisma Health physician Dr. Eric Ossmann advised that limiting restaurants to drive-thru and carry-out service is the right approach at this critical juncture. “I’d encourage all businesses, including restaurants, to limit entry to the facility to mandatory employees. They must keep a safe distance from their co-workers and model impeccable hygiene. If an employee arrives sick, send them home and require them to be symptom-free for three days before returning,” he said.

Mayor White called these “unprecedented times” where tough decision-making is required. “Understanding that the hospitality industry is dedicated to the care of others and seeing the hardships already experienced by a loss of customers, the City of Greenville will also provide support for local businesses.”

The Mayor said he would defer payments for all new business license applications for 60 days and announced the creation of an online resource guide.

The “Connecting Our Community” Resource Guide is a City-hosted webpage that allows local businesses to share deals, promotions or new offerings with residents. If a City of Greenville business or organization is offering a service (take-out, delivery, online sales, restricted shopping hours for seniors) or a discount (free meals for children, donated meals to charity in exchange for purchase) to help the community good they are asked to [complete this form](#).

Once the form is submitted the City will publish all relevant results at <https://www.greenvillesc.gov/COVID-19-Community> and work to publicize the offerings of our businesses and provide opportunities for families to patronize them safely.

“This is an uncertain time. Many businesses are finding creative ways to keep their employees working and customers healthy. We want to support them,” said Mayor White. “We are adhering to federal guidelines for COVID-19 that include limiting gatherings to less than 10. We understand the strain that can put on local stores and restaurants. We want our citizens to be able to stay home or limit person-to-person contact, but not to the detriment of our business community.”

The City’s non-essential workforce is working remotely, while first responders and service providers continue to operate with modifications. Citizens can continue to call Greenville Cares at 232-CARE or cares@greenvillesc.gov for assistance. Emergency information for employees and our community can be found here: <https://greenvillesc.gov/438/COVID-19-Emergency-Information>.