

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**Big Horn County Health Department Announces
Phased Reopening of Business
*Reminds Residents to Take Precautions***

HARDIN, MONTANA (April 24, 2020) – The Big Horn County Public Health Officer, with the approval and support of the Big Horn County Public Health Board, today ordered a deliberate, phased reopening of businesses in the County. This order follows the Directives issued by Governor Steve Bullock for the State of Montana on Wednesday, April 22, 2020.

Under the Order, places of worship may begin holding religious services on Sunday, April 26, 2020, as long as required social distancing is strictly enforced.

The Order requires that employees of all establishments that deal with food or drink for public consumption, including hospitals, group residences, restaurants, bars, casinos, and convenience and grocery stores, must wear face coverings or masks. In addition, employees at all businesses in the County must also have their temperature taken prior to starting their shift and employers must keep a log of those results for examination by Public Health officials. Any employee with a temperature of over 100.0 degrees Fahrenheit must not be allowed to work for at least eight (8) hours or until the temperature resolves, whichever is later.

Beginning on Monday, April 27, 2020, main street businesses, such as shops and boutiques, in Big Horn County may begin to reopen.

Beginning Monday, May 4, 2020, barber shops, salons, and massage therapy businesses may reopen, but will have to practice social distancing and follow strict sanitation guidelines. Dine-in restaurants, bars, and casinos may also reopen on May 4, 2020; however, prior to reopening, those establishments must complete an Application for Reopening, a copy of which is available for download at www.bighorncountymt.gov or by calling (406) 665-8720. Once an establishment's application has been approved by the Big Horn County Public Health Officer, they may reopen for dine-in business.

Also beginning May 4, 2020, lodges, shuttle services, long-term rental units (such as VRBO, Home Away, and Airbnb), private campgrounds, and private parks may reopen to in-state visitors, but they too must abide by strict sanitation and social-distancing requirements.

“Big Horn County Public Health officials are taking a cautious and measured approach to reopening of businesses during the COVID-19 pandemic,” said George Real Bird III, Chairman of the Big Horn County Board of Commissioners and President of the County Public Health Board. “They are trying to walk a fine line between protecting the physical safety and the economic safety of our community.”

Big Horn County requires all persons traveling into the County from out of state for non-work-related reasons and staying for more than 24 hours to self-quarantine in their lodging for 14 days or until such time as they leave the County, whichever is sooner.

Public Health officials expect to see an increase in the number of positive test results in Big Horn County, not only from reopening of business, but from an increase in the number of tests completed by healthcare agencies in the County, but are hopeful that they will not have to reinstitute restrictions. Public Health wishes to remind all residents of Big Horn County of the best ways to prevent the transmission of this illness: stay home as much as possible; wear a mask when in public; stay at least six (6) feet away from other people; and avoid travel out of the County if at all possible. And if you are feeling sick, do not go to work or leave your home; rather, contact your healthcare provider for guidance.

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Big Horn County is the sixth largest county in Montana, at approximately 5,023 square miles, and with a population exceeding 13,000. The local government was established January 13, 1913. Hardin is the County Seat. <https://www.bighorncountymt.gov/>. Public Health Officer Order 2020-5 is available here <https://www.bighorncountymt.gov/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/Order-of-BHC-Public-Health-Officer-2020-5-ALL.pdf> Application for Reopening for restaurants, bars, and casinos is available here <https://www.bighorncountymt.gov/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/Application-to-Open-fillable.pdf>