

PHASE 1: City is moving to a neutral position on tourism

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Ryan praised the resiliency and determination of local business owners.

“Most of them are way down in revenue and are quote-unquote ‘in survival mode’ right now,” he said. “They’re all behind promoting good social distancing and PPE (personal protective equipment).”

Several councilors and City Manager Cory Misley made a concerted effort to reach out to local businesses earlier this month in preparation for reopening, an effort that councilors felt was well-received.

Councilor Michael Preedin said that, “Businesses just want to know that the City has their back. They just want a chance for survival. We may still lose some businesses, and that’s unfortunate.”

Mayor Ryan noted that some business owners have

expressed concern that some patrons — young people and out-of-town visitors in particular — are not respecting concerns for employees’ safety.

“I can guarantee that, as we open up, that’s going to be a little bit of an issue,” Ryan cautioned.

The council gave the nod to Misley’s proposal that the City be open to allowing businesses to use City right-of-way — essentially parking spaces — for displays or seating if that helps them to meet distancing guidelines. Councilors asked to see a plan before authorizing the expenditure of \$5,000 to \$10,000 in materials to make such uses aesthetically pleasing.

Councilors expressed concern that any such program should not favor some businesses over others.

“I think it’s a fantastic idea,” said Nancy Connolly. “I just hope that there can be equity for all businesses.”

The Council is also amenable to offering some business license fee relief.

While City Hall will remain closed to the public

for now, the City is reopening the recycling center — with restrictions — due to high public demand (*see related story, page 4*).

The Council agreed to extend its state of emergency declaration, which retains the City’s eligibility for state and federal emergency funding and flexibility to enact or maintain personnel protections. The City is officially moving away from discouraging visitors and tourism to a neutral position. Deschutes County allowed its ban on vacation rentals — a ban the City never imposed — to expire as of May 15.

“No one is advocating or encouraging tourists or visitors at this time,” Misley said.

Councilors are ambivalent about reopening the City campground adjacent to Creekside Park. While they agreed with the staff recommendation to open the campground with spacing restrictions, reduced site capacity and sharply limited stay times, some councilors expressed concern that it would attract out-of-town visitors, which

is contrary to the spirit of the gradual reopening and the City’s “neutral” position on visitors.

“When we do open up, we expect a high demand,” Misley said. “There’s no way to not allow people from certain areas to come to town.”

Councilor Andrea Blum posed the question: “Are we going to be OK opening June 1 with the campground filling up with people from out of state?”

It is not legally or logistically viable to discriminate over who can reserve a campsite, so the City will have little means to control where campers come from.

Councilor Preedin suggested that the City can use the weeks prior to the planned opening to evaluate the risk, observing whether the Phase I reopening does, in fact, bring a higher volume of visitors, and the status of the disease outbreak.

The City is still working on sourcing PPE and hand-washing stations, which are in high demand across the nation.

Most of Sisters’ major events have independently decided to cancel; the City has not declined a permit for

an event. Such permits require a public safety plan, which now includes a COVID-19 element, and must be approved by the Deschutes County health department. Events must conform to spacing requirements and gathering size restrictions.

The same concerns exist regarding events bringing people to Sisters from out of the area.

There have been no confirmed cases of COVID-19 in the 97759 zip code and locals hope to keep it that way, even as the community seeks to return to a higher level of social and economic activity.

SUDOKU SOLUTION

for puzzle on page 21

5	1	9	3	6	7	4	2	8
4	8	6	1	9	2	3	5	7
2	7	3	5	4	8	1	9	6
1	9	7	8	5	4	6	3	2
3	4	5	2	7	6	8	1	9
6	2	8	9	3	1	7	4	5
8	3	1	7	2	5	9	6	4
9	6	2	4	8	3	5	7	1
7	5	4	6	1	9	2	8	3

Comments? Email editor@nuggetnews.com

Deschutes County opening under Phase 1

Deschutes and Jefferson counties are included among the counties in Oregon able to begin “reopening” under restrictions and guidelines provided by the Oregon Health Authority, beginning Friday, May 15.

Phase 1 lays out a detailed framework of protocols.

RETAIL STORES MUST:

- Limit the number of customers in the retail store and focus on maintaining at least six feet of distance between people and employees in the store. Store management should determine maximum occupancy to maintain at least six feet of physical distancing, considering areas of the store prone to crowding (like aisles) and limit admittance accordingly.
- Post clear signs (available at healthoregon.org/coronavirus) listing COVID-19 symptoms, asking employees

and customers with symptoms to stay home, and listing who to contact if they need assistance.

- Use signs to encourage physical distancing.

- Frequently clean and sanitize work areas, high-traffic areas, and commonly touched surfaces in both customer/public and employee areas of store. Wipe down changing room doorknobs, walls and seating between each customer use.

- Require all employees to wear cloth, paper or disposable face coverings. Businesses must provide cloth, paper or disposable face coverings for employees.

RESTAURANTS & BARS MUST:

- Ensure tables are spaced at least six feet apart so that at least six feet between parties is maintained, including when customers approach or leave tables

- Require all employees to wear cloth face or disposable coverings (provided by the employer)

- End all on-site consumption of food and drinks by 10 p.m.

PERSONAL CARE SERVICES (SALONS, BARBER SHOPS, MASSAGE, ETC.) MUST:

- Make appointments with pre-appointment health check.

- Maintain a customer log.

- Maintain 6 feet physical distancing between clients.

- Remove all magazines, newspapers, snacks and beverages from waiting areas.

- Require face coverings by employees and clients (depending on the services provided).

GYMS/FITNESS MUST:

- Limit maximum number of customers accordingly.

- Enforce physical distancing and sanitation.

LOCAL GATHERINGS ARE:

- Limited to 25 with no travel.



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My family calls Sisters home and I take great pride in helping strengthen our community through homeownership.

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