



## **PRESS RELEASE**

From: Office of the Adams County Commissioners  
210 W. Broadway Ave., Ritzville, WA 99169  
For More Information, Contact:  
Stephen McFadden, Public Information Officer  
& Economic Development Director  
Email: [stephenm@co.adams.wa.us](mailto:stephenm@co.adams.wa.us)  
Mobile (509) 660-1062

### **COVID-19: Commissioners declare county emergency, restrict public access to county facilities.**

RITZVILLE—Adams County Commissioners have unanimously approved a resolution declaring a countywide state of emergency.

Commissioners met with elected officials, department heads, and the Adams County Health Department Monday morning to consider options. The commissioners took the official action at 12:30 p.m.

“We are going to do everything possible to assist the public and protect the county’s employees during this global pandemic,” said Chairman Roger Hartwig of Othello. Commissioner Terry Thompson of Othello made the motion and Commissioner John Marshall of Ritzville provided the second.

Key language in the resolution includes: “The Washington State Department of Health confirmed 42 deaths, 769 confirmed positive cases, and over nine individuals under public health supervision in Adams County...”

Adams County Health Officer Dr. Alexander Brzezny, has advised the commissioners that “there exists a health emergency for all citizens and visitors of Adams County.”

The emergency declaration makes it possible for Adams County to access and utilize all state and federal assistance as it becomes available, including, but not limited to, business and employee support and future disaster recovery funds provided by FEMA and other sources.

“If there’s funding available we should take all opportunities to secure it and have it in place,” said Hartwig. “My concern is that these small businesses and the people who rely on them are going to suffer. Let’s do everything we can to assist them.”

Commissioners also approved a resolution to restrict public access to all county facilities, effective immediately. Emergency services, District Courts, Superior Court, and Adams County Department of Health will continue to function as necessary during this health related crisis.

Following Governor Jay Inslee’s decision to prohibit public gatherings of 50 people or more, the commissioners, elected officials, and department heads are taking steps to ensure the health and welfare of all county employees. All county departments will be closed to the public effective immediately. Departments will continue to be staffed and can be reached by phone or email.

“We want to protect the health and welfare of all the people who work here, and the public, while our departments are adjusting to ensure that emergent services continue to be provided,” Hartwig said.

Adams County has approximately 180 employees. Today’s decision includes the commissioners’ intent to ensure all employees will continue to be paid.

“Our people need their wages. They will continue to face their financial obligations, to pay for food, to buy essential supplies and care for their families,” Hartwig said. “I think it’s very important we do not cut their wages,”

Commissioner Marshall concurred.

“They are a highly trained staff and it would be detrimental to the county if we were to lose them,” Marshall said.

**Public sources for additional information:**

Adams County Department of Health COVID-19 information can be found here: [http://www.co.adams.wa.us/news\\_detail\\_T15\\_R84.php](http://www.co.adams.wa.us/news_detail_T15_R84.php).

Washington State Department of Health COVID-19 information: <https://www.doh.wa.gov/Emergencies/Coronavirus>.

Centers for Disease Control COVID-19 information: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-nCoV/index.html>.

**For Media Information Only:**

Jay Weise, Director  
Adams County Emergency Management  
[2069 W Hwy 26, Othello, WA](mailto:2069.W.Hwy.26.Othello.WA)  
[509-659-3337](tel:509-659-3337) (D)  
[509-488-3704](tel:509-488-3704) (O)  
[509-659-1122](tel:509-659-1122) (24 hr)

RESOLUTION NO. R-018-2020

ORDER OF BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS  
ADAMS COUNTY, WASHINGTON

**IN THE MATTER OF A DECLARATION OF AN EMERGENCY FOR THE COVID 19 PANDEMIC  
RESPONSE**

**WHEREAS**, COVID-19, a respiratory disease that can result in serious illness or death, is caused by the SARS-Co V-2, virus, which is a new strain of coronavirus that has not been previously identified in humans and can easily spread from person to person; and

**WHEREAS**, the Washington State Department of Health confirmed forty two (42) deaths, seven hundred sixty nine (769) confirmed positive cases, and over nine individuals under public health supervision in Adams County, and local health departments and the Washington State Department of Health are working to identify, contact and test others in Washington State potentially exposed to COVID-19 in coordination with the United States Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC); and

**WHEREAS**, Dr. Alexander Brzezny, Adams County Health Officer, has advised that there exists a health emergency for the citizens and visitors of Adams County due to the reasons stated above; and

**WHEREAS**, the Adams County Department of Emergency Management is coordinating resources to support the Adams County Health Department officials in alleviating impacts to people, property and infrastructure.


**WHEREAS**, there is an emergency present which necessitates activation of the Adams County Comprehensive Emergency Management Plan and utilization of emergency powers granted pursuant to RCW 38.52 and Adams County Code 2.40; and

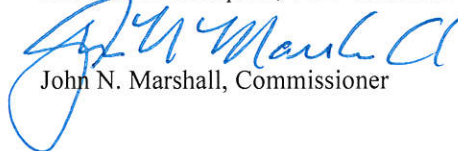
**NOW, THEREFORE BE IT HEREBY DECLARED BY THE ADAMS COUNTY COMMISSIONERS** that an emergency exists in Adams County; therefore, the Adams County Health Department and Adams County departments are authorized to take emergency actions and-to provide emergency services to protect the health and safety of persons and property pursuant to Adams County Code 2.40, RCW 36.40.180 and RCW 38.52; each Adams County department is authorized to exercise the power vested under this proclamation in the light of the urgent requirements of an emergency situation without regard to time-consuming procedures and formalities prescribed by law (excepting mandatory constitutional requirements).

**DATED** this 16<sup>th</sup> day of March, 2020.

BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS  
ADAMS COUNTY, WASHINGTON

  
Roger L. Hartwig, Chairman

  
Terrance J. Thompson, Vice-Chairman

  
John N. Marshall, Commissioner

ATTEST:

  
Patricia J. Phillips, CMC  
Clerk of the Board

Approved as to form:

  
Randy J. Flyckt  
Adams County Prosecuting Attorney  
WSBA #29302



RESOLUTION NO. R-019-2020

IN THE MATTER OF CLOSING THE COUNTY FACILITIES FOR ALL NON-EMERGENT BUSINESS AND VISITS, DIRECTING THAT COUNTY DEPARTMENT HEADS UNDER THE ADMINISTRATION OF THE BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS REDUCE STAFF TO ESSENTIAL OPERATING POSITIONS AND CONSIDER OPTIONS SUCH AS TELECOMMUTING AND WORKING FROM HOME SO AS TO LIMIT INDIVIDUAL EXPOSURE AND MAKING SIMILAR RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE ELECTED OFFICIALS OF ADAMS COUNTY AND TO THE COURTS OF ADAMS COUNTY

**Recitals**

WHEREAS, the Adams County Board of Commissioners have adopted a resolution declaring an emergency for the COVID-19 pandemic response; and

WHEREAS, to protect the health and safety of the public and reduce the possible exposure to COVID-19; and

WHEREAS, the Adams County Board of Commissioners does hereby resolve as follows:

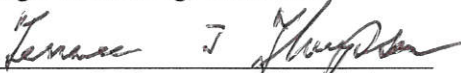
1. All department heads under the administration of the Board of County Commissioners are directed to have all non-essential employees to remain at home, or perform work from home.
2. Recommends that all Adams County elected officials employ measures similar to those directed of department heads.
3. Further recommends that the District and Superior Courts operating within Adams County consider enactments of emergency measures as set forth in Washington State Supreme Court Order 25700-B-602.
4. This order shall be deemed effective the close of business on March 16, 2020, and closure of a minimum of 14 days, or until further order of the BOCC.
5. All employees affected by this emergency resolution will continue to be paid in accordance with their existing salary classifications.

NOW, THEREFORE IT IS SO ORDERED this 16th day of March, 2020.



BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS  
ADAMS COUNTY, WASHINGTON

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Roger L. Hartwig, Chairman


  
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Terrance J. Thompson, Vice-Chairman

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
John N. Marshall, Commissioner

ATTEST:

  
Patricia J. Phillips, CMC  
Clerk of the Board

Approved as to form:

  
Randy J. Flyckt, Prosecutor  
WSBA #29302