A Significant Public Health Crisis

COVID-19 is the most significant public health threat our community has seen. Coming together as a community with a commitment to implementing social distancing recommendations now will save lives. We do not know when this outbreak will end or what actions may be needed later. Our local, state, and federal leaders ask residents and the business community to work alongside us to help mitigate the effects of this serious health crisis. We sincerely appreciate your contribution to the community, and to our response efforts.

New Developments from Governor Inslee

The Governor has ordered the temporary closure of restaurants, bars and entertainment and recreational facilities until March 31. Restaurants may provide take-out and delivery services but in-person dining is not permitted. The ban does not apply to grocery stores and pharmacies.

All gatherings with over 50 participants are prohibited and all gatherings under 50 participants are prohibited unless previously announced criteria for public health and social distancing are met.

La Conner Public Schools

Effective Tuesday, March 17, all school district buildings and facilities will be closed through April 24 to help contain the spread of the coronavirus. For more information please visit the La Conner School District’s website at www.lcsd.wednet.edu/

Port of Skagit

The Port of Skagit has made the decision to remain open for business, but has significantly changed its business operations and has encouraged the use of email and telephone contact. For additional information, visit the Port of Skagit’s website at www.portofskagit.com/

What this Means for the Town of La Conner


- City Hall will be closed to the general public. Residents may pay their utilities online, at the drop box outside the La Conner Post Office or by mail, or by placing a check in an envelope and dropping it through the mail slot at Town Hall. The Planning Department will be available by phone and email. Essential staff will continue to work in Town Hall.
- Yard Waste: For the next two weeks, until March 31, 2020, there will be no charge for yard waste drop-off at the sewer treatment plant during plant hours.
- Compost: Compost will be unavailable for the next two weeks, until March 31, 2020. While we appreciate that the unavailability of compost will work a hardship on both commercial and
private users of the material, we have determined that commercial exchanges place our staff at risk and may lead to spread of the COVID-19 virus.

- Following Governor Inslee’s recommendation of limiting exposure and social gatherings, the Town of La Conner is doing what it can to help residents protect themselves. The City is monitoring the situation, issuing recommendations and taking actions based on direction from the Skagit County Public Health Department, the lead agency for local COVID-19 response. All City essential services will continue, including public safety, water and sewer.

**Town of La Conner Public Meetings**

The Town of La Conner is following guidelines provided by the Skagit County Public Health Department to slow the spread of COVID-19 and reduce the number of people infected. Town leadership will continue to work to protect our community and ensure continuity of essential services while minimizing exposure to our residents and staff.

The City is therefore postponing indefinitely all non-essential meetings where ten or more people are gathered, including meetings of the La Conner Planning Commission, Arts Commission, and Parks Commission.

The La Conner Town Council will continue regularly-scheduled meetings, but will limit agendas to essential business items only. Public comments will not be taken at council meetings for the time being, but may be provided by email to administrator@townoflaconner.org, or may be delivered by mail to P.O. Box 400, La Conner, WA 98257. Any comments received will be provided to the Town Council.

Skagit County and our government partners are committed to providing you regular information on our response and preparedness efforts. As you may have heard, Skagit County currently has one positive COVID-19 case, and we expect to see many more in the coming days and weeks. We must act now to mitigate the spread of this dangerous disease.

**ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**

**Skagit County Public Health** is your primary source of information for COVID-19 (coronavirus). You can find more information on their website at https://www.skagitcounty.net/Departments/HealthDiseases/coronavirus.htm or by calling 360-416-1500.

You may also contact the Washington State Department of Health at https://www.doh.wa.gov/Emergencies/Coronavirus?utm_medium=email&utm_source=govdelivery or by phone at 1-800-525-0127, then press #. Phone lines are staffed from 6 a.m. to 10 p.m. seven days a week.

For emergency purposes only, you may contact Mayor Ramon Hayes at (360) 708-7635, or the town administrator at (360) 466-3125 (or by email at administrator@townoflaconner.org).
Emergency Declaration and Health Officer Recommendations

On March 9, in a proactive step to facilitate coordination with state and local partners, the Skagit County Board of Commissioners declared a public health emergency on COVID-19. This will allow Skagit County to take the immediate steps necessary to prepare and respond appropriately to this outbreak.

Additionally, at a meeting of the Skagit County Board of Health, Skagit County Health Officer, Dr. Howard Leibrand, issued recommendations in order to slow the spread of COVID-19 and reduce the number of people infected. These recommendations were made in consultation with the State Department of Health. Dr. Leibrand has recommended – but is not requiring – the following:

- **People at higher risk of severe illness should stay home and away from large groups of people as much as possible.** People at higher risk include people over 60 years of age; people with underlying health conditions including heart disease, lung disease or diabetes; people with weakened immune systems; and pregnant women.
- **Employers should maximize telecommuting options for as many employees as possible; urge employees to stay home when they are sick and maximize flexibility in sick leave benefits; consider staggering start and end times to reduce large numbers of people congregating at the same time.**
- **The community should postpone non-essential events and gatherings of ten or more people.**

Social distancing measures are the best tool we have to combat COVID-19 and protect our loved ones. The Health Officer based his recommendations on the best available science on how to counter the spread of COVID-19 and the risk of a widespread local outbreak.