

KEY NOTES

NEWS FROM
THE PERDIDO KEY ASSOCIATION



April 2020

Perdido Key and COVID 19

Whether on Perdido Key or elsewhere, we are all monitoring the COVID 19 epidemic across the United States and the world. What seemed a distant problem now has the US medical community, federal, state, and local authorities, along with companies, institutions, and private citizens working to control its spread and effects – with a first Perdido Key case reported on March 31. Staying home can be good for family time and for catching up on projects, but we would all prefer isolation as a choice and not a need.

To keep group size to a minimum, at its March 20, 2020 Special Meeting the Escambia County Board of County Commissioners (BOCC) decided to close Escambia County public beaches, including those on Perdido Key; Gulf Islands National Seashore and Perdido Key State Park closed as well. The beach closure will last at least until the next scheduled BOCC meeting (April 2, 2020). More information about the decision can be found at <https://myescambia.com/news/news-article/2020/03/20/escambia-county-to-temporarily-close-public-areas-of-beach-follow-executive-order-20-71> and in the March 20, 2020 *Pensacola News Journal* article “Pensacola Beach to close through April 2” by Jim Little at <https://www.pnj.com/story/news/2020/03/20/COVID-19-pensacola-beach-perdido-key-beach-close-until-april-2/2884475001/>.

The Perdido Key Area Chamber of Commerce has worked hard to clarify the beach closure decision and other preventive actions. While public beaches have been closed, government mandate has not closed private beaches. On March 27, 2020, Governor DeSantis issued Executive Order 20-87 suspending Vacation Rentals for two weeks, specifically: “...vacation rental properties are prohibited from making new reservations or bookings and shall not accept new guests for check-in for the next two weeks. The order applies to any house, condo, cooperative or dwelling unit that is also a transient public lodging establishment. The order does not apply to resorts, inns, hotels, motels or

time-shares.” (From *Gannett Florida’s* March 28, 2020 article “Governor’s order suspends short-term rentals for two weeks” at <https://www.thedestinlog.com/news/20200328/governors-order-suspends-short-term-rentals-for-two-weeks>. Executive Order 20-86 discusses travel restrictions to Florida and is available along with other Executive Orders at <https://www.flgov.com/2020-executive-orders/>. Janitorial and other essential services continue but contracts and other commitments must be worked out between owners, affected firms, and individuals. As provided by the Chamber, information on the federal stimulus bill and how it may affect local businesses is available from the SBDC Florida website at <http://floridasbdc.org/disaster/> and other resources.

With beaches and related activities closed, those dependent on our area’s service industry for their livelihood should not be forgotten. One hopes the social distancing measures taken, along with more testing, warmer weather, and some luck will flatten the rate of COVID 19 increase – allowing for serious consideration of when rentals, restaurants, shops, and public activities can begin returning to normal.

Staying Healthy

COVID 19 is extremely infectious so considerable direction has been given on how to impede its spread. The following guidance is from the Escambia County web location on COVID 19: “stay home when you are sick; cover your cough or sneeze with a tissue, then discard in trash; avoid close contact with people who are sick; avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands; wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds; use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol if soap and water is not available; and, clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces.” The federal social distancing mandate was just extended to April 30, 2020 while travel and quarantine instructions have been issued by various authorities. Testing for COVID 19 can be obtained at a number of Escambia County locations with guidance available at <https://myescambia.com/covid-19-information-for-escambia-county>.

Here are some websites with information about COVID 19 and its repercussions:

US Federal Government at <https://www.COVID19.gov/>

State of Florida updates at <http://www.floridahealth.gov/newsroom/2020/03/031520-2110-covid19.pr.html>

Escambia County at <https://myescambia.com/covid-19-information-for-escambia-county>

Visit Pensacola updates at <https://www.visitpensacola.com/plan-your-trip/visit-pensacola-covid-19-COVID-19-update-3-march-20-2020/>

Mullet Wrapper at <http://mulletwrapper.net/>

Pensacola News Journal “COVID 19 Watch” for subscribers

Bridge to Pensacola Beach now Cashless

To help prevent the spread of COVID 19, the Bob Sikes Bridge to Pensacola Beach from Gulf Breeze has gone cashless before the planned implementation later in the spring. Only Florida's Sun Pass or other interoperable transponders will work, or be billed with TOLL-BY-PLATE.

Perdido Key Property Owner Survey

With some delays being experienced because of COVID 19 and other issues, the Perdido Key Property Owner Survey being readied by PKA has not yet been mailed. With no further problems, we anticipate mailing the survey by late-April 2020.

Home Activities

Finished those long put-off chores and decent movies? What now? Getting to the books you've always meant to read is a good option, but the Internet offers additional suggestions for children and the rest of us. Here are a few options among many you can find online. Some sites listed have advertisements and are provided for information only, not endorsement:

Rick O'Connor (Escambia County Sea Grant Representative) has made available nature-focused activities. Here are lessons on "Water," "Backyard Habitat," "Invasive Species," and "Local Frogs:

<https://blogs.ifas.ufl.edu/escambiaco/2020/03/24/water-lesson-1/>

<https://blogs.ifas.ufl.edu/escambiaco/2020/03/25/backyard-habitat-lesson-1/>

<https://blogs.ifas.ufl.edu/escambiaco/2020/03/30/invasive-species-lesson-1-2/>

<https://blogs.ifas.ufl.edu/escambiaco/2020/03/31/local-wildlife-lesson-2/>

The following two websites offer further suggestions:

"Five fun things to do at home during the COVID 19 pandemic" at

<https://www.clickorlando.com/features/2020/03/27/here-are-5-fun-things-to-do-at-home-during-COVID-19-pandemic/>

"Here are 31 free things to do online while you're stuck at home during the COVID 19 outbreak" by Samantha Grindell of the *Insider.com* at <https://www.insider.com/free-things-online-while-at-home-during-the-COVID-19-outbreak-2020-3>

With most public events cancelled or postponed, this month's Key Notes does not have an event Calendar

Our thanks to care-givers and first responders for being on the front-lines during this emergency. To all, stay very safe!

Perdido Key Association Board of Directors