

## **BRINGING BRYAN BACK**

As of April 28, 2020, there were 188 confirmed cases of COVID-19 in Brazos County, with 16 deaths. Eighty-six individuals have recovered from the virus, with 86 active cases and 7 hospitalizations.

On April 27, Governor Abbot announced the first phase of the State of Texas' ongoing plan to safely and strategically open Texas while minimizing the spread of COVID-19. Under Phase I, certain services and activities are allowed to open with limited occupancy, and the Texas Department of State Health Services (DSHS) is issuing minimum standard health protocols for all businesses and individuals to follow. The Governor also outlined special guidance for Texans over the age of 65 and detailed a comprehensive mitigation plan for nursing homes in Texas. The Governor also announced a statewide testing and tracing program developed by DSHS that will help public health officials quickly identify and test Texans who contract COVID-19 and mitigate further spread of the virus.

The Governor's announcement was accompanied by [\*Texans Helping Texans: The Governor's Report to Open Texas\*](#). This detailed report, available on the Governor's website, helps Texans understand phase one by outlining the new protocols, guidance, and recommendations. The report also includes a series of Open Texas Checklists that outline DSHS minimum standard health protocols for all Texans.

Even with the Governor's plan to reopen Texas, it is still important that the City of Bryan continue to operate with the Mayoral Declaration of Local State of Disaster Due to Public Health Emergency in effect. Having an active Disaster Declaration allows the City to apply for federal and state relief funding, and provides the basis for special grant funding for local businesses impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. Continuing the Disaster Declaration in place also allows me, as Mayor, to issue emergency orders should the need quickly arise.

However, at this point in the road to recovery to "bring Bryan back", it appears the need for such emergency orders has declined significantly. Therefore, it is my intention that future decisions regarding the direction of the City of Bryan relative to COVID-19 recovery will be made with the participation of the full City Council, unless an extreme emergency situation arises unexpectedly.

By working with staff, residents, business owners, Operation Restart, the Mayor's Small Business Recovery Advisory Committee and Industry Task Force, and many other groups that have formed to address the return to a fully functional business climate in the community, the City Council can provide advice and guidance to help facilitate a rapid return to a thriving economic environment in our City while keeping us safe.

As we move forward, I know the Bryan City Councilmembers working together will be instrumental in "bringing Bryan back".

Andrew Nelson, Mayor

April 29, 2020