



PRESS RELEASE

April 29, 2020

COOKE COUNTY

CITY OF GAINESVILLE

On April 27, Governor Greg Abbott issued an executive order to begin the process of reopening many businesses that have been ordered closed for the past several weeks because of COVID-19. On May 1, retail businesses, restaurants, and movie theaters will be able to open to 25% occupancy state-wide. These businesses will have to ensure certain protocols are in place to protect the health and safety of patrons and employees alike. Other businesses, such as bars, gyms, swimming pools, massage establishments, tattoo studios, piercing studios and cosmetology studios remain closed according to the Governor's order. For rural counties with five or less active COVID-19 cases as of April 30, these occupancy thresholds will be allowed to increase from 25% to 50% if the respective county chooses to allow it. More information about the Governor's order requirements can be found at the [gov.texas.gov](http://gov.texas.gov) website.

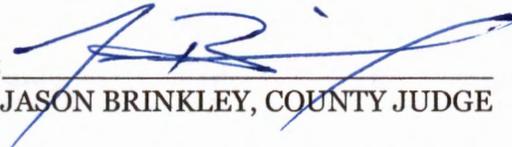
On April 29, the Cooke County Commissioners Court agreed to allow retail, restaurants, and movie theaters to open at 50% occupancy on May 1. We are hopeful that the Governor will soon release more protocols for opening up many of the remaining businesses in a safe and responsible way.

The purpose of imposing restrictions is to "flatten the curve" to reduce the spread of COVID-19 in order to give our health care industry and health care professionals the best opportunity they have to fight the virus, and to not allow our health care facilities to become overwhelmed. It has worked for Cooke County. We have been extremely fortunate to have a very limited number of positive COVID-19 cases. Our local healthcare providers are not overwhelmed. Our local hospitals have sufficient bed space for any possible surge in cases. Additional local surge capacity options have been made available. The amount of personal protective equipment (PPE) for front-line workers is sufficient. Our response to COVID-19 continues to be a combined effort by many local individuals and entities, including North Texas Medical Center, Muenster Memorial Hospital, the City of Gainesville and Cooke County. We have numerous community partners that are assisting those in need as well. Our community has come together in a tremendous way.

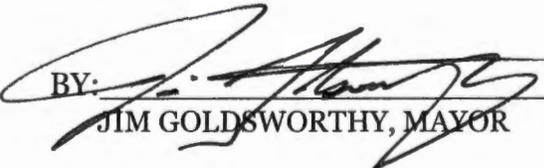
As restrictions slowly lift, we must continue to work together to do our part. We all must make sure to practice safe social distancing. We must follow CDC guidelines while in public places. We must continue to take this virus seriously. However, we must also work to bring our local economy back online. This will be a gradual process, but the more we collectively work together the quicker that process will move.

God bless you all and stay safe.

BY:

  
JASON BRINKLEY, COUNTY JUDGE

BY:

  
JIM GOLDSWORTHY, MAYOR