



News Release

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RESIDENTS AND BUSINESSES STRONGLY URGED TO FOLLOW GOVERNOR DUCEY'S GUIDELINES REGARDING FACE COVERINGS AND SOCIAL DISTANCING

PINETOP-LAKESIDE, Ariz.— On June 17, 2020 Arizona Governor Doug Ducey issued Executive Order 2020-40 on containing the spread of COVID-19. This order allows a city, town or county to mandate the wearing of face coverings in public to mitigate the spread of COVID-19 based on local conditions.

Due to a recent surge in cases, Arizona has the highest per-capita rate of new cases in the United States. Navajo County is the second-highest county in Arizona in per capita cases. Just today, the state reported 3,246 new cases of COVID-19 since yesterday. The surge in cases in our local area has put a strain on our healthcare system.

The Town of Pinetop-Lakeside has joined the City of Show Low, the Town of Springerville and Navajo County in strongly urging all residents and businesses to follow the guidelines from the Governor as outlined in his requirements for businesses. This includes requiring face coverings when physical distancing is not feasible and implementing and enforcing a policy for use of face coverings by employees and customers. Those with qualifying medical conditions may be exempt. We are asking our local citizens and businesses to step up their game and follow the requirements of the order.

"We had serious conversations about mandating the use of face coverings to slow the spread of COVID-19," said Pinetop-Lakeside Mayor Stephanie Irwin. "However, we came to the joint decision with our neighboring communities to give our businesses, residents and visitors an opportunity to comply. It is imperative that everyone do their part to help slow this insidious disease, and if there is a widespread lack of compliance, the Town may have no alternative than to mandate the use of face masks.

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“The number of new cases, both in Arizona and in Navajo County, is headed in the wrong direction,” added Mayor Irwin. “Our local healthcare system may not be able to handle a continued increase in cases. I implore everyone to take this seriously before we are forced to take the next step.”

The Navajo County Health Department is responsible for ensuring that restaurants, bars, hotels and stores that sell pre-packaged food follow the requirements ordered by Governor Ducey. The Health Department will be working with local establishments to provide education and technical assistance during their transition to comply with the new executive order.

“The county has the ability to issue a citation for food code violations and issue a cease and desist letter if an establishment fails to comply with the executive order,” said Mayor Irwin. “Our businesses have been through a tough time and we hope they will comply with the requirements so they don’t risk losing their ability to operate. If we do not take the order and requirements seriously, then this may lead to further orders from the Governor that may shut down businesses again.”

Everyone should continue to follow social distancing guidelines, to wash and sanitize your hands regularly, avoid touching your face, stay home if you are sick or don’t feel well and other requirements in the Governor’s order. If we are vigilant, then we can slow and contain the spread of COVID-19. We ask all to make the effort to follow the requirements put in place by the Governor’s order, which can be found at

<https://azgovernor.gov/governor/news/2020/06/governor-ducey-announces-enhanced-covid-19-action-plan>.

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