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CHAUTAUQUA COUNTY OFFICIALS ANNOUNCE PHASE 1 REOPENING PLANS

Residents and Businesses Urged to Continue Social Distancing Measures and Precautions to Prevent the Spread of COVID-19 as Western New York Reopens Under Phase 1

MAYVILLE, N.Y.: -- In light of the news yesterday from New York State Governor Andrew Cuomo that the Western New York Region can reopen to Phase 1 effective May 19, 2020, Chautauqua County Officials held a press conference to outline what this means for Chautauqua County residents and businesses.

“I am happy to announce that the Western New York Region, including Chautauqua County, met all of the State’s seven metrics and can move into Phase 1 reopening today,” said PJ Wendel, Chautauqua County Executive. “This is exciting news for our communities and a critical step to restarting our economy. As we move forward with reopening in a safe and responsible manner, I urge everyone to please remain diligent and continue our preventive and social distancing measures so we don’t backtrack by having a spike of COVID-19 cases in our region.”

In addition to the previously designated essential businesses, Phase 1 will allow the following businesses to reopen:

- **Construction:** Some examples include highway, street and bridge construction; nonresidential and residential building construction; and utility system construction;
- **Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting:** Some examples include greenhouses and nurseries, charter fishing, and support activities for animal production, crop production, and forestry;
- **Retail (limited to curbside or in-store pickup or drop off):** Some examples include clothing stores, electronics and appliance stores, furniture and home furnishing stores, florists, shoe stores, sporting good stores, and book stores.

- **Manufacturing:** Some examples include apparel, computer, furniture, machinery, paper, plastics and rubber manufacturing.
- **Wholesale Trades:** Some examples include furniture and home furnishing merchant wholesalers; household appliance, electrical and electronic good merchant wholesalers; metal and mineral merchant wholesalers; and professional and commercial equipment and supplies merchant wholesalers.

“If our region is able to gradually reopen and keep our COVID-19 cases and hospitalizations down, then after 14 days in a phase we could move onto the next phase,” said Wendel.

Additional phases include:

- Phase 2- Reopening of professional services, retail (in-store), administrative support, and real estate/ rental and leasing businesses.
- Phase 3 - Reopening of restaurants/food services (on-premises);
- Phase 4 - Reopening of Arts/Entertainment/ Recreation businesses and Education.

“Businesses must go to the NY Forward Website and electronically sign the detailed guidance documents, after they’ve read them for their business type, before they can reopen,” said Mark Geise, Deputy County Executive and CEO of the County of Chautauqua Industrial Development Agency (CCIDA). “They also need to complete the business guidance template, print it out, and keep it close at hand at their business location in case of an inspection by the NYS Department of Health, or local health or safety authorities.”

Businesses can go online to forward.ny.gov to find guidance documents, including safety plan templates, and complete the necessary paperwork.

Businesses who have questions can also contact Empire State Development (ESD) at (716) 846-8200 and the County of Chautauqua Industrial Development Agency at (716) 661-8900.

“As we move to reopen our economy, please practice common sense and respect others,” said New York State Senator George Borrello. “The people of our region have done a great job, which has kept our numbers low. It’s critically important to continue those safety practices as we move forward.”

“As we begin to reopen, I urge county residents to continue to pay attention to their personal and community responsibility,” said Christine Schuyler, Chautauqua County Director of Health and Human Services. “COVID-19 is a highly infectious virus and as such, we expect to see increased rates of infection when people are out and about more. Please use common sense, abide by the prescribed precautions and do your part to keep the spread of COVID-19 low. 1.4 million people in Western New York are relying on each other to make good choices and think of the greater good. If we see infection rates and hospitalization rates increasing at too high of a pace, the WNY reopening will go backwards. Please be vigilant and do your part to protect yourself, your loved ones and your community.”

To help prevent the spread of disease, the public is reminded to:

- Wash your hands for at least 20 seconds, and wash them more frequently throughout the day;
- Avoid touching your face;
- Cover your coughs or sneezes;
- Avoid close contact with others by keeping a distance of six feet, especially around people who are sick;
- Wear a cloth covering over your mouth and nose when in public and when six feet of distance cannot be maintained;
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces;
- Work from home if you can;
- If you are 60 years of age or older, have serious medical conditions such as heart disease or diabetes, or have a chronic medical condition (no matter what age), you are at high risk. Individuals who meet any of the above criteria should consult with their health care provider and take extra precautions to protect their health.
- If you are sick, stay home and avoid contact with others. Talk to your health care provider about your symptoms and diagnostic and treatment options, including those related to COVID-19. Talk to your health care provider **before** you visit a clinic or hospital emergency department.
- Only if your symptoms are severe or you are experiencing a life-threatening emergency, call 911 and the 911 dispatcher will screen your call per established protocol.

Residents are also reminded about the 10 points of NYS on PAUSE:

- All non-essential businesses are closed;
- Non-essential gatherings of individuals of any size for any reason (e.g. parties, celebrations or other social events) are canceled or postponed at this time;
- Any concentration of individuals outside their home must be limited to workers providing essential services and social distancing should be practiced;
- When in public individuals must practice social distancing of at least six feet from others;

- Businesses and entities that provide other essential services must implement rules that help facilitate social distancing of at least six feet;
- Individuals should limit outdoor recreational activities to non-contact and avoid activities where they come in close contact with other people;
- Individuals should limit use of public transportation to when absolutely necessary and should limit potential exposure by spacing out at least six feet from other riders;
- Sick individuals should not leave their home unless to receive medical care and only after a telehealth visit to determine if leaving the home is in the best interest of their health;
- Young people should also practice social distancing and avoid contact with vulnerable populations; and
- Use precautionary sanitizer practices such as using isopropyl alcohol wipes.

“I applaud the County residents who have been considerate of others and practiced many safety factors such as practicing social distancing, having no mass gatherings, and wearing face coverings,” said Chautauqua County Sheriff James Quattrone. “We need to continue our opening of the economy in a reasonable and prudent manner. Disregard of the wellness and safety precautions will pose additional threats to our larger community. The complaints result in law enforcement being pulled away from other duties that need to be tended to in order to maintain public safety.”

Individuals can still file complaints about the operation of non-essential businesses or social gatherings by contacting the New York State PAUSE Enforcement Assistance Task Force at 1-833-789-0470 or submit complaint online at <https://coronavirus.health.ny.gov/new-york-state-pause> .

Once complaints are submitted, they will be reviewed by the Task Force and investigated by local authorities within 24 to 48 hours of submission.

“Once we receive the complaint from the task force, the Sheriff’s Office or the appropriate police department will investigate the complaint,” said Quattrone. “Businesses and individuals need to be aware of the potential consequences for non-compliance, including a fine of up to \$1,000 for violating the state’s social distancing protocol.”

Potential consequences for non-compliance include:

- Verbal or written warning;
- Fines for violation of Uniform Code/ Local Building Code and Health Law;
- Fines or Loss of State License or Certification; and
- Criminal penalties for Disorderly Conduct, Nuisance, Obstructing Government.

“I understand how frustrating it has become to always wear your mask and not see many friends or family, but we must remain strong and continue these practices,” said Wendel. “If we

stop social distancing and violate the Phase 1 restrictions, our numbers could increase to a point that we slide back or delay the next phases. The last thing any of us want to happen is for our next phases to be delayed and it is critical for our local businesses to be able to reopen.”

Chautauqua County Government continues to have a variety of resources available for individuals to stay informed of the County’s statistics and updates for COVID-19. Daily updates are available by 5 p.m. each day on:

- Chautauqua County’s website at chggov.com by clicking on “COVID-19 Information” on the home page.
- Chautauqua County Health Department Facebook page at www.facebook.com/myhealthycounty/
- Chautauqua County Government Facebook page at www.facebook.com/chautauquacountygovernment
- Emailed directly to individuals who are signed-up to receive the County Executive’s “Monday Memo” newsletter. To sign-up, go to chggov.com and under the County Executive’s page sign up under the Monday Memo Newsletters tab.
- Chautauqua County Public Health COVID-19 Hotline-- Individuals can hear the daily update of COVID-19 cases in Chautauqua County by calling the Hotline at 866-604-6789 and selecting option 6.

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