



March 24, 2020

Re: Letter to the Greater Willits Community

To the people of Willits, I wish to thank you for your patience during this Federal, State, and local emergency. I believe locally we have not been on edge like this since the Polio scares of the 1950's when communities felt the fear of ending up in an iron lung. We have traded that scare for respirators, which are in short supply.

So first and foremost, I want to tell you that social distancing does work to keep our local medical facilities from getting overwhelmed. Please wash your hands and cover your coughs. We have a topnotch hospital and some of the best doctors and nurses in the state. There is science behind this tactic, and it has worked in slowing the spread of Covid-19 in other parts of the world that took it seriously. Our Public Health Officer, Dr. Neomi Doohan has been prudent in issuing her orders, which I believe is a testament to why we only have one case at this time verses our neighbors to the south.

Let me reassure you that our City is open for business and all key departments are staffed. The city has taken precautions to keep staff healthy so that the city staff can continue to make sure that you have safe water, can flush your toilets, have police on the streets and continuing street repair. While the city has prepared for fires and other natural disasters in the past and this is a public health emergency, the system we have in place for managing city resources is the same. I have spoken with City Staff and they are prepared to meet your needs head on with our City Manager at the helm. The City has opened its Emergency Operations Center at the lowest level and declared a local emergency as part of a process to protect our citizens. Many of us working with the city, including your council members, are still attending meetings by teleconference or phone. The City is also working with our County partners and networking with our community partners.

On a community level we want everyone to be a good citizen and neighbor. Please help out those in the community that need it. We have regular garbage pickup and your mail and packages are being delivered. The food supply chain is intact and there is no need to make a run on toilet paper or other basic items. Avoid close contact with those most at risk like the elderly and those with immune compromised systems. To that end the Safeway Manager, Clint Heller, advised that they have a special shopping time reserved for these folks on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 6 am to 9 am. Please allow these folks

to shop in peace. Clint tells me that courtesy clerks are wiping down shopping carts at both doors and there are lines in place to allow for social distancing in the store checkouts. The Grocery Outlet also continues to be open serving our residents on the south end of town.

The pharmacies, Post Office, and many restaurants are open for take-out orders. Our hardware stores and automotive shops are open for business. Our teachers are working diligently remotely and our children are studying at home or online. Our Superintendent closed our schools out of an abundance of caution and now the rest of the state has followed suit. Life goes on and we will get over this. I know this is a stressful time and I again want to assure all of you that we, your community, are working hard. I want to give a shout out to our many public safety workers like our Little Lake Fire Department, Medstar Ambulance, The Willits Police Department, The Mendocino County Sherriff's Department, and the Staff at Howard Hospital who are on the frontlines of this health emergency.

If you have any questions about Covid-19 call the Mendocino Public Health at (707) 234-6052. For matters related to City Business (non- emergency) please call (707) 459-4601. Willits Police Department (707) 459-6122 (bus) 9-1-1 for emergency calls.

The City posts the latest updates on Facebook at:
https://www.facebook.com/CityofWillits/?eid=ARCO_vFihXMdKbliLezggGXsX8-4BpGm3nzPs1RlqrcefMWRGwsWaxDHfP2Q9Gv1DdHoed_aNwVfv9PV

City Website: <https://cityofwillits.org/>

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Sincerely,

Gerry Gonzalez
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City of Willits