

MEDIA RELEASE



Contact: Shyanne Palmus
Communications Coordinator
Shyanne.Palmus@co.benton.wa.us
509-222-3760

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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RESPONSE TO RECENT DECISIONS ON COVID-19

Kennewick, WA – The Benton County Administration and Commissioners’ Office has received multiple calls, emails, and inquiries from the community regarding how Benton County will be responding to recent decisions surrounding the COVID-19 pandemic. Benton County leadership, along with other City and County leaders have been calling on the Governor’s Office to provide a detailed, specific, and measurable plan to reopen Washington State in a responsible and timely manner, to ensure a safe return to public life.

The health and safety of our community are of paramount importance, and Benton County leadership will continue to encourage our County employees, local business, and community members to observe the recommended health and safety guidelines as set forth by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the Washington State Department of Health (DOH), and the Benton-Franklin Health District (BFHD) including, but not limited to: staying home when sick, washing hands often, practicing physical distancing, and maintaining other good health habits.

We understand our community’s desire to “return to normal” and the need for our local businesses to be able to reopen. We also appreciate the inequities that exist in allowing certain functions to continue as essential while other similar functions are deemed non-essential and prohibited.

However, the Benton County Board of Commissioners does not have the legal authority to override the Governor’s “Stay Home, Stay Healthy” proclamation. We are disappointed in the Governor’s recent press conference, and strongly encourage his office to develop a detailed plan to reopen the state that takes into account the local conditions that exist across our state.

County leaders have been and will continue to discuss how to safely and responsibly begin to reopen County facilities and other activities under the purview of the Board of Commissioners, while ensuring that we follow the guidance of local public health officials.

ABOUT BENTON COUNTY

Benton County is located in south-central Washington. The county seat is located in Prosser, and its largest city is Kennewick. Benton County was created on March 8, 1905 and was named after U.S. Senator Thomas Hart Benton. Benton County operates under the plural executive form of government with three commissioners and seven other elected officials. Benton County has offices located in Prosser and Kennewick. For more information, please visit our [website](#).

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