



CITY of LA GRANDE MEDIA ANNOUNCEMENT

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
COVID-19 Coronavirus Update
City of La Grande
March 17, 2020**

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City Manager
541-962-1309**

The City of La Grande's focus is on the safety and well-being of our community and staff. Although at this point there have been no confirmed cases of the COVID-19 virus in Union County. In an effort to proactively minimize the spread of the COVID-19 (Coronavirus) through person-to-person contact, while continuing to maintain all essential services, the City of La Grande would like to share the following information:

- In order to protect the health and safety of all our families, we must work together and support each other.
- It may seem like we're in the middle of this, but it's just the beginning. That's why the new social distancing measures announced are so important. The current recommendation is to limit gatherings to no more than ten people.
- Even if coronavirus is not present in our area right now, social distancing is important for all of us to follow. It will slow the spread.
- We have to slow the transmission of COVID-19 to preserve hospital capacity. That's why social distancing is so important.
- Young and healthy people need to practice social distancing. You can be contagious, even if you don't have any symptoms. Following the guidelines on social distancing is a matter of life and death for others.
- Health care professionals and first responders need to be healthy so they can do their jobs, which is challenging now, and promise to be even more so in the future.
 - Please do anything you can to assist a friend or neighbor who is a health professional or first responder: bring them a meal, watch their child, walk their dog, etc.
- Isolation from our friends and neighbors is the only way to slow the rate of transmission and get us through to the other side of this.
- Please view the link below for more information on mitigation measures:

<https://www.oregon.gov/gov/Documents/updated-mitigation-measures-coronavirus-response.pdf>

Public Safety:

The La Grande Fire Department and La Grande Police Department would like to inform citizens that they may on occasion be seeing our first responders including police and ambulance crews wearing additional protective equipment like mask, gowns and face shields. These precautions are being taken out of an abundance of care to protect our responders as well as the citizens that we serve. With the spread of the COVID-19 virus, our responders will be taking these extra protective measures whenever they encounter a patient that presents with flu like symptoms, such as fever, cough or shortness of breath. Please don't be alarmed.

The Police Department may handle some low-level calls for service via phone rather than face to face contact. If you make a call into dispatch for police or EMS services, you will likely be asked some screening questions about potential symptoms. This is simply to let our responders know if there is a potential need to wear personal protective equipment on that call.

Effective Friday, March 6, 2020, the fire station classroom and conference room and community activities scheduled at the fire station, such as station tours, were canceled for the month of March. New requests and reservations will not be approved, until further notice.

City Hall:

At this point, we are open during normal business hours 8:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m., though we encourage the public to utilize email and to phone when possible to limit public contact.

Meetings:

The City is temporarily suspending all City Committee and Commission meetings, including Planning and Landmarks Commissions.

- We have NOT cancelled the April 1, 2020, City Council Regular Session at this time.

City Water and Finance Department:

Given the economic hardship that may impact our community during the current public health emergency due to the COVID-19 virus. Effective immediately and until further notice, the City will be suspending water disconnections and late fees.

We encourage the public to utilize other methods of payment, when possible, such as;

- Online payments can be made at <https://cityoflagrande.merchantransact.com/> Or by clicking on "Pay Your Water and Sewer Bill Online" in the center of the home page at www.cityoflagrande.org. From there you may register or make a quick payment.
- There is a secure drop box available 24/7 on the east side of the building in the City Hall parking lot. Staff will be checking several times throughout the day.
- Payments are also accepted inside City Hall in the drop box located next to the water office window during business hours.
- Turn off/on requests may be *temporarily* completed by phone at 541-962-1313.

Municipal Court:

Currently, we will continue to hold Municipal Court on March 18, 2020, and April 7, 2020. Any cancellations will be noted on the City's website at www.cityoflagrande.org.

Municipal Court and Parking ticket payments are encouraged to be mailed to P.O. Box 670, La Grande, OR 97850, or placed in one of the drop boxes available for water/sewer payments listed above. Payments online are not available at this time. For further assistance please call 541-962-1314.

Building Department:

At this point, we are open during normal business hours, though we encourage the public to perform as much business via phone (541) 962-1360 or email lgbuilding@cityoflagrande.org. Please call or email before coming into the office to see if you can be helped over the phone or by email. Payments can be arranged online after a permit is initiated. We are suspending some inspections inside of houses and other buildings that work being performed is not an immediate safety hazard, please still continue to call in at 541-962-1317 to schedule inspections and a member of the building department staff will let you know if the inspection will be performed now, photos will be accepted or postponed to a later date. At this time inspections of construction projects will continue.

Library:

In the interest of protecting the well-being of our La Grande community, and following information from state and federal public health authorities regarding the mitigation of the spread of the novel Coronavirus (COVID-19), **the Cook Memorial Library will temporarily close to the public beginning Tuesday, March 17, 2020.**

We will remain a source for trusted information and a provider of research databases, streaming movies & music, and eBooks & eAudiobooks. These services are free to access with your Cook Memorial Library card; if you need a library card, please complete this Request Library Card form and we'll create a temporary eCard that you can use until we reopen. We will continue to provide high-quality reference services ranging from book recommendations to tech help to community resources; we will provide these services virtually via telephone (541.962.1339), e-mail, our online patron comment form, and through social media.

Don't worry about returning or renewing your materials. We will be extending due dates and waiving fines during the closure. Please return your materials when we reopen; however, our drop boxes will remain open. If you have an item on the holds shelf it will be waiting for you when we reopen. If you have items on hold that haven't arrived yet, you will maintain your place in the holds queue.

Parks and Recreation:

The Veterans' Memorial Pool will be implementing additional measures on Tuesday, March 17, 2020.

In conjunction with recent announcements and safety measures, Veterans' Memorial Pool is cancelling all classes including water aerobics and mid-day exercise until further notice. The

pool will remain open for recreation swim and lap swim times, but lap swim will be restricted to one lap swimmer per lane or two water joggers per lane as long as they are 6 feet apart.

The pool will be open for one recreation swim time each day Monday through Friday March 16 through March 27th from 1:30 – 5:30, but there will be a cap of 50 swimmers and only 10 patrons allowed in each locker room at a time. Rec swim will be closed due to a rental on March 20th. Saturdays will have the same restrictions as stated above, but remain open for recreation and lap swim times.

The best way to stay informed is through the Veterans' Memorial Pool Facebook page at <https://www.facebook.com/veterans.memorialpool/>

The following Recreation Programs and Activities have been cancelled:

- Youth Basketball remaining practices and games
- Adult Basketball remaining games and end of season tournament
- Women's Volleyball remaining games and end of season tournament
- Doggie Easter Egg Hunt
- Mariners Game Excursion
- Tri-Cities Americans Hockey Excursion
- Spring Break Camp

The best way to stay informed is through La Grande Parks & Recreation or Veterans' Memorial Pool Facebook pages.

Veterans' Memorial Pool: 541-962-1367
Parks & Recreation Office: 541-962-1352

Small Businesses and Employees

The state of Oregon is continuing to work on resources that will be available to businesses and employees. Attached is an FAQ regarding COVID-19. Additionally, the Oregon Employment Department and Business Oregon will keep the follow sites up-to-date:

- Updated information on guidance and tools for employees/employers are here: <https://www.oregon.gov/employ/Pages/COVID-19.aspx>
- Update guidance and information for businesses is available here:
 - <https://www.oregon4biz.com/Coronavirus-Information/>
 - Specific financial tools:
 - <http://www.oregon4biz.com/Coronavirus-Information/COVID19-Resources.php>
- Please also refer businesses to your local Small Business Development Center to help plan and work through tools as they become available.
- Our economic development districts NEOEDD (Baker, Union and Wallowa Counties) and GEODC (Gilliam, Wheeler, Morrow, Umatilla, Grant, Harney and Malheur counties) have great resources to help.

We continue to monitor this fast-evolving situation, making informed decisions based on current local factors as well as on the Centers for Disease Control and Oregon Health Authority's

recommendations about coronavirus management/containment. Our intent remains to continue to serve the public while maintaining the safety and health of our staff and our patrons.

For more information on the latest coronavirus (COVID-19) status, we encourage you to visit the Oregon Health Authority's website which is listed below.

OHA - <https://www.oregon.gov/oha/pages/index.aspx>

Information from the Office of the Governor

- [March 8, 2020: Executive Order 20-03 Declaration of Emergency due to Coronavirus \(COVID-19\) Outbreak in Oregon](#)
- [March 12, 2020: Executive Order 20-05 Prohibiting Large Gatherings due to Coronavirus \(COVID-19\) Outbreak in Oregon](#)
- [March 12, 2020: State of Oregon Updated Mitigation Measures on Coronavirus Response](#)
- [March 16, 2020: Governor Kate Brown Announces New Statewide Actions on COVID-19](#)