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Press Release - COVID-19 – Business Support

PRESS RELEASE



COVID-19 – Business Support

March 23, 2020 - On March 19, in an effort to curb the spread of COVID-19, Governor Newsom issued an Executive Order requiring all individuals in California to stay home except as needed to conduct and maintain certain essential services. It is recognized that this and prior local and County health orders to shelter in place have and will continue to impact Woodland's valued business community and workforce.

In response, the City of Woodland is taking several steps to lessen this impact and provide critical information and resources to our local businesses and their employees. On March 17, the City of Woodland passed a Resolution declaring a Local State of Emergency. This action allows the City to access Federal and State resources and be more responsive in our decision making process to respond to the rapidly evolving events.

Additionally, the declaration temporarily suspends the City's termination of water service to all commercial and residential properties for non-payment and places limitation on price increases on goods and services. City water and wastewater systems are secure and public safety officials are well prepared and equipped to weather this time. The City has confirmed that our private partners that provide waste pick up and utilities are prepared to continue delivering service without interruption. PG&E has issued a statement that power and gas will not be shut off due to lack of payment during this time. Despite the closure of City Hall to the public on March 19, many divisions within the City remain operational through telecommunication, including Planning and Building for those businesses in or entering entitlement or plan review.

Local Business Assistance

On Tuesday, March 24, the Woodland City Council will hear an update on resources available and efforts ongoing to assist local businesses impacted by COVID-19. The City is actively working with the Chamber of Commerce and local business community to understand the impacts and discuss actions to help support them during these challenging times. City Council will be asked to support a specific proposal aimed at the local hotel industry that has seen a 60-70 percent decline in occupancy due to government mandates regarding travel and gathering. Hotels are required to collect and remit transient occupancy taxes (TOT) monthly to the city. The proposal would temporarily defer those payments to help hotels retain staff and remain open during this time.

Also under consideration is adoption of an Urgency Ordinance imposing a moratorium on evictions of commercial tenants for failure to pay rent during the current state of emergency. The impact of social distancing and shelter in place orders have on our local businesses cannot be understated. Many businesses have had to close, lay off employees or substantially reduce operations. Despite these drastic measures to scale back operations, many are concerned that they will be unable to pay rent due to reduced revenue. The Governor's executive Order N-28-20 signed on March 4, 2020 gives local jurisdictions authority to impose limitations on evictions during this emergency. During this time period, the moratorium would provide qualifying commercial tenants relief from concern of eviction in the event they are unable to pay rent due to financial impacts related to COVID-19. City Council passed a similar ordinance for residential tenants on March 17.

Additional actions and programs are under consideration and will be implemented as they are further defined and approved.

Business and Employee Resources

In addition to the above local actions, the City is taking action to ensure employers and workers remain informed of critical resources and financial assistance available at the local, State and Federal level. The City is collaborating with the Sacramento Metro Chamber, the Woodland Chamber of Commerce and other regional partners in this effort. The Metro Chamber will soon launch a business hotline open seven days per week to answer all business calls and email requests for support in multiple languages.

Additionally, the City has launched its Economic Development COVID-19 Response webpage (<https://www.cityofwoodland.org/COVID-19-Response-for-Businesses-and-Employees>) specific to the needs and questions of our business community. The following information is available on the City's Economic Development response webpage where it will be regularly updated as new resources and information becomes available.

- Local and State Orders; Shelter In Place "Essential Business" Guidance
- Small business quick resources*
- Taxpayer information
- Work share, reduced work hour and unemployment assistance
- Workplace health and safety guidelines
- Support Woodland-based businesses
- Food security assistance programs for seniors and low-income community members
- Immediate temporary employment opportunities in Woodland and Yolo County
- Volunteer opportunities in Woodland and Yolo County

*** SBA Emergency Loans:** California small businesses suffering substantial economic injury as a result of COVID-19 are encouraged to take advantage of the low-interest federal disaster loans available through the Small Business Administration (SBA).

SBA's Economic Injury Disaster Loans offer up to \$2 million in assistance and can provide vital economic support to small businesses to help overcome the temporary loss of revenue they are experiencing. These loans may be used to pay fixed debts, payroll, accounts payable and other bills that can't be paid because of the disaster's impact. The interest rate is 3.75% for small businesses without credit available elsewhere; businesses with credit available elsewhere are not eligible. The interest rate for non-profits is 2.75%.

Applicants may apply online, receive additional disaster assistance information and download applications at <https://disasterloan.sba.gov/ela>. Applicants may also call SBA's Customer Service Center at 800-659-2955 or email disastercustomerservice@sba.gov for more information on SBA disaster assistance. Individuals who are deaf or hard-of-hearing may call (800) 877-8339.

State of California Business and Employee Resources Website

As well, the State of California has created a website, <https://covid19.ca.gov>, listing COVID-19 resources for businesses and employees. Information is available on how to apply for unemployment, disability benefits, paid family leave, and small business assistance.

Promoting Local Business

Woodland's business community, its local shops, restaurants, and professional service providers, play a vital role in the health of our economy and the resiliency of our community. During this difficult time, the City of Woodland is strongly advising residents to comply with all shelter-in-place requirements and guidance provided by the State, Federal and local governments. The City is also encouraging residents to continue to support local businesses and restaurants that are exploring creative ways to offer services while maintaining compliance with government guidelines.

Through the City's primary COVID-19 response webpage, the City's Economic Development response webpage, and through our City's social media channels on Facebook and Instagram: @cityofwoodland, @thefoodfront, and @woodlandecondev, we will continue to provide information on ways in which residents can support our local businesses as we weather this storm together.

City Council Meetings

Beginning with the Special City Council Meeting on Tuesday, March 24, the City Council will be holding teleconferenced meetings each Tuesday at 6 pm with the next in-person meeting scheduled for April 21. City staff is implementing teleconferencing options for these meetings. Visit www.cityofwoodland.org to learn how and participate in the council meeting.

Yolo County is the lead agency for the COVID-19 response, for more information on the County response, please visit: <https://www.yolocounty.org/coronavirus>. Additional information can also be found at www.cityofwoodland.org. To receive email alerts from the City of Woodland visit www.cityofwoodland/notifyme. To receive email alerts from the County visit www.yolocounty.org.