Local Emergency Order No. 1

WHEREAS, beginning in late 2019 the severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2, SARS-CoV-2, emerged causing a novel coronavirus disease, COVID-19, which has now become a worldwide pandemic; and

WHEREAS, on March 14, 2020, Governor Brian Kemp signed an order declaring a State of Emergency for the State of Georgia which activated the Oconee County Emergency Operations Plan and enabled emergency powers under the Oconee County Emergency Management Ordinance allowing the County to quickly and appropriately respond to the COVID-19 pandemic in the same manner as a declaration of a local emergency; and

WHEREAS, on March 16, 2020, the President of the United States in conjunction with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) issued Coronavirus Guidelines for America – 15 Days to Slow the Spread; and

WHEREAS, these guidelines contain recommendations on how to protect oneself from the COVID-19 pandemic, including recommendations such as avoiding social gatherings in groups of more than 10 people for fifteen (15) days; and

WHEREAS, Oconee County has strongly encouraged all restaurants, entertainment venues, public gathering areas and similar establishments to take voluntary measures such as closing or modifying operations to help slow the spread of COVID-19; and

WHEREAS, on March 23, 2020, the Governor issued Executive Order No. 03.23.20.01, which requires the Department of Public Health to order that certain specific higher risk populations to shelter in place for fourteen (14) days; and

WHEREAS, Executive Order No. 03.23.20.01 further orders that no business, establishment, corporation, non-profit corporation, or organization shall allow more than ten (10) persons to be gathered at a single location if such gathering requires persons to stand or be seated within six (6) feet of any other person; and

WHEREAS, in accordance with the Oconee County Emergency Management Ordinance as activated by the Governor's Declaration of a State of Emergency, the Chairman of the Board of Commissioners is granted the ability to exercise such powers as may be deemed necessary to promote and secure the safety and protection of the civilian populations during an emergency; and

WHEREAS, I believe that it is necessary to support recommendations and the Governor's Order, where the public gathers and where social distancing recommendations cannot be maintained, to help slow the spread of COVID-19 in Oconee County in order to help protect the health and safety of the residents and businesses of Oconee County; and

WHEREAS, Regional cooperation would be beneficial in establishing uniform guidelines across multiple counties to combat the spread of COVID-19; and

WHEREAS, Neighboring counties of Barrow, Jackson, Walton and Gwinnett have discussed enacting similar orders; and

WHEREAS, I further believe that it is necessary to require social distancing measures where businesses, corporations, non-profit entities, and other organizations continue to operate to help slow the spread of COVID-19 in Oconee County; and

WHEREAS, the results of previous county action and this order eliminate public gathering locations in Oconee County such as recreational fields, restaurants, and other businesses with more than ten people; and

NOW, THEREFORE, pursuant to the authority vested in me as Chairman of the Oconee County Board of Commissioners by the Oconee County Emergency Management Ordinance and other local and state law;

IT IS HEREBY ORDERED THAT:

(1) In compliance with Department of Public Health COVID-19 Guidance for Restaurants and Food Service, Restaurants and other eating establishments within Oconee County cease offering dine-in and/or outdoor/patio service. Such establishments may continue to prepare and offer food to customers through delivery, takeout, and/or drive-thru service.

(2) Cafeterias or on-site dining services in nursing homes, assisted living facilities, and other similar facilities within Oconee County following previously issued state and federal public health guidelines shall not be subject to closure requirements of this Order.

(3) The Governor's Executive Order No. 03.23.20.01 is hereby incorporated by reference herein, such that:

   a. All persons ordered by the Department of Public Health to isolate, quarantine, or shelter in place within their homes or place of residence shall comply with such executive order or administrative order. In accordance with the Governor's executive, the following populations are specifically included:

      i. Those persons who live in a nursing home or long-term care facility;

      ii. Those persons who have chronic lung disease;

      iii. Those persons who are currently undergoing cancer treatment; and

      iv. Those persons included in any Department of Public Health Administrative Order.

   b. All businesses which possess a license to operate as or otherwise meet the definition of "bar" as defined in Official Code of Georgia Section 3-1-2(2.1) shall cease operation.

   c. No business, establishment, corporation, non-profit, corporation, or organization shall allow more than ten (10) persons to be gathered at a single location if such gathering requires persons to stand or to be seated within six (6) feet of any other person.

(4) The County Administrator shall be authorized to utilize personnel and resources to support compliance with and to assist in the enforcement of this Order.

(5) Given the matters set out in this Order and the nature of the declared emergency, I strongly encourage all residents of Oconee County to remain at home unless they are engaged in necessary and vital business.

(6) The provisions of this Order shall be effective beginning March 26, 2020, at 5:00 p.m. and shall expire on April 6, 2020, at 12:00 p.m.

This 26th day of March, 2020.

John Daniell, Chairman
Oconee County Board of Commissioners

Kathy Hayes, County Clerk

(County Seal)