

**Board of Chosen Freeholders**

County of Hunterdon
71 Main Street, Building #1
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MEDIA RELEASE**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE****DATE: March 13, 2020****Contact: Shaun C. Van Doren, Freeholder Director**Shaun.vandoren@co.hunterdon.nj.us

**Hunterdon Freeholder Director Announces
County Offices Remain Open and Operations Continue
During Public Health Emergency**

Suspends Employee Conference Attendance

Hunterdon County Freeholder Board Director Shaun C. Van Doren has announced that the County's government offices and operations continue to be open and operating and that the March 17th Freeholder Board meeting will take place as scheduled, at 5:30 pm at the County Administration Building in Flemington.

Van Doren also announced he is temporarily suspending employee attendance at conferences, events, functions, large gatherings, and out of state travel for official purposes, effective immediately in response to the COVID-19 public health emergency.

Van Doren stated, "Protecting the health, safety, and welfare of the residents and the County government employees of Hunterdon County is of paramount concern for the Freeholders. Hunterdon County's government has moved forward with the appropriate steps in response to the COVID-19 public health emergency in New Jersey. At the present time Hunterdon County's government offices are open and operations continue. The County's continuity of operations and continuity of government plans are prepared for activation should the need arise."

Van Doren added, "I believe it is prudent to suspend employee attendance at large gatherings pursuant to Governor Murphy's guidance that events with attendance of over 250 persons be cancelled.

While Hunterdon County Health Department Officials have not recommended the cancellation of any specific public events at this point, the County is following the Governor's guidance with regard to large events and have directed the Parks Division to cancel the much-anticipated Maple Sugaring event scheduled for March 14th because of potential attendance far exceeding the 250 threshold. We are all disappointed to have to take this step, but it is necessary to protect the public."

Van Doren noted extra sanitizing cleaning is taking place at all County facilities that are public facing including the Justice Center, the Senior Center, the Library and other County offices that serve the public directly.

The Freeholder Director said, "While we are advised that Hunterdon County currently does not have any confirmed cases of the Novel Coronavirus within its borders; this should not result in a false sense of comfort and security. Rather, we must continue to remain vigilant and practice good hygiene.

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Health professionals anticipate seeing case counts rise across New Jersey, as testing for the virus becomes more widely available. While New Jersey's Health Commissioner has stated as recently as yesterday that the health risk remains low, the situation continues to be evolving quickly with new developments by the hour."

Van Doren concluded, "I commend the staff at the County Health Department and Office of Emergency Management (OEM), and all other County staff engaged in the public health emergency response efforts, for their extraordinary performance to date."