



BANDY HERITAGE CENTER COLLECTING CORONAVIRUS-RELATED DOCUMENTS, PHOTOGRAPHS, AND MORE

The Bandy Heritage Center for Northwest Georgia at Dalton State is seeking the assistance of local governments, schools, businesses and individuals in documenting Northwest Georgia's experience with the effects of COVID-19 and social distancing.

Over the past several weeks, the novel coronavirus has affected how Northwest Georgia conducts business, educates its children, governs its citizens and manages the distribution and consumption of goods and healthcare. The long-term effects of this virus may not be clear for months or even years from now.

As one of the entities responsible for collecting, preserving and interpreting Northwest Georgia's shared history, it is critical that the Bandy Heritage Center includes this transformative moment in its archives. The heritage center is calling on local governments, businesses, churches, schools and individuals in Northwest Georgia to send in photographs, e-mails, announcements and press releases and other materials to help us document our community's experiences surrounding COVID-19.

"Local businesses have had to change the ways they serve their employees and their customers, local schools have had to adapt rapidly to remote-learning models, local hospitals have had to change policies and treatment guidelines, local churches have adopted online-only or drive-through services, and local governments have had to hold emergency meetings to get ahead of this crisis. We are living through a historic and unprecedented event," said Dr. Adam Ware, Bandy Center director.

"Museums and archives increasingly call this kind of work 'rapid-response collecting,' in the sense that we are focused not on events from a century ago, but in some cases on events from an hour or a week ago," he said. "We don't yet know what these changes mean, but we know that if future generations are to have an opportunity to interpret them, we need to collect evidence of them as they happen."

Press releases and correspondence from local entities, photographs of emptied store shelves, social media posts from local businesses, physical notices posted on store windows and screen captures from social media are all potentially significant contributions. As the pandemic concludes, the Bandy Center will develop an initiative to conduct oral histories with individuals who survived contracting COVID-19, government officials, business leaders, healthcare professionals and service/manufacturing staffers who worked through these events.

The Bandy Heritage Center asks that digital submissions be sent to bandyheritagecenter@daltonstate.edu with "coronavirus" in the subject line. Offers of physical materials can be sent to the same address, though arrangements to acquire physical materials will be delayed until Dalton State is able to more fully engage in public-facing activity.

"We also understand that many people are self-isolating and spending more time at home, and we ask that individuals and families reconsider their own historic connections to our community as they clean out closets, attics and shoeboxes for spring cleaning," Ware said. "Right now, so much of our shared heritage resides in family collections, and we hope that people will consider contributing photographs, documents and artifacts from other eras in local life as the pandemic subsides."