



Columbia County Board of Supervisors

401 State Street
Hudson, New York 12534

Matt B. Murell
Chairman

Kelly S. Baccaro
Clerk

Telephone: 518-828-1527

Fax: 518-822-0684

www.ColumbiaCountyNY.com

Ronald L. Knott
Deputy Chairman

James J. Guzzi
Deputy Chairman

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

FROM: Chairman Matt Murell

ILLEGAL FIREWORKS AND DRY CONDITIONS A BAD MIX

"As we approach the 4th of July holiday weekend, I would like to remind everyone that the use of illegal fireworks can not only bring on an arrest, but with the drought conditions we are experiencing, may cause a fire," said Columbia County Board of Supervisors Chairman Matt Murell on Wednesday. In Columbia County, it is illegal to buy or use any type of fireworks.

"A fire has the potential to cause damage to property and people. This reckless disregard of the law forces local fire departments to unnecessarily expend their resources," said Chairman Murell. "The little bit of recent rain that has fallen has done virtually nothing to alleviate the dry conditions."

The Drought Early Warning Update, issued in partnership between the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), U.S. Geological Survey, and the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), shows concern for drought expansion and intensification within the Northeast United States based on recent conditions and the forecasts and outlooks. Currently, the northeast section of Columbia County is experiencing a D1 (short-term) drought, with the rest of the county designated as abnormally dry.

EIGHT STATES ADDED TO QUARANTINE LIST

On Wednesday, Governor Cuomo stated that an additional eight states have been placed on the New York quarantine list. Those individuals coming to New York from the following states are required to quarantine for 14 days:

California, Georgia, Iowa, Idaho, Louisiana, Mississippi, Nevada, Tennessee, Alabama, Arkansas, Arizona, Florida, North Carolina, South Carolina, Texas, and Utah.

COUNTY WORKFORCE RETURNS TO 100% MONDAY

Columbia County plans to return to 100% of its workforce on Monday, July 6, following the phased reopening plan originally put in place.

"While we have had two county employees test positive for COVID-19, we think it's important that all our departments go to full staffing. Nothing changes about how to fight this virus: wash your hands, use hand sanitizer, wear a face mask, and maintain social distancing. It's clear that these practices work," said Chairman Murell.

“Meanwhile, the county’s message continues to be, if you feel sick, do not come to work. Get yourself tested and isolate until you learn the result. I know that in the past, people have been urged to work their way through an illness, but that is not a practical approach in this environment. We must keep our guards up,” he added.

Upcoming Events.....

FREE HAND SANITIZER & MASKS FOR COUNTY BUSINESSES, ORGANIZATIONS

On Tuesdays and Thursdays between 9 a.m. and 12 noon, any municipal or private agency/organization that would like free NYS hand sanitizer and cloth face masks can come to the Public Safety Facility (PSF) parking lot at 85 Industrial Tract, Hudson, where they will receive up to two cases (eight gallons) of hand sanitizer per week based upon the size and need of the organization. Small spray bottles of hand sanitizer will also be available.

On this, the first week of distribution, county Emergency Management Director David W. Harrison, Jr., reported that 567 gallons and 1,548 two-ounce spray bottles of hand sanitizer were given out. “I would like to remind everyone that the hand sanitizer, which is provided to us by the state, can only be handed out to Columbia County businesses, non-profits, and municipal/governmental agencies,” said Director Harrison.

Those coming to the PSF for hand sanitizer should enter the north entrance (NYS DOT side) of the PSF parking area, and drive to the white “Sheriff’s” utility trailer in front of the building. Emergency Management and Sheriff’s Department staff will dispense the hand sanitizer at that point.

COUNTY DOH RELEASES EXTENSIVE TESTING SCHEDULE

WALK-UP CLINICS: Tuesdays June 30, July 7, July 21, July 28. The sidewalk in front of John L. Edwards Primary School in Hudson. The DOH will be limiting the walkup clinics to 50 tests each. It is recommended anyone who would like to be tested get to the clinic as early as possible to ensure they secure one of the 50 tests. Pre-registration will not be necessary for the walkup clinics.

DRIVE-THRU CLINICS:

Sunday, July 12, 9 a.m. to 12 noon: 325 Columbia St., Hudson. Pre-registration is required at <https://forms.gle/93TB4ibcWFamZsUPA>

Sunday, August 12, 9 a.m. to 12 noon: Ichabod Crane High School, Valatie. Pre-registration is required at <https://forms.gle/mngpRnfnPnVjpZee7>

A form of photo identification will be required, and a mask is required for entry. These tests will be nasopharyngeal swabs, which are most useful to detect the virus in actively sick people. These are not antibody tests. The kits used at these testing sites are part of those purchased with the help of private donations to Columbia County.

After leaving the test site, symptomatic residents should go directly home for mandatory quarantine until results are shared with them. Essential workers should plan on quarantining outside of work and being extremely cautious around those they come into contact with. It may take up to five days to receive the test results. Everyone who gets tested at the site will receive their results once they are processed by Wadsworth Laboratory in Albany.

DONATION INFORMATION

Monetary: Monetary donations intended for the purchase of coronavirus testing kits and much-needed equipment for emergency responders, medical personnel, and others on the front lines of the coronavirus fight

are advised to send a check in care of Columbia County, with coronavirus noted in the memo field. The check can be sent to the Columbia County Controller's Office, 401 State Street, Hudson, NY 12534. All money received is being placed in a dedicated account.

PPE: Those wishing to make donations of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE), such as N95 masks, face shields, and gowns, are advised to contact the Emergency Management Office at 518-828-1212. If no one answers, leave a message and someone will return the call.

Food: Donations should be directed to the county Office for the Aging (518-828-4258) and local food pantries.

AVAILABLE SERVICES

Family Assistance Network: As part of the ongoing COVID-19 crisis, Columbia County Emergency Management has asked leaders in the human services and spiritual areas of our community for help, Director of Emergency Management David W. Harrison, Jr., said Saturday. The individuals were asked to form a Family Assistance Network to provide information to assist county residents who may be dealing with someone close to them who passed away as a result of the COVID-19 virus. Information on where someone can reach out for help is posted on various websites, including the Columbia County website and Emergency Management Facebook page.

Hotline for Elderly and Vulnerable: Columbia County Sheriff David Bartlett has established a hotline for the elderly and vulnerable in our county, including those with medical conditions or are disabled, who would welcome a deputy checking on their well-being on a daily basis. The number for the hotline is 518-828-0601, extension 1400.

BUSINESS REOPENING TOOLS

Phase One and Phase Two of New York Forward is open in Columbia County, Guidelines and templates relating to reopening plans can be found at:

Phase One: <https://columbiacomeback.com/resources/phase-one/>

Phase Two: <https://columbiacomeback.com/resources/phase-two/>

Phase Three: <https://columbiacomeback.com/resources/phase-three/>

(Phase IV scheduled for July 1st, NYS link: <https://forward.ny.gov/phase-four-industries>)

Also, New York State has a "Reopening Tool," designed to let businesses know when they may reopen in a particular region. It can be accessed at: <https://www.businessexpress.ny.gov/app/nyforward>

DISCLAIMER

It is the county's intention to issue accurate information regarding the coronavirus situation under conditions that can change by the minute. For the most up-to-date, accurate information, visit the County Department of Health's website at <https://www.columbiacountynyhealth.com/home/coronavirus-covid-19> or their Facebook page @: <https://www.facebook.com/Columbia-County-Department-of-Health-469399129790791/>. The state's coronavirus website, with up-to-the-minute information, can be located at <https://coronavirus.health.ny.gov/home>.

The county will issue a press release on the coronavirus situation Monday, Wednesday & Fridays. The releases can be found on the Columbia County website and the Facebook pages of the Sheriff's Office, the Department of Health, and the Emergency Management Office.