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# ESSEX COUNTY EXECUTIVE DIVINCENZO ANNOUNCES PRECAUTIONS BEING TAKEN TO PREVENT THE SPREAD OF NOVEL CORONAVIRUS

**Public Events will be Postponed; Vocational School District, Turtle Back Zoo, Codey Arena, Environmental Center, Golf Courses to Close for Two Weeks**

**Newark, NJ** – On Friday, March 13<sup>th</sup>, Essex County Executive Joseph N. DiVincenzo, Jr. announced that Essex County is taking precautions to help stop the spread of the Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19). In an abundance of caution, the Essex County Vocational School District, Turtle Back Zoo, Codey Arena, County Golf Courses and senior buildings in the Parks System will close to the public for two weeks and public events, including two popular activities that are part of the Essex County Cherry Blossom Festival, are being postponed.

"We are taking precautions in order to keep our residents safe and prevent any possible exposure to coronavirus," DiVincenzo said. "One of the ways to reduce the spread of the virus is to prevent community spread by avoiding large gatherings such as races and festivals. We are doing everything we can to ensure that our residents feel safe. I encourage the public to follow CDC precautions and wash your hands after using the restroom, coughing or sneezing, and after coming in contact with frequently touched surfaces," he added.

The County Executive said conditions surrounding the virus are changing rapidly and will continue to be monitored. Essex is relying on the guidance of the Essex County Health Officer, the New Jersey State Department of Health, the CDC, WHO, and other public health authorities. County policies will evolve as public health experts understand more about the virus.

As a preventive measure, the Executive announced that the following County facilities will be closed for two weeks, from Saturday, March 14 to through Friday, March 27<sup>th</sup>:

- Essex County Vocational School District
- Essex County Turtle Back Zoo
- Essex County Codey Arena
- Essex County Golf Course: Francis Byrne Golf Course, Hendricks Field Golf Course and Weequahic Golf Course
- All community centers and senior buildings located within the Parks System
- The Parks Department will not issue any new permits for events being held within this time period.

These closures will result in the postponement or cancellation of any events being hosted by the County or independent organizations at these locations.

DiVincenzo announced that the following Essex County events are being postponed:

- The Annual State of the County Address on Monday, March 23<sup>rd</sup>
- Census Day at Essex County Turtle Back Zoo on Saturday, March 28<sup>th</sup> and Sunday, March 29<sup>th</sup>
- The Cherry Blossom Bike Race in Essex County Branch Brook Park on Saturday, April 4<sup>th</sup>
- The Cherry Blossom 10K Race in Essex County Branch Brook Park on Sunday, April 5<sup>th</sup>

Other precautions being taken at Essex County offices and institutions to minimize the risk include the following:

- Additional procedures have been implemented at all county facilities and buildings to enhance the cleaning and sanitizing of offices and areas where the public gathers, such as waiting rooms.
- The visitation schedule at the Essex County Correctional Facility has been modified. Also, additional measures to medically screen detainees entering and being released from the ECCF have been implemented.
- The visitation schedule and outside passes for patients at the Essex County Hospital Center have been suspended.
- Clients dropping off forms, applications or other documents at 18 Rector Street or 50 South Clinton Street are being asked to mail them, send them electronically or deliver them to drop boxes in the office.
- Additional procedures have been implemented to clean and sanitize the vehicles that are part of the Essex County Special Transportation program and partnerships have been created with companies like Uber and Lyft to provide additional transportation options if it becomes necessary.
- The congregate meal program offered by the Division of Senior Services as part of the Senior Café in the Park program and at other locations throughout the County have transitioned to a "grab and go" format and, in some cases, to home delivered meals.

DiVincenzo also noted that Sheriff Armando Fontoura has announced that foreclosures, evictions and sheriff's sales will be suspended for the next two weeks.

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## THE COUNTY OF ESSEX, NJ



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