



Town of Fletcher

RIDE IN OUR PAST ~ FAITH IN OUR FUTURE

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Responding to COVID-19 - April 15, 2020

Town of Fletcher COVID-19 Response

The Town of Fletcher was placed under a State of Emergency effective March 14, 2020 at 6:00 p.m. due to COVID-19. The Town entered into this declaration under the umbrella authority of Henderson County. Henderson County issued a "Supplemental Proclamation" to the March 14th order effective March 28, 2020 which it thought necessary "to slow the viral transmission in Henderson County as much as possible to protect the most vulnerable, and to prevent the local healthcare system from being overwhelmed." An Amended Supplemental Proclamation was made effective on March 31, 2020 to make certain provisions of the March 14th order identical to similar provisions of Governor Roy Cooper's Executive Order 121. The Town of Fletcher is operating under this Amended Order, which can be viewed at www.hendersoncountync.gov.

The Town of Fletcher is participating in weekly conference calls with the County and other municipal officials to help understand the constantly evolving situation and respond appropriately. A consistent message we are hearing from the County Health Department is to continue to follow public instructions to help limit the spread of the virus. They are also clear that the instructions they are following come from the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), The NC Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS), and our local Health Department. Our residents are cautioned that there is a lot of conflicting information on the Internet about this virus, so we would highly suggest using reliable and verifiable sources such as these noted above.

The Town has to this point been able to operate with only minimal impacts to services. Our Public Works Department has continued to provide all services that are normally available without interruption. There has been a noticeable increase in the volume of garbage that has been collected as well as a large uptick in the amount of brush collections. Our Police Department is continuing to operate at normal levels. They have adjusted their operating procedures to help limit direct contact with the public unless necessary.

Parks and Recreation has probably experienced the greatest disruption in services. All sports programming at Bill Moore Community Park has been suspended indefinitely. Kate's Park has been closed and at Bill Moore Community Park only the green spaces and trails are open. The Park has received a lot of traffic and consequently all park users are strongly urged to follow park guidelines as explained on the following page of this newsletter and as posted in the Park.

Planning & Zoning is operating at normal levels however the activity level has decreased with the state of the economy in flux, resulting in several projects being placed on hold. Staff is continuing to receive inquiries on new projects and they are issuing permits for ongoing projects as needed. Administrative Services is continuing to function at close to normal levels. Town Hall was closed to the general public on March 27th but the utilization of options to conduct certain types of business online has helped. Some administrative staff is at the Town Hall daily, with phone calls being answered at Town Hall.

We have three departments which have implemented teleworking with staff working some days in the office and some days from home. The staff in all departments have been asked to reduce expenditures where possible through the end of this fiscal year.

We thank you for following the stay-at-home order, the 6' social distancing, and using masks if you go out for essentials and encourage you to keep up the good work to help end the negative impacts of this virus soon.

Town Council

Rod Whiteside, Mayor
Phone.....(828)545-8913
Sheila Franklin, Councilwoman
District # 1.....(828)684-5676

Preston Blakely, Councilman
District # 2.....(828)230-2838
Bob Davy, Mayor Pro-Tem
District # 3.....(828)687-0313
Eddie Henderson, Councilman
District # 4.....(828)231-4811

Town Phone Numbers

Town Manager.....(828)687-3985	Police/Fire Emergency.....911
Town Fax.....(828)687-7133	Police Dispatch.....(828)697-4911
Parks & Rec.....(828)687-0751	Police Non-emerg..(828)687-7922
Public Works.....(828)654-9208	This institution is an equal opportunity provider.

Public Works Reminders

Brush Pickup Requests

Now that more residents are at home, the number of our brush pickup requests has tripled. So it may take us until the end of the week to pick up your brush, but we are coming so please be patient.

Trash Collection

Remember to bag your trash, especially now due to COVID-19. If it is not bagged, we will not collect it but we will tag it with a red notice.

Recycling Collection

Non-recyclable items will be left in your recycling cart. If you need a reminder of what is/is not recyclable, please visit <https://www.fletchernc.org/departments/public-works/sanitation-and-recycling/> or call us at 828-687-3985.

Social Distancing for our Employees

As our employees are out working, we've encountered more residents outside working too. Thank you for your words of appreciation. Just please remember 6' social distancing so we can stay healthy in order to continue serving you.

Changes in Town Events

We still hope to replace the April 4th Easter Egg-Stravaganza, which was cancelled, with another like event on May 16, 2020. Details will be shared when finalized.

The **Document Shred** event, scheduled for April 25th, has been **cancelled**. We are trying to reschedule it for a Saturday in June.

At this time, we will still be participating in the Fletcher Spring Litter sweep on April 25th.

Henderson County Specific COVID Information

To obtain current ongoing information about the COVID-19 virus as it impacts our county, such as alerts, situation reports, press releases, FAQ's, and other helpful information and links, please visit the "Health" page of the Henderson County website which can be found at <https://www.hendersoncountync.gov/health/page/public-health-advisory-coronavirus-covid-19>.



Parks & Recreation Update

Bill Moore Community Park

The greenway trail at Bill Moore Community Park is still **OPEN** at the current time from 7:30am to 7:30pm. If you chose to come to the Park, please follow these guidelines to help keep everyone safe:

- > **OBSERVE 6' SOCIAL DISTANCING** from others.
- > All groups must be less than 10 persons anywhere in the Park.
- > Please, NO group activities such as team sports.
- > If you eat in the Park, please take your trash with you when you leave.
- > Wash your hands before you come to the Park and after you leave the Park.
- > Be courteous and respectful of others -- families, joggers, and walkers all want to enjoy our Park. So share the trails and consider coming at non-peak times such as early in the morning or before closing.
- > Please consider limiting your time at the Park. Come, exercise, and then leave so others may enjoy the Park too.
- > If exercising your dog, it must remain on a leash and please utilize the outer loop -- the dog park is closed.
- > Remember, helmets are required for ALL bikers, skaters, and those riding scooters.
- > The Park restrooms are now closed, but we do have port-a-johns and hand washing stations available.

If the park must be closed for public safety reasons, our Facebook page at www.facebook.com/FletcherParksandRecreation/ will be updated immediately along with our website located at <https://www.fletchernc.org/> so you might wish to check one of these daily before coming to the park. You may also call us at 828-687-3985.

Remember, except for a Countywide or statewide mandate which closes our park, your level of cooperation with the above guidelines will help determine how long our Park remains open to the public during this time.

NOTE: Rather than coming to the park every day for an activity, we are now posting videos daily on our Facebook page at www.facebook.com/FletcherParksandRecreation/ for you and your children to participate along with and enjoy.

NC Unemployment Claims

If you are laid off work temporarily or if your hours are reduced due to a business slowdown as a result of COVID-19, you may be able to receive unemployment benefits. State officials say the best way to file an unemployment claim is to go online to the NC Dept of Commerce Employment Security website at www.des.nc.gov/ and create an account. After filing a claim, your last employer has 10 days to respond to DES. Your claim may be “pending”, and no payment will be released during the 10 days. If there are no issues, it will take about 14 days from the time you file to receive payment according to DES. For more information, visit their website.

Federal Employment Insurance

Copied from <https://des.nc.gov/need-help/covid-19-information/federal-unemployment-assistance>:

The Division of Employment Security has received official guidance from the U.S. Department of Labor on how to implement the three unemployment programs of the federal CARES Act. We are working as quickly as possible to modify our systems to make sure people receive proper and accurate payments. If you are due any benefits prior to the full implementation of these programs, you will be paid retroactively.

DES intends to implement the programs in the following order.

1. Federal Pandemic Unemployment Compensation (FPUC): This program provides an additional \$600 in weekly unemployment insurance benefits to eligible claimants. We are currently testing our system for this program and anticipate making the first payments by April 17, 2020.

2. Pandemic Unemployment Assistance (PUA): This program provides unemployment compensation for individuals not eligible for regular unemployment insurance or any extensions to unemployment insurance. This will provide benefits to eligible self-employed workers and independent contractors. We anticipate the system will be ready to accept claims for this assistance around April 25, 2020.

3. Pandemic Emergency Unemployment Compensation (PEUC): This program provides up to 13 additional weeks of benefits for those who have exhausted their state unemployment benefits. A definitive timeline for completing system updates for this program is not yet available.

They will continue to provide updates about eligibility and how to apply for these benefits on their website.

Federal Government Stimulus Checks Are On The Way

The Federal Government Economic Impact Payment should start arriving soon. They will be sent out in 3 different waves. The 1st wave will be by automatic deposit, arriving the week of April 13th, into the bank account of taxpayers for whom the IRS already has their banking information and also Social Security beneficiaries who filed federal tax returns that included direct deposit information. For security reasons, the **IRS plans to mail a letter** about the payment to the taxpayer's last known address within 15 days after the payment is paid. The letter will provide information on how the payment was made and how to report any failure to receive the payment. The 2nd wave of payments could begin as early as the week of April 20th for people who receive Social Security benefits by direct deposit but do not make enough money to be required to file a federal income tax return in 2018 or 2019. The 3rd wave will involve mailing an actual stimulus check. The paper checks themselves would be staggered over several weeks possibly beginning in early May.

The quickest way to receive your stimulus money is for the IRS to have your bank account information for direct deposit. The Treasury Department has launched a web-based portal to allow non-filers to provide their direct deposit information and the “Get My Payment” application so tax filers can check the status of your direct deposit, verify your payment type as direct deposit or check, or provide direct deposit banking information if the payment has not been sent yet. Visit <https://www.irs.gov/coronavirus/economic-impact-payments> for more information.

U.S. residents will receive a non-taxable payment of \$1,200 for individual or head of household filers and \$2,400 for married filing jointly if they are not a dependent of another taxpayer and have a work eligible Social Security number with adjusted gross income up to \$75,000 for individuals, \$112,500 for head of household filers, and \$150,000 for married couples filing jointly. In addition, they are eligible for \$500 per qualifying child. Taxpayers with higher AGI's will receive a reduced payment and high-income filers will not qualify for a payment. There are some exclusions such as those who can be claimed as a dependent on someone else's return, those without a valid SS #, non-resident aliens, etc. Basically for persons who file a tax return, there will be no action required on your part to initiate this payment. **The IRS cautions taxpayers to be on the lookout for payment scams during this time.**

Manufacturing Jobs Available

The Henderson County Partnership for Economic Development launched a blog which discusses why manufacturing is so important in Henderson County. Their blog contains a partial list of essential manufacturers in our area that are currently hiring. If you are looking for a job due to the COVID situation, you might want to check out <http://gohendersoncountync.org/2020/04/07/essential-businesses-why-manufacturing-is-so-important-in-henderson-county/>.

Local Food Pantry

For those who have been hit extremely hard financially and may be experiencing food insecurity at this time, Calvary Episcopal Church, at 2840 Hendersonville Road, operates a food pantry on Saturday mornings from 8:00-11:00 am. It is located in the building behind the main church and can be accessed from their 2nd entrance from Old Airport Road. There is no cost for the pre-packaged food box which will be loaded into your car.

Using Facemasks & Gloves

The CDC now recommends wearing facemasks outside your home where social distancing is difficult to maintain (ex: grocery stores, pharmacies, etc.) and in areas of community-based transmission to help slow the spread of the virus and to help people who may have the virus and do not know it from transmitting it to others.

There are a few reminders however: 1) A facemask does not negate the need to social distance; 2) the public should use fabric masks which can be made by a sew or non-sew method found at <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/diy-cloth-face-coverings.html> rather than trying to secure surgical masks or N-95 respirators which should be left for medical personnel and first responders.

Gloves are good to use outside the home or if caring for someone that is sick but just remember, gloves only protect your hands. You can still touch something with the virus on it and spread it everywhere you touch while wearing those same gloves. Also remember, you can still get the virus in your eyes even if you have on a mask and gloves -- so don't touch your eyes or face without washing your hands first.

Small Business Loans and Grants

The CARES Act is intended to assist business owners with current needs. There are several grants and loans that are a part of this program: (1) Paycheck Protection Program (PPP), which provides 100% federally guaranteed loans to small businesses. These loans may be forgiven if borrowers maintain their payrolls during the crisis or restore their payrolls afterward. (2) Small Business Debt Relief Program will provide immediate relief to small businesses with non-disaster SBA loans. Under it, the SBA will cover all loan payments including principal, interest, and fees, for six months. (3) Economic Injury Disaster Loans & Emergency Economic Injury Grants provide an emergency advance of up to \$10,000 to small businesses and private non-profits harmed by COVID-19 within three days of applying for an SBA Economic Injury Disaster Loan. There are also several tax provisions available to small businesses due to the COVID-19 hardship. Please refer to the [US Chamber Guide](#) or the [US Senate Committee on Small Business & Entrepreneurship Guide](#) to determine what the CARES Act means for your business.

NC COVID-19 Rapid Recovery Lending Program

A consortium of public, private, and nonprofit partners have come together and launched an innovative recovery-lending program to help support NC small businesses and family farms bridge the gap between when crisis strikes and when federal loans, insurance payouts, and other relief funds are approved, or businesses have time to recover. For more information about these loans, go to <https://ncrapidrecovery.org/>.

Non-Profit Funding

The Henderson County COVID-19 Response Fund was established jointly by the United Way of Henderson County and the Community Foundation of Henderson County to rapidly deploy resources to front line human services organizations that are assisting vulnerable populations during the coronavirus crisis. Nonprofits interested in applying to the Fund can access the application at <https://www.cfhcforever.org/henderson-county-covid-19-response-fund>. Contributions are also welcomed.

Takeout Tuesday

#TakeoutTuesday is trending on social media as a community rally to support local restaurants that are still open. Please consider ordering takeout from one of our restaurants in Fletcher -- local or chain. We recently contacted most of them and all were still open for business, although some have shortened their hours slightly. So if you can, give a Fletcher restaurant a call for breakfast, lunch, or dinner.

Free Diaper Drive-Through

Children & Family Resource Center held a drive-through distribution of diapers, wipes, and infant formula on Friday, April 10th from 10am to 2pm at 851 Case Street in Hendersonville. The drive-through is open to all Henderson County families in need and will continue every Friday as long as supplies and funds to purchase supplies are available. Visit their Facebook page for more information, <https://www.facebook.com/childrenandfamily/>.