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## **PRESS RELEASE – REOPENING MODOC COUNTY**

April 28, 2020 @ 1600 HRS

**Alturas, CA-** The Modoc County Board of Supervisors signed the Reopening Modoc County Strategic Plan presented to them today by the Modoc County Health Officer, Public Health Director, Sheriff and Deputy Director of OES. Modoc County has zero confirmed cases of COVID-19. Multiple Northern California Counties submitted proposals to the Governor in hopes of opening rural California. Modoc County will be adopting their reopening plan as of May 1, 2020.

This morning we received news of a possible COVID-19 case in our County. Public Health received a call requesting a contact investigation of a Modoc County resident who recently traveled out of state. We are in the midst of this investigation and we currently know that the resident has been self-isolating since returning to Modoc.

Throughout this incident, we have been able to collaborate, plan and prepare for positive cases. Based on what we know, we do not anticipate this delaying the opening of our County. Having a case in Modoc County has always been a probability. This further emphasizes the need of following the reopening guidelines as we continue working through this COVID-19 pandemic.

The following guidelines must be adhered to by all residents and visitors:

- Proper physical distancing with 6 feet of space between one another in public.
- Washing hands frequently and thoroughly.
- Staying home if sick or not feeling well.
- Proper sanitation practices and protocols are followed at all facilities.
- All residents 65 or older or having underlying health conditions should continue to self-isolate.
- No large gatherings where proper physical distancing cannot be maintained.

Starting May 1<sup>st</sup>, all businesses may open but must be able to adhere to the above guidelines. Schools, churches, public transit companies and private/government sectors may also return to operations if guidelines can be followed. Restaurants and bars may open inside dining but may only be at half-capacity of maximum occupancy to be able to insure physical distancing between customers. Dental services and routine medical may resume services under advised PPE guidelines.

At this time, residents over 65 years of age or residents with underlying health conditions are being asked to continue their stay at home order. We need to protect our vulnerable population. We will

reevaluate this continued isolation and have a plan to the community May 15<sup>th</sup>. Non-essential travel is strongly discouraged. Residents traveling out of county should do so for essential purposes only. Similarly, travel from out of County residents into Modoc County is strongly discouraged. There will be no mask wearing directive within the Modoc Reopening plan. The CDC does recommend the wearing of fabric masks in an effort to prevent transmission of COVID-19.

Multiple trigger points have been set up with this staged approach to reopening. These all align with the Governors six key indicators and the Presidents plan for reopening America. The plan will be reassessed on May 15<sup>th</sup> as well as June 1<sup>st</sup>. The Health Officer and Incident Command team will reevaluate based on testing data and those six key indicators discussed and move forward. If Modoc does receive a positive COVID-19 case, the direction of the team will be dependent on the contact investigation. The conclusion of that investigation and the amount of exposure risk to residents can vary. This would depend on how much that person interacted throughout the community.

We have met with all County Superintendents about resuming classes. No decision has been made at this time. Their guidelines may vary slightly but will be approved by the Modoc County Health Officer, Dr. Edward P. Richert. Churches that have been able to meet are encouraging those vulnerable populations to stay home, practicing social distancing on site, doing drive in services or meeting outdoors.

We cannot stress enough how important it is to do this right. COVID-19 is not over. This is a beginning of a very long road to recovery. The health and safety of Modoc residents is and continues to be our number one priority. This reopening plan was made in the best interest of residents physical, mental and economic health. If you have questions about preventative measures or proper steps to follow the guidelines within your business, organization or office, please call our information line at 233-1350.

As we move through this plan to reopen Modoc County, we will include reasoning where we may need to reinstate previous measures. Guidelines will be assessed and rescinded as necessary, but businesses will remain open at the discretion of the County Health Officer. On May 1<sup>st</sup>, Modoc County will be open with preventative measures in place to protect our residents. Modoc County is unique in that our residents and businesses have been able to adapt their framework to fit the physical distancing guidelines put forth by California. Modoc needs to be open to salvage our local economy and to move forward in this pandemic. We know that we need to do this now, we need to do this in the smartest way possible and we need to do this together. Together we protect our vulnerable population. Together we move forward.

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