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News Release

City closing many public facilities in response to coronavirus

Refunds offered for all canceled rentals; senior meals program to continue

ARKANSAS CITY, Kan. (March 15, 2020) — In an abundance of public caution, the City of Arkansas City is taking several proactive steps to combat and limit the spread of the coronavirus pandemic locally.

Effective Monday, the following City facilities will be closed to the public (*more information below*):

- **Agri-Business Building**, located at 712 W. Washington Ave.;
- **Cleo Graves Memorial Hogan**, located in Ranney Park at 326 E. Poplar Ave.;
- **Northwest Community Center**, located at 615 W. Birch Ave.;
- **Senior Citizens Center**, located at 320 South A St.;
- **3 recycling trailers** located at Arkansas City Middle School, Cowley College and Spring Hill Golf Course (*these will be removed temporarily to prevent the contamination of materials*).

No City parks are being closed at this time. City Hall will remain open to the public for the time being.

Both may be re-evaluated if any positive COVID-19 cases are reported in Cowley County, however.

"These closures are to protect the most vulnerable members of our community and preserve access to key backup facilities in the case of an emergency shelter need," said City Manager Nick Hernandez.

"We are sorry for any inconvenience that this may cause and hope these closures are temporary."

Tuesday night's City Commission meeting will proceed as planned, but all non-essential City board meetings likely will be canceled or rescheduled. More specific information will be released at a later time.

Senior Citizens Center closure

The Seniors Citizens Center will be closed indefinitely to the public, but the senior meals program through Aging Projects, Inc. will continue, with certain modifications to ensure maximum public safety.

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Carryout of meals will be available curbside at the Senior Center. Meal delivery will continue to currently enrolled addresses.

“These measures are intended to minimize the risk of infection to the maximum extent possible,” Hernandez said. “Our senior citizens are our most vulnerable residents and we want to take all available precautions to protect them from COVID-19 while still providing this greatly needed meal program.”

Hogan and NWCC closures

Both the Hogan and the Northwest Community Center will be unavailable for rental indefinitely.

“Due to other critical staffing needs, the City is not equipped to provide the necessary sanitization procedures that would be required to maintain these as rentable facilities during this outbreak period,” Hernandez said. “Refunds will be provided to all parties with canceled reservations at either facility.”

Monday’s NWCC Advisory Board meeting is canceled. The Thursday night outreach program at NWCC also will be suspended indefinitely. “Again, we apologize for any inconvenience,” Hernandez said.

Agri-Business Building closure

The Agri-Business Building also will be unavailable for rental indefinitely during this outbreak period.

As with the other two facilities, full refunds will be offered to any party with a canceled reservation.

Athletic uses, such as tennis practice, also will be canceled indefinitely at the Agri-Business Building.

In addition to the disinfection challenges, the Ag Building is identified in Cowley County’s emergency operations plan as a potential shelter in the event of an emergency and must be kept available for such.

Other facilities

Other than City Hall, all City facilities housing City personnel will be off-limits to the public indefinitely, except for exceptional circumstances. This restriction includes the Bryant Shop, Central Shop, Fire-EMS Department, Parks Shop, Police Department, Water Treatment Facility and Wastewater Treatment Plant.

For questions or concerns about any of these closures or changes, please call Hernandez at [\(620\) 441-4414](tel:6204414414) or email him at nhernandez@arkansascityks.gov.

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