



STAY SAFE • STAY HEALTHY

The Rabun County Board of Commissioners, the Clayton Tribune, the Rabun County Chamber of Commerce and Forward Rabun join together as we continue to look out for local businesses, residents, and families during the current COVID-19 crisis. We applaud the efforts of our local municipalities, our mayors and councils, and our healthcare and public safety workers as we all work together to remain strong in the midst of adversity. We are providing the following information as we partner together to support and assist our citizenry.

COVID-19 FACTS

- Per the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), "*Coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) is a respiratory illness that can spread from person to person. The virus that causes COVID-19 is a novel coronavirus that was first identified during an investigation into an outbreak in Wuhan, China.*"
- In extreme cases, the disease can cause pneumonia, multi-organ failure and in some cases death.
- The virus is thought to spread mainly between people who are in close contact with one another (within about 6 feet) through respiratory droplets produced when an infected person coughs or sneezes.
- Patients with COVID-19 typically experience mild to severe respiratory illness with symptoms of, fever, cough and shortness of breath.
- The first case of COVID-19 in the United States was reported on January 21, 2020. The current count of cases of COVID-19 in the United States is available on CDC's webpage at: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/cases-in-us.html>.

HOW TO STAY HEALTHY

- According to local resident and former CDC Epidemiologist, Dr. Julie Taylor, "*People in our community may be contagious without having a lot of symptoms for the COVID-19 virus and before confirmed cases of the virus are reported in our area. You can protect yourself from respiratory viruses, including the COVID-19 virus, by preventing viruses from entering our body through inhalation or contact with eyes, nose, or mouth. Follow the CDC guidelines, CDC.gov/COVID-19 and COVID-19 Screening Tool app.*"
- The CDC also recommends staying home when you are sick, covering your cough or sneeze with a tissue, and immediately disposing of the tissue, and cleaning and disinfecting frequently touched objects and surfaces.
- Local physician Dr. Laura West concurs by affirming, "*wash your hands, clean surfaces in your home, practice social distancing, and if you are sick with any illness STAY home. Yes, do these things; they matter.*"
- Rabun native Dr. James R. Story agrees, advising, "*we don't really have any option at this time other than meticulous social distancing.*"
- Everyday preventive actions to protect against respiratory illnesses include avoiding close contact with people who are sick, avoiding touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands, and washing your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds.
- It is equally beneficial to use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol if soap and water are not available.

GETTING FINANCIAL AID

- Local assistance with items such as food, utilities, rent or mortgage payments may be available through Rabun County Family Connection, Ninth District Opportunity and Rabun County Department of Family and Children Services (DFACS).
- Those numbers are: Rabun County Family Connection: (706) 782-8390; Ninth District Opportunity: (706) 782-3704 and Rabun County DFACS: (706) 782-4283.
- Governor Brian Kemp announced last week that Georgia has received an official statewide disaster declaration from the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA). This declaration will provide assistance in the form of SBA Economic Injury Disaster Loans to impacted small businesses in Rabun County.
- Small business owners should visit www.disasterloan.sba.gov for information and the application.
- The Georgia Department of Labor (GDOL) is assisting both employers and displaced workers. Resource listings and continued updates are available on their website at: <https://dol.georgia.gov/>.

MOVING FORWARD

- Please do what you can to support our local businesses. Whether it be through purchasing gift cards, or ordering curbside or take-out, keep purchases local while following the rules for social distancing.
- Local physician Dr. Laura West also advises that Rabun residents should "*address their mental health and the mental health of those around them. In no other disaster in history have we been asked to isolate ourselves. In adverse times, we need to connect to one another. Make sure you call a friend; not necessarily someone you know well. Don't talk about the news; find something positive to chat about. Make sure they are coping.*"
- Dr. West continues, "*for your own mental health get up in the morning, get dressed, fix your hair, make your bed. Plan an activity everyday- it can be anything. Clean out a closet, read a book, or weed a flower bed, anything; just accomplish something. Get exercise. If you can safely get outside, do so. If you can't, walk around your home or apartment for five or ten minutes a few times a day. Wave or smile at a stranger. Your act might be good medicine for them. We will get through this together.*"
- Governor Kemp has asked for the identification of all Georgia businesses or manufacturers that produce, distribute, or store critical health care supplies that are already limited in supply or may become scarce in the weeks ahead. The Governor has asked that anyone able or willing to help please contact the appropriate state agencies by accessing the link <https://www.georgia.org/covid19response>.

The Clayton Tribune



The State of Georgia has established a COVID-19 hotline for anyone experiencing symptoms of COVID-19, or anyone who may have been exposed to the coronavirus. The hotline number is: (844) 442-2681.

If you need immediate help please contact Mountain Lakes Medical Center at (706) 782-3100