

Update from the Monroe County Commissioners (4/1/2020)

New cases of the COVID19 virus are reported every day with the total as of March 31, 2020 reaching 236. So far, the rate of spread of the virus has not begun to level off. As before, the steps we can all take to minimize the spread of the virus include:

- Staying at home
- Practicing social distancing when outside the home
- Cleaning all surfaces that receive frequent contact
- Washing hands often
- Keeping hands away from your face and
- Sneezing into the inside of your elbow

County Office Schedule

During the current emergency, all Monroe County administrative offices remain open during regular business hours. These offices are staffed only by essential personnel who are able to answer your questions by phone or by email. Face-to-face contact is not possible at this time. A list of the administrative office and phone numbers follows:

- Commissioners - 570-517- 3102
- Controller – 570-517-3120
- Coroner – 570-517-3192
- Human Resources – 570-517-3115
- Tax assessment – 570-517-3133
- Tax Claim – 570-517-3172
- Treasurer – 570-517-3180
- Veterans Affairs – 570-517-3187
- Voter Registration – 570-517-3165

The courts and court-related offices are functioning under restricted hours and are available for only emergency and critical services.

Taxes and Payments

There have been numerous questions related to the dates on which county and municipal taxes are due. By Pennsylvania statute, the discount period for taxes runs through April 30, 2020 and the payment period for full taxes, without penalty, runs through June 30, 2020.

The Pennsylvania legislature is considering a bill to relax and extend the deadlines. Until this legislation is passed, we are unable to change the due dates. Check back periodically to track this legislation and any new payment dates that may result.

Residents on payment plans for delinquent taxes who are unable to make timely payments because of the pandemic will not be charged additional penalties and interest during the emergency.

Voting

The primary election scheduled for April 28, 2020 has been rescheduled for June 2, 2020. You are encouraged to vote by MAIL-IN BALLOT. Applications for this type of ballot may be obtained from www.votespa.com or by phone from the Voter Registration office.

A Final Word

Keeping the public aware of developments during this continuing emergency has proven to be a huge challenge. Social media is ever present and it is a great tool when the information that is disseminated is accurate. Unfortunately, sensationalism seems to spread much more quickly and widely than accurate information that may not be so sensational. We would encourage our residents and visitors to visit the Monroe County website. We have also teamed up with the Pocono Mountains Visitors Bureau to supply information to a special web site they have developed www.poconomountains.com/covid-19. Our goal is to deliver a consistent, accurate message across all areas of the region. Also, if you are experiencing more immediate problems related to food, shelter, or medicine, the United Way of Monroe County may be able to help. Their phone number is 570-517-3953 and their web address is www.poconounitedway.org/covid-19/.

Rest assured that we are working behind the scenes to minimize the long-range impact of COVID19. Chief among our concerns are supporting our health care professionals and facilities who are dealing with this pandemic and protecting our most vulnerable populations.

We are frustrated that there is not more we can do in the face of this emergency. The truth is that recovering from this pandemic relies more on the actions of the public than it does from the actions taken by your elected officials and emergency responders. By staying home and staying healthy you are doing your part. The increasing number of cases should be a concern but they should not create panic. We have handled weather emergencies and terrorist emergencies in the past and we have gotten through them through the cooperation and resiliency of our friends and neighbors. This emergency is no different. We are counting on you to do your part. Stay home.