March 16, 2020

NEWS FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

SCRANTON, PA – During this public health crisis, Mayor Cognetti urges residents to heed the warnings of the medical community and implement best practices for social distancing. The City of Scranton remains in a State of Emergency, with police, fire and public works operating to protect the safety and health of Scranton residents.

Earlier today, Governor Wolf announced measures to help stop the spread of COVID-19, including ceasing non-essential government operations and recommending businesses do the same. A list of the types of businesses the PA Department of Health recommends cease operations can be found here.

Additionally, the Governor ordered all restaurants and bars to close their dine-in facilities effective Tuesday, March 17 for 14 days. Businesses that offer carry-out, delivery, and drive-through food and beverage service may continue to do so, but eating and drinking inside restaurants and bars is temporarily prohibited.

Mayor Cognetti will hold a press conference on the City Hall steps on Tuesday, March 17 at 2 p.m. to provide updates regarding City services and resources available to residents (see below for resources already available).

Please continue to check our FB page, Mayor of Scranton or visit our website, www.scrantonpa.gov for updates.

Stay informed, stay healthy, stay calm.

<u>Conducting Government Business</u>

- Treasury Department Business will be conducted online. Visit http://scrantonpa.gov/treasury.html for information on Delinquent Refuse Information and Delinquent Real Estate Tax Information.
- Licensing, Inspections, and Permits business can be conducted online at http://scrantonpa.gov/lips.html. Scranton Police Department Headquarters 100 South Washington Ave shall serve as the temporary location for pick up and drop off of all Licensing, Inspections, and Permits business. Please coordinate with Director Tom Oleski before going to pick up or drop off permits.
- There is a new remote method for City service requests and questions: scranton311@scrantonpa.gov
- Single Tax Office – Tax information is as follows:
    - In-person at 123 Wyoming Ave
        - Cash only will be accepted in the tax office

- ▪ Checks can be mailed or dropped off in a locked drop box inside the vestibule of the Lackawanna County Government Center
- ▪ Receipts will be mailed and cancelled checks can serve as a receipt
  - ○ Payments can be made online to www.ScrantonTaxOffice.org.
    - ▪ Click on "Make A Payment" on the menu bar.
- City Council Meetings – *pending guidance from President Bill Gaughan*

Information on Closures

- Governor Wolf has announced COVID-19 mitigation efforts will extend to the entire Commonwealth of Pennsylvania starting at midnight March 16, 2020. Governor Tom Wolf today ordered all restaurants and bars to close their dine-in facilities effective Tuesday, March 17 for 14 days to help stop the spread of COVID-19. Businesses that offer carry-out, delivery, and drive-through food and beverage service may continue to do so, but eating and drinking inside restaurants and bars is temporarily prohibited.
  - ○ Guidance for business owners here
- Scranton School District https://www.scrsd.org/
- City Parks will remain open, and as of this afternoon, yellow caution tape is surrounding the playground equipment at City of Scranton Parks. Unfortunately, this is a necessary step to mitigate the spread of COVID-19 in our neighborhoods. Please remain off the playground equipment.

COVID-19 Resources

- If you are experiencing symptoms you think may be related to Coronavirus [COVID-19], please call your primary care physician, who can advise proper treatment and, if necessary, recommend further testing. You can also call **1-877-PA-HEALTH** or **Geisinger's Nurse Triage Line at 570-284-3657** with questions about symptoms or the need for further evaluation or testing.
- If you, or someone you care about, are feeling overwhelmed or anxious, call the **Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration's Disaster Distress Helpline** at **1-800-985-5590** or **NAMI Keystone Pennsylvania's HelpLine** at **1-888-264-7972**. Residents can also text PA to 741741 for mental health assistance.

Additional Resources

- **Northeast PA HelpLine** for social services: Dial 211 or go to http://www.helpline-nepa.info/
- **Keystone Mission and the Weinberg Food Bank (CEO) have partnered together to offer the Emergency Food Assistance.** The program will provide emergency bags of food for families, individuals, or seniors in the community who are in need and have been directly impacted by the COVID-19 crisis. Examples may be loss of a job, unable to work and provide for family, or those who are unable to support themselves or their families.

More information is available at
https://www.keystonemission.org/emergencyfoodassistance/

- **PA American Water** has placed a moratorium and discontinued service shutoffs at this time and will restore service to previously shut-off customers. All of Pennsylvania American Water's drinking water treatment barriers provide protection from coronavirus (COVID-19). Pennsylvania American Water's drinking water is not affected by the coronavirus (COVID-19). https://amwater.com/paaw/
- On March 13, **Comcast** announced taking steps to implement the following new policies for the next 60 days, and other important initiatives: Internet Essentials Free to New Customers, Xfinity WiFi Free For Everyone, and No Disconnects or Late Fees. https://corporate.comcast.com/
- Residents will receive an invitation to respond to the **2020 Census** in the mail. It's never been easier to respond on your own, whether online, over the phone, or by mail—all without having to meet a census taker. Residents can respond online now at https://my2020census.gov/.
- Prepare for **Pennsylvania's Primary Election** by registering to vote and applying for a mail in ballot online at www.votespa.com.