

March 23, 2020

By the time you read this, it may be out of date. Events in Oregon, indeed, across this country, are moving at what passes for light speed.

The Governor's latest order, closing all non-essential businesses, prohibiting group gatherings and mandating social distancing is drastic, yet necessary. As we saw this weekend at the Oregon Coast, for example, we did not do a good job of policing ourselves with regard to protecting each other. I would like to think that we in Forest Grove are better than that. We are concerned not only about our health and well-being, but also that of our neighbors. And if the occasional scofflaw decides that the norms don't apply to he or she, then we need to get their attention.

I ask that you please follow the guidelines laid down in the Executive Order. It will be inconvenient; make no mistake. But, it will also keep COVID-19 from spreading, and very well could save lives. This life saving action is not nearly as dramatic as rescuing the damsel in distress from the oncoming train, but it is no less important.

A synopsis of the Order says that the following types of businesses will be required to close: gyms, sports and fitness centers, health clubs and exercise studios; barbershops, beauty and nail salons, and non-medical wellness spas, and entertainment facilities, such as theaters, amusement parks, bowling lanes, arcades and pool halls.

Other retail businesses will be able to operate if they can implement strict social distancing measures and designate an employee or officer charged with ensuring compliance. In addition, a retail business that is able to adapt to take-out style shopping experiences may also remain open. Non-retail businesses such as manufacturers and the construction industry must ensure their employees maintain social distancing measures.

In Forest Grove, we will keep parks open, but playground equipment shall not be used. If social distancing cannot be maintained in our parks, they too will close.

All of this is in effect and will remain in effect until ended by the Governor.

This is a difficult time. We can choose two paths. One, complain about the 'overreach' of government and try to find loopholes around the Governor's action, or, two, we can, as they say, 'put our big person pants on', and work together to move through this crisis.

We are truly in this together. Some of us are impacted more than others. How we help each other through this will be the measure of our legacy.