



Contact: Public Information Officer Eileen Krauth  
ELBERT COUNTY GOVERNMENT  
Phone: (720) 614-8570  
Email: [PIO@elbertcounty-co.gov](mailto:PIO@elbertcounty-co.gov)  
Twitter: @ElbertCoPIO  
215 Comanche Street  
Post Office Box 7  
Kiowa, CO 80117

## Press Release – For Immediate Release

### A Message from the Elbert County Board of County Commissioners Regarding COVID-19

**Kiowa, CO, March 25, 2020:** At their regular meeting this morning, Elbert County Commissioners Chris Richardson, Grant Thayer and Rick Pettitt issued the following statement regarding the County's response to the COVID-19 pandemic:

We could not be more proud of our employees and our citizens during these uncertain times. Responsible and respectful behavior has been the rule rather than the exception. Voluntary social distancing is protecting our population and we have not identified any new cases of COVID-19 in over a week.

The coordination and cooperation between the offices and agencies of the county and other local governments has been tremendous.

Many other counties have issued "shelter in place" orders. We will make our decisions based on what is best for our citizens and on the facts available to us, not because of decisions others have made in their localities. The first and foremost role of government is to safeguard our citizens' rights. Our statutory responsibility is to provide public services. We will not make decisions for our citizens. We trust you to continue doing what is right for yourselves, your families, and your neighbors.

Ours is a very large County and our population density varies greatly from small towns and subdivisions to large ranches. At this time no action beyond those currently directed by the state is planned. If some local county directive becomes necessary, any actions we request in terms of protecting public health will be the least restrictive and most geographically focused. Any such actions will also respect individual rights and most likely be advisory in nature. We believe that with the right information and advice, citizens will make good decisions for themselves.

We recognize that many individuals and businesses are suffering great economic distress. We urge our citizens to continue to do what they can to support our local merchants and service providers. Most businesses have given much to our communities in good economic times and they deserve our support.

The county has taken steps to provide some relief in terms of timing of property tax payments and, though we have temporarily halted walk-in services at our county buildings, most administrative services are still available via phone, internet or drive-

through. Meetings will be streamed online starting today, and we are making every effort to keep all citizens up to date with useful information.

Emergency essential services such as Public Health, Emergency Management, Law Enforcement, Road Maintenance and Snow Removal, Victims' Assistance, Child and Adult Protective Services and others will continue.

If you need assistance, do not hesitate to reach out to us for help. Many local non-profits and citizens groups are ready to help their neighbors and we will work to put you in touch with them.

In closing, we again thank our citizens and employees for their grace, patience, and willingness to go the extra mile for the good of all in Elbert County. It is an honor to serve you all.

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Elbert County is located approximately 30 miles southeast of Denver and is home to over 26,000 residents. We are a unique mix of suburban bedroom communities and rural agricultural areas. The county provides essential statutory services and supportive infrastructure to our citizens in a professional, respectful, and cost-effective manner while creating a working environment that supports their endeavors, western lifestyle and rights as individuals. We strive to be viewed by our citizens and employees as the best place to live, work, and conduct business in Colorado; led in a responsive, effective, transparent, and professional manner.

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