



**MAYOR BYRON W. BROWN**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

March 16, 2020

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**MAYOR BROWN ANNOUNCES ALL MUNICIPAL BUILDINGS WILL  
BE CLOSED TO THE PUBLIC STARTING TONIGHT AT 8:00 PM  
AND WILL REDUCE MUNICIPAL WORKFORCE BY 50 PERCENT  
TO PREVENT SPREAD OF COVID-19**

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Buffalo, NY – Today, Mayor Byron W. Brown, joined by Council President Darius Pridgen, Buffalo Public Schools Superintendent Dr. Kriner Cash, Buffalo Fire Commissioner William Renaldo, Buffalo Police Commissioner Byron Lockwood, Deputy Commissioners Joe Gramaglia and Barbara Lark, Public Works Commissioner Michael Finn, BMHA Executive Director Gillian Brown, and Buffalo Sewer General Manager OJ McFoy announced all municipal buildings, including City Hall, will be closed to the public starting tonight at 8pm and will reduce the local government workforce by 50%. Non-essential personnel should not report to work.

“In order to prevent the spread of this disease I am closing all municipal buildings to the public starting tonight at 8pm,” said Mayor Brown. “This will help City departments and partnering agencies continue to do what is necessary to maintain public health and safety, while still providing critical services. In addition to these closures we will also reduce our reporting workforce by 50%. This applies to all Agencies, Authorities, and Departments, except for essential personnel. This situation is dynamic and rapidly evolving, but my Administration is ready to respond.”

There are 950 confirmed Coronavirus cases in New York State, with 7 deaths statewide. There are 7 individuals who have tested positive for COVID-19 in Erie County, 2 of whom are in the City of Buffalo.

To reduce the risk of community spread of the virus, Mayor Brown announced the following, (all postponements and cancelations are until further notice):

- The City is complying with the Governor’s request to reduce our reporting local Government workforce by 50%;
- All municipal buildings, including City Hall, will be closed to the general public beginning at 8pm tonight;
- City Court will close at 5pm until further notice, however arraignments, warrant returns and other emergency matters will continue to be conducted at the County Court Building Part 27, at 25 Delaware Avenue ([www.nycourts.gov](http://www.nycourts.gov));
- Traffic court cases are adjourned and anyone with a scheduled court appearance should call 311 for further information;

- The Broadway Market's year round, full-time, permanent tenants will remain open to provide essential services, below are additional guidelines relating to Easter operations and other vendor activities:
  - The Broadway Market will keep regular hours, Monday through Saturday 8:00am – 5:00pm
  - Save-A-Lot is open Monday through Sunday 8:00am – 7:00pm
  - The Broadway Market's restaurants will only be open for take-out meals only. No congregant dining will be allowed anywhere in the Broadway Market
  - Saturday-only vendors will be closed effective this Saturday 3/21
  - This weekend's Sneak Peek canceled (3/21 and 3/22)
  - The Broadway Market's Easter Ribbon Cutting, scheduled for March 26th, is canceled
  - Easter-only vendors will not be open, however, permanent Broadway Market tenants will be open for food essentials;
- All City-owned and operated senior centers (Richmond-Summer, Autumnwood and Broadway Market) will be closed. Seniors who receive meals at these locations will still be able to receive a meal by calling 311;
- All City-owned Community Centers (Tosh Collins, Lincoln, Machnica, Hennepin, JFK and Schiller Park) will be closed;
- The Cazenovia, Marcy and Martin Luther King, Jr. Park casinos are closed;
- All City and Olmsted park events and facilities are closed; ( [bfloparks.org](http://bfloparks.org) )
  - The parks remain open for passive uses. Playgrounds remain open and as standard will be routinely inspected along with park seating, play equipment or furnishings. Park users are asked to observe proper hygiene, and to take appropriate precautions with wipes, hand sanitizer, social distancing, etc.
  - All public park facilities and buildings including restrooms, concessions, etc. will be closed immediately through the end of March. A reassessment of facility access and room rentals will be made by April 1st. As part of the Governor's requirement for restaurant closures the Terrace restaurant and banquet facilities at the Marcy Casino are suspended until further notice
  - Only Olmsted Conservancy and City of Buffalo personnel will be allowed in Olmsted Parks buildings as necessary. Any current facility renters for the remainder of March should contact the Conservancy for steps on reimbursement or rescheduling (contact information in the link above)
  - To increase sanitary measures in the parks, there will be no portable toilets available until further notice
  - Trash and garbage collection in the parks will continue as normal, however as a measure to reduce risks to park workers, patrons are asked to dispose of trash in totes found along park roads and trails, or if trash is brought in, to please take it back out with you and dispose of it at home. Per City ordinance, please keep pets on a leash and remove/dispose of all pet excrement in proper receptacles
  - Golf, sports and major park events, festivals or gatherings (over 50 people) in the parks are not allowed and access will be reassessed after April 1st
  - Golf is currently slated to be opened for the season on April 25th and turf preparations will proceed. Season passes may be purchased by calling the Conservancy at 838-1249, any modifications to retail operations will be updated on April 1st. Public schools, sports clubs and leagues will be notified after April 1st regarding any further decisions for access to park fields or scheduling
  - The public should call 311 or the Conservancy to notify the City of any hazards in the parks or trees with damaged limbs near pathways or roads;
- Enforcement of the School Speed Zone camera program was suspended effective last Friday and police traffic details in school zones have been suspended;
- All youth activities provided by the Buffalo Police Athletic League are canceled ([www.BuffaloPAL.com](http://www.BuffaloPAL.com));
- All Winter Parking regulations are now lifted;

- Water shut-offs are suspended at this time ( [buffalowater.org](http://buffalowater.org) );
- Late fees or interest on accounts including Tax, Sewer, Water, User Fee, Parking, Traffic, and other departmental citations will be suspended as of tomorrow, March 17th;
- The City will refund all special event fees or deposits made for public-permitted events which have been canceled;
- Mayor Byron W. Brown's Civic Innovation Challenge, which was launched last week, has been postponed;
- The Buffalo Employment and Training Center's March 26th Spring Job Fair is canceled ([workforcebuffalo.org](http://workforcebuffalo.org) );
- Any Buffalo Traffic Court matters currently scheduled for trial or conference will be automatically adjourned to a later date and no additional fees or penalties will be assessed for these automatic adjournments;
- The City's indoor pools and ice rinks are closed.

While there have been only 7 confirmed cases of the coronavirus in Erie County, Mayor Brown reinforced that public health officials at the county, state and national have concluded that the best way to contain any potential spread of COVID-19 is to limit large gatherings and practice social distancing.

City residents should continue to exercise basic precautions while going about their lives, including: regular and proper handwashing, use alcohol-based hand sanitizer, and cover your nose and mouth when coughing or sneezing.

To ensure City residents have the facts and resources they need to protect themselves from COVID-19, the City posted a number of links to health information at [www.buffalony.gov](http://www.buffalony.gov).

For more information about COVID-19, including symptoms of the Coronavirus, visit the Erie County Health Department website at [www.erie.gov/health](http://www.erie.gov/health) or call the State Department of Health hotline at 1-888-364-3065.

Food Service for Buffalo Public Schools is scheduled to begin as early as Tuesday at Community School sites. Please visit [buffaloschools.org](http://buffaloschools.org) for updates of locations and times.

Be counted. Census information has or is arriving in your mailboxes. It is critically important that every resident is counted so we get our fair share of federal funding. Go to [2020Census.gov](http://2020Census.gov) to fill out your form

For further assistance, please call 3-1-1. Use BuffAlert to stay informed on important information like emergencies and cancellations. **You can sign up by texting Join BUFFALERT to 30890.**

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