



# News Release

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For Immediate Release

## **Mayor of Altus Issues Emergency Order on Wearing Protective Masks**

*Order aims to protect the public from COVID-19 and avoid further harm to Altus businesses*

**Altus, OK— July 15, 2020** — Mayor Jack Smiley of Altus, Oklahoma issued an Emergency Order requiring the public to wear of protective face coverings in all public locations inside Altus city limits beginning today. The Emergency Order issued by Mayor Smiley requires Altus citizens, residents, and visitors to wear face coverings in public locations, including: “retail stores, restaurants, bars, houses of worship and any other businesses serving the public” throughout Altus city limits. The Mayor’s Emergency Order also limits bar capacity in Altus to 25% and mandates that bars to close by 10 p.m. Capacity inside Altus restaurants was also limited to 50% in order to help contain the spread of COVID-19.

There has been a significant increase in positive cases of COVID-19 in Altus and throughout the surrounding area of Southwest Oklahoma, including back-to-back days with the largest single day increases of confirmed COVID-19 infections in Jackson County. For this reason, the Mayor took this bold step in order to contain the spread of the virus and to protect the citizens, residents, and visitors of our city.

The Mayor also acted decisively in hopes that acting now could help our community “avoid being forced to return to more drastic actions that could negatively affect local business”. Keeping businesses open and avoiding other ramifications of another potential shutdown while keeping the public safe is the Mayor’s priority.

Regarding the wearing of face coverings, the United States Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, along with other state and local health authorities in Oklahoma and throughout Jackson County have strongly encouraged people to wear face coverings in public and have stated that this simple act would be highly effective in limiting the spread of the COVID-19 virus.

The Mayor’s Emergency Order follows this guidance and further guidance from the President Donald J. Trump’s Coronavirus Task Force. In an interview on Sunday, July 12, 2020, this was confirmed by Admiral Brett Giroir, the Assistant Secretary of Health and member of the President’s Task Force. Admiral Giroir stated that government and taskforce “models really show that if you close down bars where there's a lot of transmission, if you decrease restaurant capacity to about 50%, that you really strictly physically distance and really, everybody, if you're out in public, we have to have about 95% mask wearing or face coverings. If we do just those simple things, we can bring that R value, that transmissibility value down to below one, which

means it goes away.” Admiral Giroir further stated: “So, I think we need to be very selective. Sure, if we shut everything down again, that would do it, but we don't need to. And, remember, there's a tremendous health cost to shutting down. Mental, emotional, substance use, but also no cancer screenings, no vaccines, all those other things. So, let's do what we know really works. Like I said, avoid bars because they really do spread. Restaurant capacity down 50%. Hand hygiene. And please wear a mask in public. That is really, really, really important. We've got to have 90 or 95% adherence to that, and we could achieve the same results.”

A Special Meeting of the Altus City Council has been called for 6 p.m. on Thursday, July 16, 2020 to allow the Council to further address this important issue.

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