



MESSAGE FROM THE MAYOR

May 9, 2020

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To the Citizens and Businesses of Solvang:

Well folks, I am very hopeful that the time is here: the City of Solvang (www.CityofSolvang.com) is in the very beginning stages of recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic.

As was discussed during the last Regular Meeting of the [Solvang City Council](#) (April 27, 2020), we did, as a Council, send a letter to the Governor in the hopes of starting a real-time discussion around how the Council sees the challenges more relative to *our* community today, as well as what we will need during the recovery process. I sent this letter earlier this week, in an attempt to reinforce the State's acknowledgement that progress through the four Stages of re-opening should be determined at very local levels.

As I witness the continued impacts of COVID-19 on Solvang, I recognize the increasing need of our residents to obtain necessities. I spoke with non-profit and Church representatives this week, and I am deeply saddened to learn that our community's need for food provided by these organizations has tripled since the beginning of this pandemic. I am very thankful to all of the donors, volunteers and leaders of our community for relentlessly working to ensure that we provide for our residents.

My letter to the Governor, and County, urges action to carefully and safely – but, promptly – begin to re-open our economy. The Santa Ynez Valley region only has eight (8) confirmed cases of COVID-19, to date. We want to do this prudently, but we need to ensure that Solvang businesses can re-open and that our workforce can get back to, well, *work*. My plan outlined in the letter speaks to the fact that Solvang is prepared to work with businesses and our community to modify regulations and space requirements to accommodate a phased approach to re-opening and still maintaining modified social distancing.

On Thursday, the Governor announced new re-opening guidelines. I am pleased to hear that certain restrictions have been eased to allow specific retail businesses to open for curbside pick-up. However, I remain concerned about the fact that there is no clear path right now, which our County will be able to adopt as a plan for further re-opening. These are some of the topics which the Council will be discussing on **Monday, May 11, at 6:30 PM**, during our next [Regular Meeting of the Solvang City Council](#).

As many of you know, Santa Barbara County will be following a similar re-opening plan to that of San Luis Obispo County. As you may also know, on Thursday (May 7, 2020), California Governor Gavin Newsom updated the State's "Resilience Roadmap" ([covid19.ca.gov/roadmap](https://www.covid19.ca.gov/roadmap)), allowing certain California locales and businesses to progress to Stage 2 of our phased, State-wide re-opening. Under Stage 2, lower-risk workplaces may gradually re-open – while adhering to COVID guidelines and modifications to service – such as certain retail, albeit with curbside pick-up *only*. The manufacturing and logistics sectors which back up a good portion of that retail, may also re-open with COVID modifications.

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All of this said, Santa Barbara County is behind in meeting the Regional Variance Criteria which is needed to more quickly progress towards the second part of Stage 2. Much of this is, unfortunately, due to the COVID-19 outbreak in the Lompoc prison, which inflates the total number of cases for our County. The Criteria is portioned into four sections: Epidemiologic stability, Testing capacity, Protection of Stage 1 essential workers, and Containment capacity. The County will need to be certified to re-open and as of now, the new guidelines do affect Santa Barbara's ability to certify for re-opening. As of Thursday, modifications to the guidelines for County self-certifications, cannot currently be met by Santa Barbara County.

If you are a Solvang business, here is what you should know about the Governor's ordered modifications:

As of yesterday, May 8, 2020, a portion of Solvang's retail is allowed to re-open – again, *with curbside pick-up and delivery only*, until further notice. Bookstores, jewelry stores, toy stores, clothing boutiques, shoe stores, home and furnishings shops, sporting goods stores, antique stores, music stores, and florists, may now re-open. However, higher-risk businesses like hair salons and gyms, offices and dine-in restaurants, will not be allowed to re-open until later in the phased plan.

While these types of businesses will need to immediately adapt practices to reduce the risk of further spread of infection, we urge *other* Solvang businesses to also start the gear-up process behind-the-scenes, for when Stage 2 progresses at a County level and they are also able to re-open.

The three main points which the State is suggesting, as far as business planning for future re-openings, are: 1) Plan and prepare for re-opening; 2) Make radical changes within the workplace; and, 3) Adjust practices by employees and help educate customers. The CA.gov website has information about which businesses may re-open *when*, suggested protocols for re-opening, and further clarification by industry sector. Please take the time to review this information, as might pertain to your own businesses: [covid19.ca.gov/roadmap](https://www.covid19.ca.gov/roadmap)

On a State level, once these modifications are advanced and [the State's six indicators](#) signal that California has made enough progress towards completing that check-list, Stage 2 will advance to the relaxing of retail restrictions and to the reopening and adaption process of additional business sectors – like schools, child care, offices, personal services, and limited hospitality. It is important to note, that due to the gradual nature of Stage 2 as it is currently outlined, some California communities will move through this Stage at a faster pace than others, if they show greater progress towards all of the required public health indicators. All Counties will need to abide by [the County variance](#) guidelines and criteria.

We hope that you can join us (virtually) for Monday night's [City Council](#) meeting, May 11, 2020. All Regular Meetings of the Solvang City Council may be viewed via live stream, on the City's YouTube channel: www.youtube.com/channel/UC15ThpbeQv6NkgYrup61SfA.

Instructions for remote Council meeting participation are located here: www.cityofsolvang.com/AgendaCenter/ViewFile/Agenda/03302020-509. Once again, **we welcome public comment in advance of the meeting, for presentation during the session.** While we have not had many public comments submitted to us since the beginning of the shelter-at-home orders, we still see public feedback circulate post-Council meetings. Please, if you have a comment or questions of any sort, submit it to the Council prior to the meetings so that we may address the issue before it leads to the spread of misinformation.

As we travel through this once again, unprecedented time of re-opening Solvang, we hope that everyone can respect each other's thoughts, public comments, and their personal choices as relate to the COVID-19 orders and restrictions. We are still a community. We are all struggling to navigate what will be our "new normal", while helping to take care of this community.

As we have mentioned in prior communications, our Solvang Resources website (www.SolvangResources.com) is continually being updated with lists of emergency food distribution services, Solvang businesses which are open in some capacity, financial resources for unemployment

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information or emergency loan programs, and more community resources. ***We have a number of food distribution programs in the Santa Ynez Valley, and we encourage the community to either donate goods, money or volunteered time to these services – they are working tirelessly to keep our community fed during this extremely trying time.***

Be well and be kind to each other,

Solvang Mayor Ryan Toussaint