

COVID-19 Update - March 30, 2020

Hi all-

Happy Monday!

COVID-19 Tracker is Live! We've updated our website to include a daily tracker to keep everyone updated on tests, test results, and areas under quarantine. The website will be updated at least daily. While not "real-time," we're hopeful it will be up-to-date enough to help combat rumors. The website can be found by clicking [here](#) and then clicking on the "COVID-19 Tracking" dropdown. While the website says we have 12 tests with 10 negative results, I can break a little more positive news. We just got one of the tests back and it was also NEGATIVE.

Limited Video Visitation: Limited video visitation will be rolling out in our facilities on Thursday of this week. This new feature will provide another avenue for our population in custody to maintain connections with their loved ones. And it can't come at a more crucial time. It's going to be a new feature for them – and for us. That means we're going to have a learning curve with what works and what doesn't. The important thing when approaching anything new like this is that we don't blow by the good it provides by focusing exclusively on how a small percentage may try to take advantage of it. Some people will use it inappropriately, and when they do, we'll deal with it. Our hope is this tool can be expanded as we are able to increase our bandwidth with highspeed broadband. Which leads me to the next item. . .

Highspeed Broadband: I really show my technological ignorance when I try to talk about these things, so just trust me when I say people a lot smarter than me have been working the last couple weeks to increase our technological capabilities at our facilities and worksites. Randy Turner and the IT crew, along with Christine Starr, have engaged the Department of Commerce and the state's Broadband Taskforce to upgrade the infrastructure (fiber optic cables) at our facilities to increase bandwidth. This will open the door to expanded opportunities for video conferencing, cloud-based services, distance learning and video calls/visitation.

P&P Update: It isn't lost on me how many people's jobs have changed in the past few weeks. P&P certainly hasn't been immune. In fact, their world has changed significantly. P&P Districts are working in teams to minimize the number of people in the office at any given time and provide greater ability to isolate and contain should a staff member be exposed or test positive for COVID-19. The operating environment has changed so significantly, and the need for their services has grown exponentially. It was a struggle helping to connect the supervised population to needed resources a month ago. Now, at a time when public health authorities are encouraging social distancing and isolation, that same population is experiencing insecurities in housing, employment, food, and treatment like never before. I couldn't be prouder of our staff who are working the phones, reaching out to their caseloads, and using this time to provide crucial support to people so desperately in need. Thank you!

It's going to be a busy week, so plenty more to come. Stay safe, take care of yourself, and keep looking out for each other!

Thanks-
Josh

