

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Lee Commissioners vote to support local food security organizations and continue COVID-19 recovery efforts

Fort Myers, FL, June 2, 2020 – The Lee Board of County Commissioners on Tuesday voted to approve a plan to allocate \$3 million of federal funds from the CARES Act to support local food security organizations and to continue phasing in operations previously suspended due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The \$3 million allocated to food security organizations benefitting citizens in need includes:

- \$1.55 million to the Harry Chapin Food Bank of Southwest Florida
- \$425,000 to the Midwest Food Bank
- \$225,000 to Community Cooperative
- \$500,000 to Lee County food pantries through \$5,000 individual grants
- \$300,000 to reserves.

In addition, programs utilizing funds from the federal Coronavirus Aid, Relief and Economic Security (CARES) Act have resulted in:

- 13,871 applications started for Individual Assistance, which includes payments directly to utility companies, landlords and mortgage companies. 4,923 applications have been completed.
- 4,576 applications for the Business Relaunch Program
- More than 1,000 kits of Personal Protective Equipment, including masks, gloves and hand sanitizer set to go to businesses with fewer than 25 employees. This includes more than 250,000 masks, 500,000 gloves and more than 5,000 gallons of hand sanitizer
- United Way partner agencies establishing childcare scholarship programs

Visit www.LeeFLCares.com.

Transit

LeeTran will adjust service beginning Friday, June 5:

- Bus service running from Monday through Saturday will follow a typical Saturday service schedule.
- Service on Sundays will run on a Sunday schedule. Routes that do not have Sunday schedules will not run on Sundays.
- Routes 80 and 160 will remain out of service until further notice. The service changes are part of the county's phased approach to reopening businesses and services in Lee County.

LeeTran bus services were initially reduced due to declines in ridership and staffing during the Governor's Safer At Home Order. Ridership has increased as the Safer at Home Order has been relaxed and LeeTran is increasing services throughout the county to meet demand.

Also beginning Friday, LeeTran will reopen its lobby from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday through Friday at 3401 Metro Parkway, Fort Myers. However, the application process for ADA Passport will remain an over-the-phone-only service until further notice; call 239-533-0300.

Riders can access schedules for each active route at www.leegov.com/leetrans/how-to-ride/maps-schedules. To follow service-related updates, visit www.RideLeeTran.com. Riders are asked to follow CDC guidelines and use rear entry to buses.

Libraries

The Lee County Library System will open additional locations on June 15 and will begin operating at 50% capacity.

Branches currently open include:

- Cape Coral Lee County Library
- East County Regional Library
- Fort Myers Regional Library
- Northwest Regional Library
- South County Regional Library

Opening June 15 are:

- Bonita Springs Public Library
- Lakes Regional Library
- North Fort Myers Public Library

All hours are 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. Monday to Wednesday and 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Thursday to Saturday. Curbside pickup will continue at all locations.

Signage is posted for following CDC guidelines and are marked to indicate spacing for social distancing. Plexiglass shields are installed at all public service desks, and hand sanitizer and wipes will be provided to the public. The county has removed some furniture to encourage patrons to keep visits brief so that more patrons can enjoy the libraries.

Computer use is limited to one hour per person per day. Play items in the youth areas have been removed, as has gaming equipment in the teen areas. Study rooms and meeting rooms are not open at this time. Patrons are encouraged to sign up for the Imagine Your Story Virtual Summer Reading Program.

Parks & Recreation

Lee County Parks & Recreation has requested that youth sports leagues submit safety plans for resuming play; 31 plans have been submitted and approved to date. Practices are resuming this week.

Registration for the remaining spots at summer camps reopened Monday. All camps will be operated at a ratio of 9 campers per 1 staff member.

Recreation centers remain closed at this time; they will be used for summer camp, which begins June 15. All other parks facilities, sites and preserves are open. Pools are operating at reduced capacity for fitness only.

Information

For future updates and further information, visit www.leegov.com/covid-19.