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Media contact: Betsy Clayton, APR/CPRC  
Communications Director  
Lee County Government  
239-826-4606  
bclayton@leegov.com

**Lee County grants permission for restaurants desiring outdoor seating**

Fort Myers, FL, May 1, 2020 – Lee County Manager Roger Desjarlais today, May 1, signed an Order providing a temporary policy for additional outdoor seating at restaurants so business owners can expand outdoor seating while maintaining Centers for Disease Control social distancing, as outlined in the recent executive order from Gov. Ron DeSantis.

Gov. Ron DeSantis' April 29 Executive Order adopted the recommendations in his Phase 1 plan published by his Task Force to Re-Open Florida, establishing outdoor seating area guidelines for restaurants. These include a requirement for social distancing at outdoor tables of 6 feet. The Order allows restaurants to reopen at 25% indoor capacity.

The Lee County Order allows restaurants to place seating in areas not previously allowed, such as a business' parking lot. At the point in time when the governor allows restaurants to operate at 100% capacity, the Lee County Order will remain in place for five additional calendar days.

"Understanding that public health, safety and welfare remains critical during this pandemic, Lee County's goal is to help facilitate the restarting of our economy," Desjarlais said. "We know how crucial it is for people who are currently unemployed to get back to work."

Desjarlais signed the Order under his authority within the Board of County Commissioners' State of Local Emergency. All temporary additional outdoor seating must satisfy criteria that are listed in the Order.

The order will be posted at [www.leegov.com/covid-19](http://www.leegov.com/covid-19) under the "documents and resolutions" section, or <https://www.leegov.com/covid-19/documents>.