FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

ACADIANA LEADERS SEND EASTER MESSAGE

[Lafayette, Louisiana, April 8, 2020]

EASTER MESSAGE AND JOINT STATEMENT OF CEO AND APC BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

“The Acadiana Planning Commission strongly recognizes and appreciates that our region proudly proclaims its Christian values, beliefs, and traditions. Indeed, we are about to celebrate perhaps the most cherished holiday for Christians. Our celebration embraces both secular and non-secular activities which we hold dear. These include events such as family and neighborhood gatherings commencing on Good Friday, Easter Egg hunts throughout the weekend, and attendance at beautiful and invigorating worship services on Sunday.

Unfortunately, this year our world is much different because of the COVID-19 pandemic. As we see this virus began to spread in our rural communities at an alarming rate, the Board of Directors for the Acadiana Planning Commission urges our residents to resist engaging in the gatherings and activities to which we have grown accustomed at this time of year. We must continue to practice social distancing, limit our gatherings to only those in our household, and adhere to all of the other measures which have been imposed in order to stymie the spread of COVID-19.

We at the Acadiana Planning Commission are certain that life will be back to normal in the near future. We are confident that next year we will be able to celebrate Easter as we have grown accustomed to except that we will undoubtedly savor our opportunity to enjoy our family, friends, and to worship at our chosen churches.

Stay safe, and happy Easter to all.”

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Lafayette, LA. – On March 16, 2020, the Acadiana Planning Commission (APC) organized a COVID19 Recovery Support Network for local leaders to collaborate and mitigate the impacts of the coronavirus outbreak in Acadiana. Bi-weekly conference calls led by APC Chairman and President of Iberia Parish Government M. Larry Richard have provided the platform by which information is shared, resources are leveraged, and common issues are identified. The conference calls are attended by Parish Presidents, Police Jury Presidents, Mayors, regional OEP representatives, representatives from Governor Edwards office, congressional staffers and representatives from the Office of Public Health Region 4.

“The impacts of COVID19 are especially challenging for our rural communities,” said Parish President Richard. “We are being advised that a rural surge in Covid-19 cases is expected.”

According to the American Community Survey, rural Acadiana is home to a large elderly population, constituting 20% of residents over the age of 60. This group is most vulnerable to COVID19. Discussions by the COVID19 Recovery Support Network have addressed the critical needs for social distancing including changing hours of operation for essential business and limiting the number of customers shopping at one time, small business recovery, the challenges to telemedicine and distance learning from a lack of access to sufficient broadband infrastructure in the rural areas, testing sites and screening resources.

Lafayette Consolidated Government is leveraging 311 as a regional screening resource. Mayor President Josh Guillory stated, “We are asking Lafayette citizens to dial 311 to be prescreened by a medical professional to determine if visiting the Cajundome screening site is necessary. Understanding the regional needs for screening, Acadiana’s citizens outside of Lafayette can reach 311 by calling 337-534-TEST (8378). The screening calls have been a critical part of the testing process and the flattening of the curve in Acadiana.”

The Department of Health has listed testing sites in Acadiana to address the needs expressed by the COVID19 Recovery Support Network.
**Regional Screening:** 337-534-TEST (8378)   **Lafayette Screening:** 311

- **Lafayette**  Cajundome, 444 Cajundome Blvd.
- **New Iberia**  North Lewis Elementary, 604 N. Lewis St.
- **Erath**  Delcambre Erath Rural Health Clinic, 220 North Road
- **Opelousas**  Opelousas General Health System
- **Crowley**  Crowley Cares Family Clinic, 576 North Avenue G
- **Mamou**  Savoy Medical Center, 801 Poinicina Ave.

The COVID19 Recovery Support Network has allowed a greater exchange of ideas among elected leaders who are trying to manage the impacts on their communities. Governments all across the nation are struggling to stay ahead of the curve. Acadiana leaders know the best way to lessen the impacts of Covid-19 is to share resources and best practices.

St. Martin Parish President and APC’s Vice Chairman, Chester Cedars emphasized, “It is challenging enough to deal with these situations on your own, my hope is that we can all learn from one another and move forward as a region throughout this long-term recovery effort.”

Curfews have been implemented across the Region by the parish leaders in an effort to maintain the safety of their residents:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Parish</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Acadia</td>
<td>Parish wide/Adults and Minors</td>
<td>9pm – 6am</td>
<td>4-2-20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evangeline</td>
<td>Ville Platte/Adults and Minors</td>
<td>9pm – 6am</td>
<td>3-30-20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Iberia</td>
<td>Parish wide/Adults and Minors</td>
<td>10pm-5am</td>
<td>4-1-20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lafayette</td>
<td>Unaccompanied Minors</td>
<td>8pm - 6am</td>
<td>3-16-20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St. Landry</td>
<td>Parish wide/Adults and Minors</td>
<td>9pm – 6pm</td>
<td>3-24-20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St. Martin</td>
<td>Parish wide/Adults and Minors</td>
<td>10pm – 5am</td>
<td>4-1-20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vermilion</td>
<td>Parish wide/Adults and Minors</td>
<td>9pm – 5am</td>
<td>3-23-20</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

All curfews exempt healthcare and essential workers

As a region the messaging is the same: **Stay Home!** Limit the number of essential trips; do not attend social gatherings; do not use essential places, such as grocery stores or home improvement stores, as a social outing; when in public wear a face mask; and wash your hands.

These precautions are especially important to Rural Acadiana.

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St. Martin Parish  
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APC Vice Chairman

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Mission Statement
The Acadiana Planning Commission serves the public sector with planning and implementation of Community, Economic, and Transportation Development throughout the Acadiana region.