

As Ocilla and all of Irwin County deals with the unprecedented circumstances surrounding the COVID-19 pandemic, we all have been forced to make changes to how we live our daily lives. As your city and county government leaders, we have allowed the guidance from the federal state governments stand as our guidance up to this point. With the confirmation of the first case of COVID-19 in Irwin County, we feel the need to make this joint statement reinforcing the directives of the President and our Governor, and to ask some specific actions of you in this difficult time.

The guidance from all authorities has been to limit group gatherings to a number less than 10 in any and all situations. With that in mind, we are asking that restaurant dining rooms and sitting areas be closed throughout Irwin County and that all churches discontinue services and prayer meetings. This is a temporary, but much needed, measure to prevent the rapid spread of this new virus that can severely harm members of our community. We understand that this request goes against much of our social and religious culture, and we hope to return to a normal state of gathering together as friends and family as soon as possible. It is only being asked of you after much deep and thoughtful discussion and consideration, and with the health and well-being of our citizens in mind.

While we have these measures in place, it is our plea that every one of you will find ways to support our community businesses and churches. This can be done by picking up food at the restaurants that will still be allowed to operate their kitchens and serve food for pick-up or delivery. You can be sure to support their messaging through social media so others in the community, and maybe in surrounding communities, will be aware that they are still open and need to be supported. Churches are encouraged to continue to function in worship and prayer, just with the necessary social distancing. Please support the local churches by viewing messages broadcast online and leaving encouraging comments. Be proactive about discovering and meeting the needs of our community members, continue to give tithes and offerings to support these necessary institutions of our community, so that they may continue to serve through this crisis and after it has passed.

We have seen trouble before, and after this situation has passed, we will likely see some again in the future. Each time, our community comes together, sets aside any differences, and helps each other through hard times. We are asking you to do that now, in these unique circumstances. We are asking that you make necessary sacrifices to help your neighbors by keeping social distance and protect us all from the spread of this new threat. We thank you in advance for your cooperation and your support of us as we will lead Ocilla and Irwin County through this unprecedented situation.



Mayor Matt Seale

City of Ocilla



Chairman Joey Whitley

Irwin County Commission