**JOINT NEWS RELEASE: Montgomery County, Town of Blacksburg, Town of Christiansburg**

**Parks and Recreation and Aquatics Extend Cancellations and Closures**

**March 25, 2020:** In order to protect the health and safety of our community and help reduce the spread of COVID-19 (coronavirus), the current closure of the Blacksburg Recreation Center, Blacksburg Aquatic Center, Christiansburg Recreation Center and Christiansburg Aquatic Center will be extended through April 30, 2020. This extended closure also complies with Gov. Ralph Northam’s statewide closure of non-essential businesses and recreation facilities.

* All Montgomery County Parks and Recreation, Blacksburg Parks and Recreation and Christiansburg Parks and Recreation community programs, fitness classes, senior programs and events will be canceled during this time.
* Youth and adult athletics will be delayed.
* All swim meets, swim lessons, events and fitness programs at the Blacksburg Aquatic Center and Christiansburg Aquatic Center will be canceled during this time.
* All rentals at Montgomery County, Town of Blacksburg or Town of Christiansburg facilities, athletic fields and shelters are canceled. We will not be accepting rental requests during this time.
* Parks and trails in all three localities will remain open, including the Huckleberry Trail, but we encourage residents to recreate at their own risk and to practice social distancing and good hygiene.
* Citizens who planned on attending events and programs hosted by the three localities that required pre-registration or participation fees will be notified of the cancellation and will receive either a credit to their household account or a refund if the event or program will not be rescheduled.

The Town of Blacksburg is disinfecting playground equipment weekly.

The Town Christiansburg is also disinfecting equipment on a weekly basis, resulting in temporary park closures during those operations.

* Circle Park – closed Thursdays, 1-4 p.m., for disinfecting
* Depot Park – closed Wednesdays, 8 a.m.-noon, for disinfecting
* Downtown Park – closed Tuesdays, 8 a.m.-noon, for disinfecting
* John Lemley Park – closed Fridays, 8 a.m.-noon, for disinfecting
* Kiwanis Park – closed Tuesdays, 1-4 p.m., for disinfecting
* Town and Country (Summit Ridge) Park – closed Thursdays, 8 a.m.-noon, for disinfecting
* Wall Street Park – closed Wednesday, 1-4 p.m., for disinfecting

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has flagged mental health as a top concern associated with the COVID-19 outbreak. It’s true that social distancing can take a toll on our mental health during these times. While our parks, playgrounds and trails provide an opportunity to clear our heads with physical activity and fresh air, there are a few common sense steps we can all take for a safer outdoor experience.

* Refrain from using parks or trails if you are exhibiting symptoms.
* Follow the CDC’s guidance on personal hygiene prior to and during use of park facilities.
* Adhere to the 10 person or less government mandate for social gatherings. This includes outdoor picnicking, sporting activities, and other group hangouts.
* Observe the CDC’s minimum recommended social distancing of 6 feet from other individuals at all times. If this is not possible, users should find an alternate location or depart that space.

Our goal is to keep parks, playgrounds, trails and other open spaces accessible as long as it is safe to do so.

If you think you have been exposed to COVID-19 and develop a fever and symptoms of respiratory illness, such as cough or difficulty breathing, call your healthcare provider or the Health Department immediately. Do not go to the emergency room until you have been advised to do so. The New River Health District has activated a local public health hotline at 540-267-8240.

The Montgomery County Public Health Task Force will provide updates as they become available via social media and online at [www.montva.com/coronavirus](https://urldefense.proofpoint.com/v2/url?u=http-3A__www.montva.com_coronavirus&d=DwMFAg&c=iAWSY1t9C8GWtZuj3vGmSIXn6mQB7nigR9AcmCl-a7o&r=Vpqc851H-zPP33IooL3BzmwgifXGWtO0VK25DnnqVcE&m=MCFqcDGuZL8q7EmY6nuQ3KE2P8pC9Bhx7o2oYUyqzFI&s=-cOmeyaUNE-7UR03bpLWl34QvMiGlfQ6I_XtspCVndM&e=).

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