

[THIS IS AN UNEDITED REALTIME TRANSCRIPT. I AM A NATIONALLY-CERTIFIED CLOSED CAPTIONER, BUT THIS IS NOT A CERTIFIED TRANSCRIPT, IT IS TO BE USED FOR INFORMATIONAL PURPOSES ONLY -- KATHY ROBSON]

>> JASON: I'm Jason Mahoney, Carbon County public health emergency coordinator. Serving as one of the incident commanders in the management team here.

>> RYAN: I'm Ryan Brajcich, a commercial lender at bank of red lock in red lock. Business owner on main street as well. Thank you for having me.

>> JASON: Appreciate you being here

>> RYAN: Thank you.

>> JASON: Couple of housekeeping items. If you have questions, can submit those in the comment section. And we'll do our best to answer some of those toward the end. 23 we can't answer them in the believe feed, we'll follow up afterward. The Facebook feed will be recorded, archived and available on the website later today, we'll get it up as soon as we can. Soon after we're done we will have a transcript of the event done by Kathy Robson. Look for that if that's something you're interested in as well. We'll move right in to some of our agenda items here. We'll talk a little bit about where we are as a state and County. We'll talk a little bit about reopening plans and the status there. And we'll go into what more local recovery group is doing. So, again this morning, all things considered, another really good day. We've only added two cases in

the state bringing our total up to 453. We have had 16 deaths which is unfortunate. But it's a small percentage of the number much cases we have. And we hope to keep that number as low as possible. On the upside, we have 392 patients throughout the state have recovered. And the folks that are still actively being treated in the hospital is down to five out of a total of 61 throughout the crisis. We are doing a great job, getting people the care they need, and we have a lot of folks recovering from this. We're really happy to see that. We thank the healthcare providers for the hard work they have been doing this to take care of these patients. Along the same lines, quick thank you to the residents of Carbon County and folks throughout the state that stepped up, worked with us on the stay at home orders, and the social distancing, all of those measures that we know are making a big difference. We say it all the time, I'll say it again, thank you for the great work there. Again, make that quick push for keeping up that good work. We're not done with this yet, we're moving into a phase where it's not how are we going to prevent this virus, it's how we're going to learn to live with it. There will be a new norm that we're going to return, to and we appreciate everyone's understanding and help as we negotiate this change. On the Carbon County side, then, of our six total positive cases, five of those patients are now recovered. We're hoping that that last patient, that sixth patient, is fully recovered very soon. The cases that we have had, to

give us an idea, it's not the cases we've seen are in any one area, they're relatively well spread out around the County. One in the Red Lodge area, three around Joliet as far as the commissioner's district around Bridger with two cases. Like we said, five recoveries, one remaining.

Moving on to the schools. All of the school boards in the County have met now, and they're all moving to -- maintaining the online learning that they have been doing throughout the end of this school year.

Fromberg has decided to do virtual learning for all of their students.

But they will reopen -- will open on a voluntary basis between May 7 and May 22. They have submitted a plan that covers Sanitization and social distancing and the important things that we know we need to manage in order to keep everyone safe and healthy.

Offering the services to children who need a little bit of extra help for the online option, not working as well for them.

Let's see.

Other things from my talking points.

Let's see what we need to touch on.

There have been some new symptoms identified, traditionally we have said since the start of Covid-19 that shortness of breath or difficulty breathing, cough, fever are the hallmark symptoms. We have had update from the CDC that's brought in a lot of new symptoms.

We're starting to understand the virus a little bit more and understanding there can be some other symptoms associated with Covid-19.

Kind of normal sounding things like muscle aches, chills, things like that.

But one of the interesting one

is a sudden and unexpected loss of taste or smell.

That's been associated with a lot of Covid-19 cases.

Those are available on the carbon alert website if you want to review those in more depth. There are other symptoms other than the big three we've been talking about.

As far as testing in the County and in the state, really all the way up to the national level, there has been a plan rolled out and promises made to make -- increase the capability of local jurisdictions to do more testing over the next few months.

We'd like to be able to get -- wrap our heads around how many cases are really out there, track the spread a little bit more and get that information. Over the next weeks and months we'll see our capability of testing to increase.

A lot of the testing in the state of Montana according to governor Bullock will be around the highest risk facilities and entities.

Long-term care facilities, nursing homes, those sorts of things.

We will be testing I'm sure the outside of those arenas as well. Though we do want to work to make sure that we're keeping those high-risk population as safe and healthy as possible.

The state of Montana has released the phase one reopening plan frequently asked questions. We'll hit on some of the reopening plan a little bit more detail coming up here.

With any plan and with such complicated requirements and recommendations, there are always questions.

So the state joint information center worked with the governor's office to put together a documented answers a lot of the questions from that initial document.

That's available as of this morning on the carbon alert

website.

There's a lot of great information in there for private citizens, a lot of information for business owners, that also applies to the general public. It'll give us a little better understanding of what to expect as we start to see businesses and the economy in general reopen.

It's not going to be like it has been at least for now.

There are going to be changes that we need to expect and understand and try to work with. Right now we're officially in phase one.

The stay at home directive was lifted throughout the state on April 26.

Retail businesses were able to open on April 27.

Coming up on May 4, restaurants, bars, et cetera, those entities will be able to reopen as well. Again, like we have said, it's going to be a slightly different look and feel to things.

We are going to have to limit the number of folks in some of these businesses, we're going to have to ensure that we have social distancing in place.

We're not at this point required to wear masks when we go out in public but they are strongly recommended especially in areas where we're not able to maintain that minimum six-foot distance that are part of the same family.

Just because we're starting to reopen doesn't mean that the masks go away.

There's still a strong recommendation that we wear those to try and keep ourselves and each other safe and healthy.

May 7 schools can return to in-classroom instruction, like we said in the County, schools are not in Carbon County going to return to full classroom instruction.

Other parts of phase one, for business owners and understanding those of us that

are employees that are going to be returning to these businesses, there is a requirement for some sort of health assessment to be conducted on employees when they return to work and at the beginning of each shift.

There's not a lot of specificity in what's required there.

Something we're looking at as an incident management team, there's the possibility we may put out an assistance document to give some direction on what the health screenings might look like.

So more on that to come later, I think.

Other things we will have to manage as we start going back out to the businesses, that six-foot distance is going to be very important as it has been for us.

If we're waiting in line in a business we want to maintain that distance.

If a business has waiting areas where that six-foot separation between patrons is not possible to be maintained, those waiting areas are going to be closed. The way that businesses function and the flow of people through some of them may change as we move into these phase one reopenings.

As customers, if it's possible, obviously depending on the businesses that you're going to utilize, if it's possible we'd like to see folks have the possibility to use the capability to call ahead for reservations or appointments rather than showing up and having to wait in line which could, again, give us some issues with social distancing. Businesses have been asked through the state plan to use an online wait listing APP if something like that is available for their business type.

That six-foot physical distancing is important for us. The incident management team

this last week put out this flyer that you'll probably see around the County. Definitely restaurants, bars, distilleries, those sorts of businesses. The maximum indoor occupancy will more than likely be listed on the signs. And then it will just remind us of the big key points of the reopening plan. As far as businesses, have to have all of the customers out by 11:30 at night unless there's some other local restrictions on that. No more than six people at any table in a restaurant or bar, et cetera. And those tables and the groups have to be, again, at least six feet apart. Bars will not be open, you won't be able to sit at a bar right now. You won't be able to be served at that bar. We prefer, again for social distancing not to have groups of people standing around. So the expectation as we start to go back to the restaurants and other entities within the County is that everyone will be at a table, servers will serve you there, drink refills will not be a thing like they have been in the past. All of this self-service sort of buffets and things, for now, will not be reopened. We've had a lot of questions and understandably so about do I need to wear a mask when I leave the house. Neither in the county nor the state level this a hard requirement at this point. But, again like we said before, it's definitely our best practice, there's a strong recommendation to wear those nonmedical face coverings. What that means for most of us is that cloth face covering to protect us if we may have the virus that we could transmit to

someone else. Or someone else transmitting that virus to us. While it's not required right now we're recommending that everyone really try to maintain that mask utilization as best as possible. That's definitely enough for me, Ryan. We'll go to the economic recovery group and some of the points you came here to give us >> RYAN: Great update. Thank you for having me on air today. I am commercial lender at the bank of Red Lodge, I have some information on the banking financial part of the pandemic along with being a committee member for the Carbon County economic recovery group. I want to touch base a little bit on that recovery group. There are 24 members on that committee with wide range of industry knowledge. Ranging from Dr. Bill George to bars, restaurants, real estate, agriculture, banking, many more. We have experts in those industries that can come together and update the committees on where everybody is at through this pandemic, which is pretty cool. Ultimate goal of that committee is to reassure all of the business owners and citizens of Carbon County that we're here for them to establish a good plan to get back on our feet. Once phase one has rolled out, but phase two and phase three when it comes together. Ultimate goal is to have a good detailed plan to help Red Lodge main street and Carbon County in general roll-out once we your the green light. Once we get the green light. A little new development, we had a meeting yesterday at 3:00. We had a rodeo update. They're monitoring that daily. The PRCA has given local control to that.

The Red Lodge rodeo committee has done a good job monitoring that, and they have set a tentative date of June 1 to make a decision on the Red Lodge fourth of July rodeo.

Another good point of that meeting was the chamber and the foundation are working on grants for Carbon County to help businesses that have been impacted.

There's roughly about \$1.5 billion that has been given to Montana and that will be divvied out in the different counties. And the chamber and foundation and some of the members of the committee are working on letters to write to the governor to earmark some of that money for Carbon County which would be really helpful.

In addition to that, with the numbers in Montana, they're really focusing on in-state tourism and travel just to keep Carbon County's numbers at a minimum.

There is a website that we have rolled out where we can funnel all together information into one website which we can roll out on carbon alert which will have updates from the committee frequently asked questions, and what not.

You can also reach out to any of the committee members on questions that the public may have.

So we'll get that list of members rolled out.

A little update on the banking information.

Again I'm a lender at the Bank of Red Lodge.

There's a couple of main programs that business owners can rely on through the pandemic.

One is a P.P.P. program, the most popular, the paycheck protection program.

Essentially helping business owners with payroll through the pandemic.

There were two rounds, there was

a first round \$350 billion, that -- those funds expired within about a nine-day period. They just rolled out another \$250 billion on Monday and those funds are still available to business owners.

We encourage anyone that hasn't applied for a P.P.P. loan to reach out to your local bank or another -- any lending institution.

I've got some numbers based on the bank of Bridger and family banks, bank of Bridger, bank of Joliet, bank of Red Lodge. On the first get on-round of \$350 billion we put together 102 loans for 7.3 million in Carbon County alone.

It was our goal to get that money out as quick as we could to the businesses in need of it.

>> JASON: Outstanding.

>> RYAN: As I mentioned, the \$250 billion was rolled out on Monday, funds are available. We are at roughly 25 loans right now, adding more each day, about \$400,000.

Those numbers show you we're able to get a lot -- majority of all businesses on that first go round of P.P.P. funding.

In addition to the paycheck protection program, there's economic injury disaster loan which they refer to, which they as the SBA, small bills administration, as EIDL.

That is a program directly through SBA.gov.

You don't need to go to your local bank, go to SBA.gov and apply directly through there.

Right now that website is temporarily down until they get funding back in place for that. But people that had applied for EIDL loans previously before those funds ran out, that money is starting to be deposited into people's accounts.

That's good news to get some cashflow to these businesses.

Kind of a neat statistic, Montana statewide on that first Go-round of the \$350 billion,

Montana did 35 years of SBA loans in a nine-day period. That is financial institutions statewide.

But a lot of hard work put in by lenders and banks to help everybody out.

Again I mention that P.P.P. funds are available, \$250 billion is available, reach out to your bank if you have not. The P.P.P. program as long as it's used for payroll, 75% used for payroll, 25% for mortgage, utilities, that amount of money be for given by the SBA.

Essentially a grant from the SBA as long as it's used for payroll which would be really helpful

>> JASON: Absolutely.

>> RYAN: A couple of positive notes that I would like to mention, update from the realtor on the committee, the real estate market is busy in Carbon County.

Properties are being listed, sold, that's a positive note.

In times like right now.

There's quite a bit of construction going on in the Carbon County area specifically. Red Lodge and outskirts which is good to keep the economy going in the construction world.

Mortgage rates are really good for purchases and refi's.

There's an opportunity to possibly save money on that.

>> JASON: Really quick, we were a little out of order, I got out of order with my slides.

On the screen is the upcoming website that Ryan mentioned, WWW.CarbonCountyeconomy.org. That should be live in a little bit.

Will give us some great way for us to share information on the economic recovery from Covid-19. And I'm not sure in Facebook and instagram if you can read the list of members we have up there.

But already large number of folks from throughout the whole County that have really pulled together as part of the economic

recovery group to help out. As Ryan said, reach out to us as a group, reach out to these folks in your community if you know them, and have questions or let us know how we can help.

>> We have a few questions if I might

>> JASON: We will do our best.

>> RYAN: We're ready.

>> Question of when will antibody testing be available?

>> JASON: You know, it's something we have tried to keep a close eye on.

It's a very interesting and maybe very helpful for us to understand the scope of the virus throughout the County, the state, the nation.

At this point it hasn't trickled down to our level in any great degree but it is something the incident management team is keeping an eye on.

And we'll just keep looking forward to a point at which that is widely available.

When that happens we'll let you know.

I'm sorry we don't have any great perfect answer as far as when it will be available here.

>> Another kind of idea around timeline, when will we be entering phase two?

>> JASON: When will we be entering phase two.

That is something that the governor, if we had him sitting right next to us right now would probably not be able to tell us. We don't know either.

We are moving forward at the speed that we think is the best for all of us.

We don't want to rush and open up too soon and have a huge spike of cases and let the virus run rampant.

Both at the local level and state level we're going to very closely monitor the number of cases, do very aggressive contact tracing to keep an eye on the impact that the reopening plan may have, and as soon as it is appropriate for us to move

into stage two, to the more open economy and things like that, we'll get there.

But it's going to be probably a number of weeks still.

Please understand that none of us are dragging our feet or want to stretch these phases out any more than we have to.

>> If I am a small business owner and I have these issues with rent or paying vendors, and I just don't know how to project how long things are going to happen, what kind of resource does we have available?

>> RYAN: I can take that one, absolutely.

Great question.

As I mentioned a little bit earlier, the best route is the P.P.P. funding program through the SBA.

That is a quick route, it's unsecured loan, at 1%, that can be for given as long as it's used for payroll and rent and what not, as long as it's documented properly.

That will help with the cashflow issues that the majority of businesses are having right now with their doors closed.

That being said, there's the EIDL on that website at SBA.gov. Hopefully that website is back open and taking applications again shortly.

Another option is just your bank in general as well.

You don't to have go through the P.P.P. or EIDL, reach out to your lender and most of the time they can get creative in helping businesses out.

>> JASON: Good to know, thank you.

>> Will Carbon County have different restrictions for campgrounds than those that are in place by the state?

>> JASON: At this point I don't know that we are going to have any different regulations than the state level.

As with everything else, as we start to reopen we'll look at the impacts of reopening and do

our best to provide the most freedom we can and still keep each other safe and healthy. It is something, if we find a need that we may need to look at that.

Our policy group within the incident management team will do so.

At this point I'm not aware of any variation from what the state plan is.

>> Are you engaged in assuring that ballot counters and County staff are being protected in the coming election?

And should ballots be sanitized prior to handling by the County?

>> JASON: We have not breached the subject of elections quite yet.

It's something obviously as we start to look further and further ahead as things have stabilized for now.

That's something we'll look at obviously very soon.

Most definitely I can guarantee that we will do our best to maintain the necessary social distancing and other safety measures to keep everyone safe.

>> That's all the questions I have.

So can you let us know, going forward, you mentioned that things are stabilizing, what kind of schedule should we expect for updates with live stream and other forums?

>> JASON: We're looking at changing the schedule a little bit and we may not do weekly live streams over the next few weeks.

Unless something comes up where we have a lot more information to share.

We appreciate everyone's attention and their participation in these events. But at the same time we don't want to hold an event just to hold one.

If you pay attention to our social media feeds and website, we will continue to publicize the schedule.

But going forward over the next few weeks it may be an every two week sort of thing is kind of our thought right now.

>> That's all of the questions that we have had come in.

Do you guys have anything you'd like to offer for wrapup?

>> RYAN: Thank you again for giving me the opportunity to join the Facebook live event, and spread the word of the committee and a little bit of the financial background. Keep your six feet away. Keep healthy and thank you very much

>> JASON: And obviously we like to thank Ryan for sharing a lot of his time on the radio and the Facebook live feed.

Just for the great work he has done, the wealth of information he brings, and as a representative of the economic recovery group, we appreciate all of those folks' time and efforts as well.

In closing I would like to, again, thank everyone for the great work they have been doing.

Keep up the good work as we learn to live with this virus and move away from the thought process of preventing it.

We need to look at how that's going to be part of our lives and how we're going to keep ourselves day-to-day.

Last thing I'd like to thank the members.

Incident management team, our public health folks that have been so busy in doing their best to keep all of us healthy and safe.

And just everyone that stepped up to help us manage this.

Again, thank all of you for participating.

Thank you for the great questions.

Thank you for engaging and working with us through this. With that I think we'll call it a day.

Thanks, and we'll be in touch again soon.