



Carl J. Florea
Office of the Mayor
City of Leavenworth

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Community Members,

As I am sure you are aware, our county finally got approval to move out of Phase 1. While it is not a move to Phase 2, it is pretty close, much closer than the prior attempt to allow the county to move to 1.5. As Barry Kling, the head of the Chelan Douglas Health District referred to it in our conference call yesterday, "it is more like Phase 1.9 than 1.5." That announcement that we can begin to "open up" was greeted with enthusiasm and real joy – the first for many businesses in a long time! I swear I could hear the cheers echoing off the mountains. So many things will be different this weekend. Many stores will be open (with COVID restrictions as to numbers / spacing) for the first time. We will see Art in The Park set up for the first time, with fewer vendors and a need to limit the numbers in their space as well. More like the same old Leavenworth, but still different. At least there is some movement! We are ALL happy for that! We hope and pray that this movement can continue to move us forward...

However, I just got back from an all staff meeting, (held outdoors with social distancing, of course), in order to introduce everyone to our new administrator, Ana Cortez. When I returned, I had a long phone message from a Leavenworth local. He was frustrated because in his walk through the downtown today, he saw the party atmosphere (perhaps understandable, but...) and was upset. He wanted me to do something. So many people and they weren't social distancing or wearing masks. He went inside a couple of establishments and the employees weren't wearing masks. He wanted to know why the City was allowing this to happen. Governor Inslee is asking that all employees wear masks inside. Why was this still happening? He wanted me to stop it.

I called him back and explained to him that all the restrictions, the spacing requirements, the masks... these are all things we try to make happen, and encourage to happen, and do our best to provide items like masks to make it possible to happen, but they really depend on the cooperation and willingness of people to follow them. There is really no enforcement mechanism, unless there is peer pressure. (The one exception is eating establishments, which are inspected by the Chelan Douglas Health District, and they can enforce restrictions). WA State Dept of Labor and Industries handles things like construction, manufacturing, and agriculture. But just about everything else depends upon the good will of people. I have written about this more than once during this pandemic. We need to follow safety rules as we open, or we will be in danger of being shut right back down again. We will continue to do what we can to change the culture to one of safety. As one local told me yesterday, "I am so sick of this! I want it over! If I need to wear a mask and stay six feet away from others for now, that's a small price to get this behind us!" I agree. I hope we can see how easy we can make this, or how difficult.

I love to see us continue moving forward. Enough pain already! Let's do all we can to model the culture of safety we want others to embrace. We have survived to this point by working together and helping one another. Let's keep that going, stronger than ever. For the sake of all of us! Stay healthy!



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