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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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A message about COVID-19, local preparations and response

GOSHEN, Ind. (March 9, 2020) — Over the weekend Indiana State officials announced that the first two cases of Coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) had been diagnosed in the state. This news release is to update the community on what the City of Goshen is doing about preparation and response to the situation.

Gov. Eric Holcomb declared a public health emergency on Friday, which is needed to open avenues for federal funding to state and county health departments to help fight the spread of the disease. Though the risk of infection is low at this time, it's important that the outbreak be carefully monitored and contained.

The City of Goshen is working with the Elkhart County Health Department, Goshen Health as well as other county and city officials and health providers to ensure the community is as best prepared for a potential outbreak. If someone is infected, it is imperative that the disease is diagnosed early and contained to avoid exposure to the rest of the community.

Immediate actions being implemented by the City of Goshen to protect the community include the following:

1. The City will be posting current information from the Center for Disease Control, State Board of Health, and the Elkhart County Health Department on the City website and through social media. Updates from these agencies will be posted as available.
2. The City is establishing a working group of City staff that will be responsible for coordinating efforts with community partners and preparing community updates as circumstances may change. The COVID-19 task force will meet on a weekly basis, or as needed, to develop and implement actions needed to prevent community spread of the virus.
3. To protect first responders from possible infection, the Police and Fire Departments will be reviewing procedures to ensure that personnel are taking proper precautions to protect themselves from possible exposure. This includes the use of personal protective equipment and infection control procedures.
4. Along with protecting first responders, the City is working with other essential department personnel to ensure City facilities are safe and employees are protected from possible infection.
5. A meeting with local health care providers, school officials and other organizations that could potentially be impacted will be convened. The purpose of the meeting will be to ensure that local organizations that have a role in detecting and preventing the spread of the coronavirus are working together as a team to protect Goshen residents from infection.

Residents are asked to check with the CDC and reliable sources for the latest information about the outbreak. The city has created a page (goshenindiana.org/covid-19-information) with links to local and state resources, and updated information from the CDC. Links will be revised, as updated information about the new virus is available.

Mayor Jeremy Stutsman said the following about the situation:

“If we see COVID-19 spread to our community, the Elkhart County Health Department will take the lead,” he said. “Goshen will help in any way we can. For now we want to take a proactive approach by helping to share up-to-date information from reputable sources.”

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