City of Port Heiden
PORT HEIDEN, ALASKA 99549

March 20, 2020

Citizens of Port Heiden,

Today, under authority granted to me under AS 26.23.140. I am declaring a local disaster emergency as a proactive measure to help prevent the spread of COVID-19 virus, to open emergency funding, and to allow us to formally request state and federal support to help our village get through the COVID-19 pandemic. To be clear, there are currently no known cases of COVID-19 in Port Heiden. The City & Village Council met and formalized this declaration with a resolution.

We are urging all Port Heiden residents who are returning from travel, regardless of the method of transport, to take proactive steps to reduce any potential transmission of any virus. As recommended by the CDC, individual actions that can be taken to prevent virus transmission include washing your hands regularly, coughing or sneezing into your elbow, avoiding touching your face, and participating in social distancing. These methods should be practiced by everyone, whether you have recently traveled or not. We also strongly urge self-reporting any potential COVID-19 contact to the Port Heiden Health Clinic. When returning from travel, please make every effort possible to avoid contact with any community members who are identified as members of high-risk groups, which are people over the age of 65 and people with any chronic medical conditions. While it is very important to avoid contact with high-risk groups, you should also avoid contact with any person regardless of their risk group, if possible until it is determined that you are not infected.

We are asking that all travel that goes outside of Port Heiden be limited to essential travel only. Many regional events have already been cancelled, all non-emergency Medicaid travel has been cancelled, school has been cancelled, and we are sure that more closures and cancellations are on the way.

We do not have the multitude of businesses that other towns have, however we are requesting that if possible, employees be allowed to work from home. In addition we are strongly suggesting that all businesses take steps to prevent large gatherings at their locations and enforce strict hygiene requirements if gatherings cannot be avoided.

Effective immediately all offices at Rays' Place will be closed except for those functions which are essential to maintain the health, safety, and security of the citizens of Port Heiden. City will be closed until further notice, fuel, electricity, water, sewer, and garbage collections services will continue as normal.

We understand that many local children utilize the school breakfast and lunch program. We are pleased to share that the Lake and Peninsula School District has already taken steps to continue providing meals during this time.

It is vital that we all work together as a community to reduce the risk of contracting the COVID-19 virus, slow its spread, and avoid overwhelming our community clinic and healthcare workers and regional

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healthcare system. The best way to do this is to follow the recommendations above and to reduce contact with others as much as possible.

The City and Tribe are working on a telephonic meeting system to safely continue meeting while still allowing the public opportunity to participate. Information about how to call in and attend any City Council meetings telephonically will be released as soon as it is available.

For more information on COVID-19, how the state is responding, and additional resources, go to: http://coronavirus.alaska.gov or call 2-1-1.

I am confident that we can work together as a community to keep our citizens, especially our Elders and high-risk residents, safe from this global pandemic.

Thank you,

Scott W. Anderson

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