

**Office of Falls County Judge
Jay T Elliott**

30 April 2020

News Release:

**Falls County Follows Directives from Governor Greg Abbott
And Medical Professionals in Phase One of Reopening Texas**

I have had multiple meetings with Dr. Downing, who is the Falls County Local Health Authority to discuss the COVID 19 coronavirus epidemic and the process of reopening businesses such as retail, dine-in restaurants, theaters, shopping malls, museums, and libraries.

Governor Abbott issued Executive Order GA-18 on 27 April. You may view EO GA-18 at: DID11316_1_042720.pdf GA-18. There is also a 64-page Report that includes further guidance at www.gov.texas.gov/opentexas. Executive Order GA-18 outlines several procedures to allow some businesses to reopen at 25% of listed occupancy capacity on the first day of May.

Governor Abbott has stated that he will have a news conference on May 11 to announce if the 25% occupancy rule is working. If the rule is keeping the number of statewide positive COVID 19 cases down, he may announce that all of the state can go to 50% on May 14.

The Falls County Local Health Authority and the other health care professionals that I rely on in this battle to contain COVID 19 are not comfortable in opening the occupancy restriction to 50% on 1 May 2020. Our current practices of social distancing, avoiding crowds, and using good hygiene are working. Let's continue to take steps to avoid exposure to infection while enjoying this first phase of reopening Texas with 25% occupancy in those entities listed in Executive Order GA-18. No one wants to go backwards in the fight to contain COVID 19. Let's move forward utilizing data and advice from doctors.

Bottom line, I am going to follow the guidance of doctors and healthcare professionals within the framework of the Governor's Executive Orders in how Falls County reopens. 25% occupancy is the plan for 1 May. I expect that Governor Abbott will have several more news conferences and will issue more Executive Orders in the next few weeks. Any future Executive Order could change how Falls County and Texas will respond to the continuing COVID 19 epidemic. I am beyond ready to open things, but we need to do so in a manner that is consistent with proven health protocols.

The **Courthouse Annex will open on 4 MAY 2020** and will required residents to clean their hands and social distance by standing on the X paint on the floor.

Thank you

Respectfully submitted,
Jay T Elliott
Falls County Judge