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Media Contact:  
Liz Cooper  
(704) 283-3587  
[liz.cooper@unioncountync.gov](mailto:liz.cooper@unioncountync.gov)

## **Union County Declares State of Emergency in Preparation of COVID-19**

**MONROE, N.C. (March 16, 2020)** – In response to the COVID-19 (coronavirus) pandemic, Union County leaders are taking several precautions to protect residents and employees of Union County Government. Chairman Jerry Simpson signed a declaration of a State of Emergency following the regular Board meeting on Monday, March 16, 2020. There were no confirmed cases of COVID-19 in Union County at the time of this release.

The State of Emergency declaration allows the County's administrative team to increase funding allocated for emergency purposes and sets parameters and guidelines for public safety and emergency personnel.

The County's Emergency Operations Center (EOC) has been operationalized; as well as a Joint Information Center (JIC), to coordinate delivery of important information and resources to residents, with support from Union County municipalities and community partners.

"This is an unprecedented healthcare crisis and calls for unprecedented planning and precautions as an organization," said County Manager Mark Watson.

Watson and his management team are exploring several initiatives to support employees, and their families, throughout this healthcare crisis; including flexible work schedules and using technology to support teleworking with minimal impact to County services for residents. In addition, Commissioners have given Watson approval to offer two weeks of extended paid leave to specifically over situations related to COVID-19. Those situations may include personal sickness or care of a sick family member. With the evolving crisis regarding COVID-19, management will continue to evaluate whether temporary changes to staffing levels or operations are necessary.

Several programs, events, and facility reservations hosted by Union County Government are postponed. Those postponements and closures, as well as important information and resources, are being updated on the [Union County website](#).

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