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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**Gov. Beshear: Kentuckians Defeating COVID-19 with Compassion,
Resilience**

Visit the Governor's [Facebook](#) page to watch today's news conference

FRANKFORT, Ky. (May 15, 2020) – Gov. Andy Beshear on Friday said Kentuckians are defeating the novel coronavirus 2019 (COVID-19) with compassion and resilience.

“Let’s remember to keep reaching out to one another, asking how others are doing and if they need help,” Gov. Beshear encouraged Kentuckians yesterday. “One of the reasons that we’re here today in a better position than most is because we truly care about each other.”

Friday, the Governor shared updates regarding the state’s fight against COVID-19 and the gradual reopening of the state’s economy, including the reopening of tourism and guidance for more businesses.

Case information

As of 5 p.m. May 15, Gov. Beshear said there were at least 7,444 coronavirus cases in Kentucky, 252 of which were newly confirmed Friday.

“Today, I am thankful that the new case list has fewer children,” Gov. Beshear said. “This is not to scare anyone, but this virus is still out there and it affects people of all ages and we need to do all we can to keep it from spreading.”

Unfortunately, Gov. Beshear also reported four new deaths Friday, raising the total to 332 Kentuckians lost to the virus.

The deaths reported Friday include a 66-year-old man and a 60-year-old man from Fayette, an 80-year-old woman from Jefferson and a 74-year-old man from Campbell.

“Let’s continue to shine those green lights and continue to add them to the businesses that reopen,” the Governor said. “Our kindness and our compassion are two of the main traits that have us where we are in a positive position to reopen our economy.”

At least 2,739 Kentuckians have recovered from the virus. For additional information, including up-to-date lists of positive cases and deaths, as well as breakdowns of coronavirus infections by county, race and ethnicity, [click here](#).

Testing expansion

Gov. Beshear said in partnership with Kroger, new testing locations would open in Richmond, Mayfield, Louisville and Hartford next week. Information on how to register at more than 70 sites throughout the commonwealth can be found at kycovid19.ky.gov.

Reopening Tourism

Gov. Andy Beshear announced today that as part of the Healthy at Work initiative the Tourism, Arts and Heritage Cabinet will reopen tourism in an effort to generate revenue to boost the state’s economy and offer Kentuckians opportunities to explore the commonwealth through in-state travel.

“The tourism industry has suffered significant loss as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic,” said Gov. Beshear. “As the state focuses on rebuilding the economy, reopening tourism plays a significant role in generating revenue, opening business doors and helping more Kentuckians get back to work.”

Revenue generated from tourism is critical as Kentucky focuses its efforts on rebuilding. Tourism is an \$11 billion industry in Kentucky and provides employment to nearly 95,000 Kentuckians. The spread of the novel coronavirus (COVID-19) has resulted in a loss of nearly \$64 million in tourism tax revenue.

“The reopening of tourism will allow us to generate much needed revenue for local businesses and communities experiencing economic loss as a result of COVID-19 restrictions,” said Tourism Arts and Heritage Cabinet Secretary Mike Berry. “Our phased approach to reopening will ensure we can protect the health and safety of Kentuckians while gradually rebuilding segments of the tourism industry.”

The Tourism, Arts and Heritage Cabinet will open [Kentucky State resort parks](#), recreational parks, lodges and cabins to the public for normal business hours beginning June 1. Park guests will be required to follow social distancing and public health guidelines. Natural Bridge and Cumberland Falls State Resort Parks will also reopen on June 1.

Guests can begin making reservations beginning Tuesday, May 19. Reservations can be made online at parks.ky.gov.

As part of the state's ongoing effort to prevent the spread of the COVID-19, the following Kentucky State Parks were designated to provide temporary housing for low acuity patients. These parks will not reopen at this time: (*Barren River Lake State Resort Park is closed due to renovations*)

- Lake Cumberland State Resort Park;
- Lake Barkley State Resort Park;
- Blue Licks Battlefield State Resort Park; and
- Buckhorn Lake State Resort Park.

The [Kentucky Horse Park](#), [Otter Creek](#) and [state park campgrounds](#) will open on June 11 to self-contained campers and RVs in accordance with the Healthy at Work camping guidelines. Fishing tournaments may resume on June 1 with new guidelines.

The [Salato Wildlife Education Center](#) will open with limited capacity beginning June 1. Interactive exhibits will remain closed until further notice.

Beginning May 22, groups of 10 people or fewer may gather and the state's travel ban will expire. Announcements regarding the reopening of additional tourism attractions and venues operated by the Tourism, Arts and Heritage Cabinet will be forthcoming.

CARES Funding

Recently, the Governor announced that 93 arts organizations throughout Kentucky would receive over \$450,000 CARES funding. Tonight, he announced that Kentucky will award \$500,000 in CARES funding to 85 humanities organizations who have suffered program financial losses due to COVID-19.

Kentucky received \$500,000 from the National Endowment for the Humanities to alleviate the economic impact of COVID-19 on humanities organizations throughout the commonwealth. Kentucky Humanities, an agency within the Tourism, Arts and Heritage Cabinet will distribute unrestricted operating and/or

humanities program support funding to 85 organizations. This funding will be awarded to museums, libraries and theaters across the commonwealth. [Click here](#) for a full listing of the 85 humanities organizations.

Healthy at Work

The Healthy at Work [website](#) now includes guidance for massage therapy and nail salons. Cosmetology businesses, hair salons and barbershops, tanning salons, and tattoo parlors guidance is expected soon. Gov. Beshear said the state would also be expanding June 1 reopening guidance to include aquatic centers (which does not include public pools), fishing tournaments and auto/dirt track racing.

State prisons

The Governor said that inmates at state prisons have been cooperative in efforts to help stop the spread of the virus in their facility from wearing masks to complying with sanitization.

“Our inmates in state prisons have been cooperative in efforts to help stop the spread of the virus,” said Gov. Beshear. “First in their own facilities, by wearing masks. These are often the individuals who do the sanitation and they have taken control and responsibility for their own environment and because of that we haven’t seen some of the same problems that many other states have seen.”

Gov. Beshear also shared a story about an inmate who sent him \$5 to put toward the Team Kentucky Fund and told of another inmate at Green River Correctional Complex who contacted the warden last night and indicated he wanted to donate \$19 to the Team Kentucky Fund.

The Governor also noted that Northpoint Training Center donated cloth masks made by the inmates to United Way and that Kentucky Correctional Industries continues to make cloth masks for government employees, inmates and correctional staff. They are also making medical grade gowns for Department of Corrections staff and other organizations.

Kentucky Correctional Institution for Women, in partnership with Paws with Purpose, will be providing cloth masks for Norton Healthcare area hospitals. The Norton Foundation will supply the materials.

Finally, he said 22 inmates and 28 staff at Green River Correctional Complex have recovered, there are no new positive cases and thanked the Department of Corrections staff for their hard work and dedication during this time.

Weekend press conferences

Gov. Beshear announced there would not be news conferences on Saturday or Sunday, but that he would

issue a video Saturday with case information, and that Monday's news conference would include numbers from Sunday.

More information

Read about other key updates, actions and information from Gov. Beshear and his administration at governor.ky.gov, kycovid19.ky.gov and the Governor's official social media accounts [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#) and [YouTube](#).

Kentuckians can also access translated COVID-19 information and daily summaries of the Governor's news conference at tinyurl.com/kygovespanol (Spanish) and tinyurl.com/kygovtranslations (more than 20 additional languages).



For official news and updates from the Beshear/Coleman administration, visit governor.ky.gov/news.