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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**Kempstead, TX – The news of COVID-19 cases in nearby Ft. Bend & Harris Counties merits the attention of Waller County residents. The Sheriff's Office is responsible for promoting public safety precautions and seeks to inform our community that it is urgent and necessary to emphasize greater personal preparedness, prevention, and hygiene, particularly when in contact with persons who may be ill or who may have a communicable disease.**

**According to the World Health Organization (2020), corona virus disease, COVID-19, is a virus belonging to a larger family of viruses which causes illness in humans and animals. "COVID-19 in humans causes respiratory infections ranging from the common cold to more severe disease such as Middle East Respiratory Syndrome (MERS) and Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS)." COV-19 contains closely-related reference genomes to MERS and SARS.**

**While there is a global impact of this viral transmission, there are no known cures, although several laboratories are developing test kits and vaccinations. Vice President Pence, leading the U.S. response to this near pandemic recently indicated that there are insufficient numbers of test kits needed to test more than 1.0 million people; however, the CDC is issuing test kits to hospitals, military bases, public health labs and the Department of Defense. Testing is needed to control widespread infection and mortality. Clinicians are advised to refer test cases.**

**The coronavirus symptoms include fever, dry cough, respiratory problems and tiredness. Some patients have experienced aches and pains along with diarrhea, nasal congestion, and runny nose. Some patients do not develop symptoms and feel normal; however, the incubation period ranges from 2 – 10 days, although one deceased male in Wuhon where this virus is believed to have originated, experienced symptoms in 27 days. In some cases, deterioration occurs rapidly**

**The recommended safety precautions include the following:**

- Wash hands with soap & water or alcohol-based solution (60%+) for at least 20 seconds**
- Maintain social distance, particularly from anyone coughing or sneezing (6'+)**
- Refrain from touching eyes, nose, and mouth; many surfaces contain transferable viruses**
- Seek medical attention if you experience fever, cough, and difficulty breathing**
- Self-isolate for 14 days if you recently traveled to China, S. Korea, Japan, Italy, or Iran**

**Persons with certain underlying conditions and diminished immune systems may be more susceptible. People with heart problems, diabetes, and high blood pressure must exercise greater care. Mortality is related to respiratory failure, septic shock, and/or multiple organ dysfunction/failure. Most COVID-19 patients develop mild to moderate disease and recover. If sick, please stay home and visit your doctor. Avoid traveling directly to a hospital, if possible.**