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**Date: May 7, 2020 - For Immediate Release
Press Release**

Hillsboro, TX – The number of confirmed cases of COVID-19 in Hill County remained at 18 today, according to the Texas Department of State Health Services (DSHS) report. Of those, DSHS shows 8 recoveries, 9 active cases, and 1 deceased. Statewide numbers report 35,390 cases in Texas with 1,750 patients hospitalized, and 973 fatalities. An estimated 18,440 individuals are listed as recovered from the virus while 15,977 are still believed to be active cases.

“Tomorrow is the next step in moving forward as the next wave of businesses are allowed to reopen,” said Hill County Judge Justin Lewis. “This is what we’ve been working toward, but if we relax our defenses as we return to normal activities, there is always the danger of moving back into a more restrictive environment,” continued Lewis. “So please follow social distancing guidelines and wash your hands frequently to protect yourself and those around you,” stated Lewis. “Together, we can make sure Hill County keeps moving forward while staying safe.”

According to a press release issued by Texas Governor Greg Abbott, beginning May 8, cosmetology salons, hair salons, barber shops, nail salons and shops, and other establishments where licensed cosmetologists or barbers practice their trade, may open, but all such salons, shops, and establishments must ensure at least six feet of social distancing between operating work stations. Tanning salons may also reopen under the same limitation. Also starting May 8, swimming pools may open subject to certain limitations, including on their occupancy or operating levels.

The press release further states beginning May 18, office buildings may open with the greater of five or less individuals or 25% of the total office workforce. These individuals must maintain appropriate social distancing. Gyms, exercise facilities, and exercise classes may also open on May 18, but must operate at 25% occupancy. Locker rooms and shower facilities will remain closed, but restrooms may open. Non-essential manufacturing services may also open on May 18, but facilities must limit their occupancy to 25%.

“As we begin a more normal routine in the coming weeks, support our local businesses and celebrate the victory, but please be mindful of the fact that many businesses and individuals will be dealing with the impact of COVID-19 into the foreseeable future,” said Lewis. “Let us all remain committed to helping one another through this,” finished Lewis.

Consumers and business owners seeking information on the guidelines to follow as operations reopen can visit <https://gov.texas.gov/organization/opentexas>.

Information on the spread of the Coronavirus across Texas is available at the DSHS dashboard website, <https://dshs.texas.gov/coronavirus/>. To monitor updates from Hill County, the most current information will be provided on the Hill County Emergency Management Facebook Page and *KHBR 1560 AM Radio* and the *Hillsboro Reporter*.