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For immediate release

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Panhandle COVID-19 Unified Command Announces First Positive Case in Scotts Bluff County.

The Scotts Bluff County Health Department today confirmed that a male in his 30s residing in Scotts Bluff County has tested positive for COVID-19. The investigation has begun, and more details will be released when available. This case is not connected to the recently confirmed case in Goshen County.

“The person has isolated at their home since March 24, 2020. Contact investigations are underway to identify people who may have come into close contact with the individual for the past 14 days to help prevent further spread. All identified close contacts will self-quarantine and be actively monitored twice daily by public health officials for fever and respiratory symptoms,” said Paulette Schnell, Scotts Bluff County Health Department Director.

The presence of one COVID-19 case in the community suggests the possibility that more patients will be diagnosed. For your health, please follow these guidelines:

- Practice good hand hygiene, including frequent and thorough hand washing and proper use of hand sanitizer
- Avoid touching your face, including your eyes, nose, and mouth
- Be sure you have all needed medications and supplies on hand as if you were preparing for a severe snowstorm
- Practice social distancing – no closer than 6 feet from others

“Certain people are at higher risk of getting very sick from COVID-19, including older adults and people who have serious chronic medical conditions like heart disease, diabetes, and lung disease, according to the CDC,” stated Kim Engel, Panhandle Public Health District. “It is very important that those individuals and their families observe strict isolation practices.”

Regional West asks anyone in the area who has potentially been exposed to COVID-19 and has a fever, sore throat, cough, or shortness of breath to call before going to any healthcare facility. Healthcare providers will determine if the person can be cared for at home or if screening is necessary. You may call your provider or public health at:

- Scotts Bluff County Health Department: 308-630-1580

- Panhandle Public Health District: 308-262-5764

Panhandle Public Health District, Region 21, 22, and 23 Emergency Management, and Scotts Bluff County Health Department are working as a unified command on this evolving situation. Important updates will be regularly communicated to the public and community partners.

The Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services has opened a statewide coronavirus (COVID-19) information line to help answer general questions and share the latest information and resources with Nebraskans to help keep them informed. The number is 402-552-6645; hours of operation are 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. CST, 7 days a week.

DHHS will continue to update Nebraskans through the DHHS website and on Facebook and Twitter as we have new information.

For the most up to date information from the CDC, visit:
<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html>.

Panhandle Public Health District is working together to improve the health, safety, and quality of life for all who live, learn, work and play in the Panhandle. Our vision is that we are a healthier and safer Panhandle Community. Visit our website www.pphd.org.