



STAY HOME – STAY HEALTHY – STAY CONNECTED

For more COVID-19 Information from the region, including previous issues of this report, click [here](#).

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Purpose: The purpose of this report is to provide an update to city officials within Region 22 about the current COVID-19 Pandemic. It is essential to keep in mind that this information often changes rapidly. Any questions, suggestions or concerns can be directed:

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COVID-19 Nebraska Cases:

As of 4:40 p.m., April 15, 2020. This information is updated daily and can be found by clicking [here](#).

United States Totals

Total cases 605,390

Total Deaths 24,582

[Link to US CDC](#)

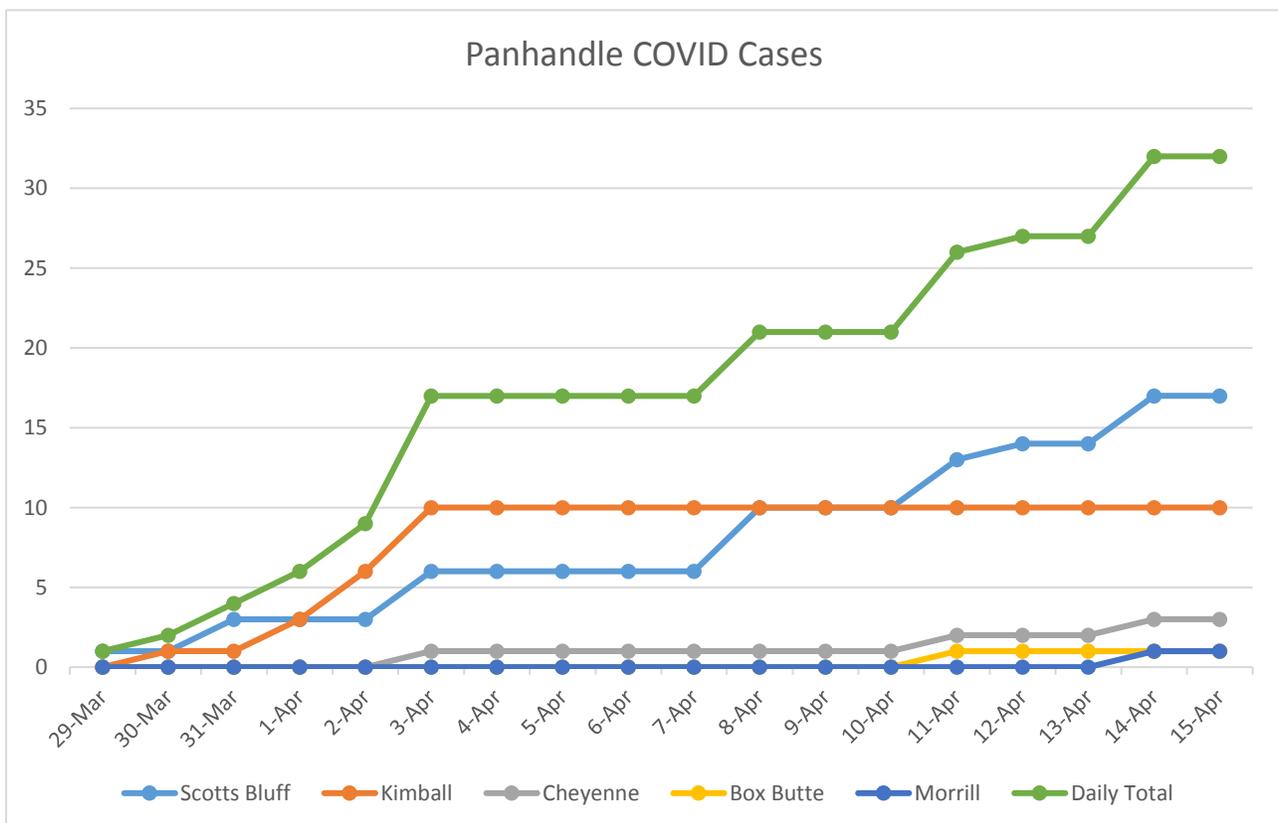
Nebraska totals

Positive tests 952

Negative tests 11,342

Total tested 12,324

Deaths 21



Panhandle Cases:

County	Panhandle	Scotts Bluff	Kimball	Cheyenne	Box Butte	Morrill
Total Tests	521*	291	75	46	32	24
Negative Tests	489	274	65	43	31	23
Positive Tests	32	17	10	3	1	1
Deaths	0	0	0	0	0	0
Recovered	10	3	9	1	0	0

* Does not include pending tests.

Flattening the Curve:

***New** - This is a personal note to the Region 22 Community. I wanted to personally congratulate the citizens of Scotts Bluff and Banner Counties for doing their part to flatten the curve. By adhering to the guidance and directed health measures in place, we have avoided a sharp rise in cases like the City of Grand Island is seeing. Almost every case has been traceable to either travel, or a close contact of a previous case, with only a couple of cases attributed to “community spread.” Your efforts to practice social distancing, hand washing, wearing cloth masks and minimizing the amount of time near others is working. Please keep up the good work and don’t stop now. Understand that we are working on ways to gradually bring the community out of the current situation in a way that will prevent a sudden spike in cases. Your patience has been noticed and appreciated.*

Trends in Rapid Testing:

***New** - Abbott Laboratories has developed a rapid test for COVID-19 that can deliver results in less than 15 minutes. They are currently ramping up production and will soon produce 50,000 tests per day. However, even at that rate, it will be weeks or months before the test is readily available everywhere. Other companies are in the development stages.*

What does “Community Spread” mean?

***New** - Many people hear the words, “Community Spread” in relation to a positive COVID case and wonder what that means. Community spread isn’t as bad as it sounds. Many people think it means that someone caught the disease by just being out in the community. Community spread actually means spread of an illness for which the source of infection is unknown. The term is used when the disease investigators cannot trace the source back to a particular contact. It’s also possible, however, that the patient may have been exposed to a returned traveler who was infected. So, when you hear that a case was caused by “community spread,” just substitute the words “unknown spread.”*

Regional West Health Services:

Regional West announced on Tuesday, April 14th, that they will begin placing some employees on furlough. This is due to the reduced volume of patients being seen for procedures, clinics and tests. This will reduce the financial burden on the hospital along with the federal support programs.

Business Recovery News:

New Information - In preparation for mapping a plan for economic recovery from the impact of the coronavirus, Gov. Pete Ricketts on Wednesday launched a business recovery survey that will gather information and suggestions online. Ricketts said he's seeking information on "how this has impacted business operations (as) we think about planning for future growth." Recovery will be "a team effort," the governor said during his daily news briefing on the coronavirus and the state's efforts to manage the pandemic. New state government revenue figures demonstrate that "the Nebraska economy was really humming along" until the virus hit, Ricketts said. The business recovery survey is being conducted at bit.ly/NE-Biz-Survey-2020.

Agriculture Issues during COVID:

Anne Kelley, County Executive Director at the USDA Farm Service Agency Scotts Bluff County Office relayed this information to me. "At this time, our producers are entering planting season and wrapping up calving season which naturally brings with it social distancing as farmers spend long hours in tractors to get fields prepared and planted and ranchers spend long hours checking their herds. Soon ranchers will be moving their herds from corn stalks to pastures, some on horseback and some on ATVs and 4 wheelers, but again more activities that provide distancing to get the job done. Farming and ranching is their calling and they are driven to continue moving forward to grow yet another year worth of food supply for America and the world."

Food Security in Nebraska:

During the daily press briefing with Governor Ricketts on April 14th, it was announced that certain regulations are being relaxed on restaurants. They will now be able to take bulk foods that they normally receive and repackage it for individual retail resale to help smaller towns that have no grocery store nearby. This will encourage smaller crowds to shop for some certain grocery items from their local restaurants, diners and cafes. This announcement was made by Zoe Olson of the Nebraska Restaurant Association.

Resources:

The University of Nebraska Medical Center has developed a COVID-19 screening mobile app. Click [here](#) to learn more, click [here for the App Store](#).

How to wear cloth face coverings and CDC guidance on homemade cloth face coverings click [here](#).

To find a Comparison of COVID-19 Loan Programs – Forgiveness Terms click [here](#).

Map of Confirmed COVID-19 Cases in U.S. Counties: [March 1 through Today](#).

Small Business Guidance and Loan Resources can be found [here](#).

Nebraska DHHS COVID-19 information can be found [here](#).

For information on Potential Community Exposure Sites, please click [here](#).

To read the most recent Directed Health Measure (DHM) from the Governor, click [here](#).