



NEWS RELEASE

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www.bernco.gov



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Virtual summer camp to be offered

Bernalillo County – In an effort to keep Bernalillo County residents and county employees safe during the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, most summer programs have been cancelled and outdoor swimming pools will not open.

“This is a very difficult decision to make,” says Parks, Recreation and Open Space Director Debbie Jo Almager. **“The safety of our citizens and staff is of the utmost importance and we want to drastically reduce any chance that this virus could spread through the use of county facilities.”**

The following is a schedule of open and closed facilities and cancelled events and programs:

OPEN:

Rio Grande Pool (Opening date and operating hours to be determined)

- Limited swimmers in facilities
- No spectators
- Social distancing will be observed
- Modified adult swim programming:
 - Lap swim only (no congregating and social distancing must be maintained)
 - Adult water exercise
- NO OPEN RECREATIONAL SWIM

Grab-n-go lunches continues

CLOSED AND CANCELLED:

- ALL outdoor swimming pools
- Community centers
- Summer sports leagues (Youth basketball and adult softball)
- Jimmy Nieto Softball Tournament
- New Mexico Recreation & Park Association state conference in Albuquerque

The county Parks and Recreation Department is rebranding for the summer of 2020 with the slogan, “Recreating Recreation to Virtual Involvement for a Healthier and Safer Community Experience.”

While the county is not offering traditional summer camps, “virtual camps” are being set up to offer zoom classes for exercise, art instruction, music classes and more. The county will also offer grab-n-go art kits that kids can use at home.

Almager notes that the county is making every effort to help homebound families.

“We’re encouraging everyone to keep in touch, via the county Parks and Rec website for program offerings that families can enjoy,” says Almager.

Any resident who has already paid for a summer program or camp is entitled to a refund or credit toward another program/season. Information about refunds/credits is at:

<https://www.bernco.gov/uploads/files/ParksRecreation/CREDIT%20or%20REFUND.pdf>.

Information about available summer programming opportunities through Bernalillo County Parks, Recreation and Open Space can be found at: <https://www.bernco.gov/community-services/parks-recreation.aspx>.

Rio Grande Pool information: <https://www.bernco.gov/community-services/swimming-pools-spray-parks.aspx>.

County information is available on the BernCo website at www.bernco.gov.

Up-to-date information about state mandates and information is at www.newmexico.gov.

Information regarding coronavirus (COVID-19) can be found at www.cdc.gov.

The New Mexico Health Department COVID-19 information line is: 855-600-3453.

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About Bernalillo County

Bernalillo County is 1,160 square miles and is New Mexico’s most populous county with more than 676,000 residents. Bernalillo County government provides a wide range of public services to residents who live in Albuquerque, Los Ranchos and Tijeras and the 111,000 residents who live outside the village and city limits in the unincorporated areas of the county. Bernalillo County employs approximately 2,500 people and has an annual operating budget and capital investments of more than \$650 million. Elected officials include five county commissioners, assessor, clerk, probate judge, sheriff, and treasurer.



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Ditch & Water Safety Task Force News Release

Contact: Joan Griffin (505) 261-4444, jgriffin@sunny505.com

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Ditch and Water Safety Task Force Reminds Parents and Children to Practice Ditch Safety during COVID-19 Closures

May 11, 2020 – Albuquerque – With children at home due to the COVID-19 pandemic and school closures, the Ditch and Water Safety Task Force urges parents to talk with their children about the importance of staying out of ditches and arroyos.

“With the weather warming up and kids home from school, we’re seeing an increase in people seeking alternate outdoor recreation options,” said Joanie Griffin, Ditch and Water Safety Coordinator. “Unfortunately, this means some are using the ditches and arroyos as play areas, and this is unsafe—regardless of what the weather may be. The area ditches have a strong undertow and are never safe to play in. Flash flooding in the arroyos can happen any time. Our message to everyone – is stay away, and find safe places to play.”

There is a misconception is that flash flooding only occurs when it's raining in Albuquerque, but oftentimes it's raining in the mountains and flash flooding will occur in Albuquerque and the surrounding areas. When flash flooding occurs, water travels as fast as 40 MPH, causing ditches and arroyos to fill rapidly. As a result, playing or walking in ditches or arroyos—even when it’s dry—can quickly turn dangerous and even deadly.

“We encourage kids and families to get outside and find safe ways to enjoy the warm weather and beautiful Albuquerque landscapes,” added Griffin. “Ditches and arroyos are never safe, and we hope all parents will remind their children of the very real dangers of these areas.”

The Ditch and Water Safety Task Force engages in community education initiatives throughout the year to spread the “ditches are deadly” message. While the Task Force provides in-school presentations and attends special events, with kids learning remotely, parents can access resources and more information at www.ditchtheditches.com.

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