

Thursday, March 12, 2020

Tri-County Electric Co-op closes lobbies **Member says dealing with COVID virus calls for vigilance, not panic**

Tri-County Electric Cooperative announced Thursday afternoon that their lobbies in Azle, Keller, Granbury and Seymour are temporarily closing while we evaluate the effects of the COV-19 virus.

The lobbies may reopen next week after an assessment has been made.

Those coming in to pay bills are encouraged to use the night drop or drive-through. The Azle office is located at 600 NW Parkway, and the Keller office is at 4900 Keller Hicks Road. For other assistance, please call 817-444-3201.

“We appreciate your understanding as we work to serve our members while keeping them, and our employees, safe,” said Darryl Schriver, general manager and CEO of the co-op.

Brenda Reed, RN, FNP, Ph.D, is a Family Nurse Practitioner at Texas Health Family Care in Azle and an instructor in the nursing program at Texas Christian University. She and her family are also longtime members of Tri-County Electric Cooperative. She spoke Thursday at the Azle Rotary Club to bring listeners up to date on the Coronavirus outbreak.

“I don’t want to let the media put me in a panic, but I also don’t want to be a turtle and put my head in the ground thinking this isn’t going to affect me,” she said. “It’s just being smart, taking care of yourself and taking care of your family.”

She noted that since Jan. 1, 2020, there have been 125,670 cases of COVID-19 reported worldwide.

About 80 percent of those who get it have a “pretty mild” case, and about 4 percent die. The rest – about 16 percent – “have a pretty tough time, but they get better. Each case is different.”

Reed said the incubation period is from one day to 14 days. She stressed that the virus was only identified at the end of December, so the World Health Organization (WHO) and the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) are “learning as they go.”

Reed said those organizations update online from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. every day, and they are the best sources of information. Reed answered numerous questions in her presentation.



How do you spread Corona? It's spread through droplet, from a cough, a sneeze. It can live on surfaces for up to 48 hours.

Who is most at risk? Anyone, but the people who seem to have the worst cases are individuals over 65 who have hypertension, diabetes, heart disease, any kind of organ failure, and autoimmune diseases. Children can get the disease, but they're usually not as sick as adults. Ironically, many times they are the ones who spread the disease because they are usually asymptomatic.

What are the symptoms? The symptoms are cough, congestion, and shortness of breath. There's usually a high fever and malaise – "you're tired and can't do much." Severe cases result in organ failure and death. Since March 1, we have 1,000 cases in 38 different U.S. states, with 30 deaths. There have been 30 cases identified in Texas, with the closest in Frisco.

How do you catch it? You have to be near someone who has it. The longer you're around them, the more likely you are to get it. If you already have immune system problems, you're more likely to catch it. In general, if that person is coughing and not covering their cough, that's the biggest risk.

How do we prevent it from spreading?

- Stay home when you're sick.
- Cover your coughs and sneezes with a tissue.
- Keep people six feet or more away from you
- Wash your hands frequently with soap and water for 20-30 seconds.
- If you blow your nose, sneeze or cough, go wash your hands.

"With time, more and more we're going to see that we're limiting big crowds in tight spaces," Reed said. "Just be prepared."