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Cape Cod Reopening Task Force Offers Reactions to Governor Baker's Reopening Plan

Task Force Members Working In Unison to Prepare for Summer 2020 as Memorial Day Weekend Approaches

Cape Cod – The Cape Cod Reopening Task Force released a statement regarding the outlook for Summer 2020 today, after Governor Charlie Baker announced the reopening plan for the Commonwealth on Monday.

“We are cautiously optimistic that our friends, relatives and guests will return to the Cape this summer for respite and a return to a traditional vacation,” said **Wendy Northcross, CEO of the Cape Cod Chamber of Commerce and Facilitator for the Cape Cod Reopening Task Force**. “This optimism is supported by our recent traveler sentiment survey. The volume and pace of this summer is expected to differ from prior summers, but 67% of our opt-in visitor database is reporting they are likely to visit the Cape this year.” The Chamber is the region’s tourism council, which promotes Cape Cod and the Islands to visitors from around the world.

While beaches officially open statewide May 25th, most town-owned and Cape Cod National Seashore beaches on Cape Cod have remained open and will be open this Memorial Day weekend. There is hope that restaurants will begin to serve dine-in customers and expand to outdoor dining where able, beginning at some point in June. Many restaurants are open for take-out service with new safety and ordering protocols including dozens of the region’s famous take-out seafood establishments, clam shacks, and ice cream parlors. Accommodations of all types are clean, stocked with supplies and are scheduled by the state guidance to reopen in early June as well.

Governor Baker’s reopening plan lists a return to dine-in for restaurants (with a possible restriction to outdoor only seating) and allowance of leisure accommodations in phase 2 of his reopening plan, which would begin no earlier than June 8th. The Governor has made clear that decisions on moving to phases 2, 3 and 4 of the Commonwealth’s reopening plan will be dictated by public health surveillance data including rates of hospitalization, positive tests, and morbidity.

While Memorial Day has traditionally been the unofficial start to summer, this year’s calendar is creating an ironic opportunity, with 14 more days of summer in 2020, Northcross reported. Memorial Day falls this year as early as possible on May 25th, and Labor Day falls as late as it can, on September 7th; the additional 14 days of summer provide a cushion to summer business cycles that may be muted by stay at home orders just now lifting.

“Over the past several weeks as we have planned for reopening on Cape Cod our aim has been to save lives and livelihoods,” **State Senator Julian Cyr (D- Truro) Member and Public Information Officer for the Cape Cod Reopening Task Force.** “We all know that the 2020 summer season will be different than what we are used to; indeed we expect a muted season. But opportunities to enjoy this special place will still be plentiful this summer with all Cape Cod has to offer.”

“Moving out of the ‘stay at home’ phase into the ‘start’ phase of reopening, allows everyone to plan, knowing there are at least three weeks between phases,” **said Wendy Northcross.** “Currently, accommodations and restaurants are serving guests under restrictions in Phase 1. Phase 2 plans for restaurants and accommodations and some attractions to reopen with guidelines.” Those guidelines include social distancing, hygiene protocols, staffing and operations training and cleaning rules, which apply to all business and social organizations. Northcross is participating in a working group organized by the Governor’s office on restaurants, accommodations, and tourism to advise on safe reopening prior to Phase 2, when these sectors are expected to begin reopening.

“Given the highly seasonal nature of many businesses on Cape Cod, which serve their guests on a leisure travel experience during the warm weather months, the Cape Cod Reopening Task Force has been instrumental in pushing for advancement of the reopening date and guidance for the region and state’s many tourism amenities,” **said State Representative Sarah Peake (D-Provincetown) Member of the Cape Cod Reopening Task Force.** “If we do this right, giving confidence to the consumer and ensuring the health and safety of our workforce and residents, we expect to have the reawakening of our tourism businesses in just a few weeks’ time.”

In order to help businesses follow best guidelines for mandatory safety practices, **Sean O’Brien, Director of Barnstable Health & Environment and Member of the Cape Cod reopening Task Force** has marshalled county resources to prepare information for businesses to access for best practices on cleaning and operations. “We will be publishing FAQs on topics like testing, best practices for entities ranging from boating to farmer’s markets and everything in between,” **said Sean O’Brien.** The County’s Department of Human Services will compile health metrics, and the Cape Cod Commission will publish a new economic data dashboard and track business impact through a new survey tool. All will be on one central Cape Cod website which will launch in the coming days.

“Guidance to towns on how to quickly ramp up outdoor dining, accommodate more pedestrian flow and town-regulated activities that may need adjusting at this time is being vetted and shared with the 15 towns,” **said Kristy Senatori, Executive Director of the Cape Cod Commission and Member of the Cape Cod Reopening Task Force.**

“The single biggest determinative factor for what’s possible this summer season depends on the personal responsibility of residents and visitors alike,” **said State Senator Julian Cyr.** “That means everyone covering their nose and mouth with a face covering when unable to keep distance between others, washing hands and surfaces, maintaining distance from others, and watching out for symptoms. Adherence to these health precautions will both prevent spread of coronavirus and allow us to safely reopen.”

“While we expect this summer to be different from any we’ve experienced in our lifetime, we do believe the lure of Cape Cod’s plentiful and beautiful beaches, miles of hiking and biking trails, 47

golf courses, boating and outdoor recreation are the right prescription at the right time. We will be here to safely and warmly welcome our guests," **said Wendy Northcross.**

[More about the work of the Cape Cod Reopening Task Force](#)

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