

## Perry County Commission, Close Courthouse Again!

For the second time since the Perry County Commission voted 4-1 to reopen the Courthouse five days a week it's being closed due to the coronavirus. The Commission Chairman Cedric Hudson notified members that a Courthouse employee tested positive for the coronavirus. The employee had left work on last Thursday (July 2) with symptoms of the virus after being tested on Tuesday June 30th. The employee has not returned by to the Courthouse. The employee results came back over the holiday weekend positive.

The CDC protocol is to have the employer test all employees who came in contact with the infected employee. Through contact tracing all Courthouses employees had been in direct contact with the infected employee on Wednesday and Thursday thus causing a total closure.

The Commission has arranged for each courthouse employee to be tested and all results are scheduled to be returned by Friday July 10. Only those employees who test results are negative will resume their work schedule on Monday. The Commission also had each employee tested last Monday and Tuesday, June 29 and 30. The results from those test showed all employees as negative except one. The employee returned to work Wednesday and had to leave on Thursday. The likelihood of additional employees being positive is very slim, however out an abundance of caution and CDC guidance, the closure was ordered.

Commissioner Turner said, "no other employees showed any outward symptoms, however if the original testing date had taken place, we would not be closing now. The original testing date was changed unknowingly when it had been scheduled for the Wednesday (July 1) and Thursday (July 2) before the employees were to leave on July 3 for the 4th of July holiday. The Commission can't follow the non medical public advice in dealing with this virus. The CDC calls for an employee to remain off work until a negative test result is back and we didn't do that. That is why the original testing dates were scheduled so the Courthouse could remain open while some employees could continue to work and some would go be tested. Now, we are following the correct protocol, closing down until test results are back first."

The debate of opening the Courthouse back to 5 days a week by the Commission was had in May. Since that vote, the Courthouse has been temporarily closed on two occasions for safety reasons related to COVID-19.