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## **FYI COMMUNITY AFFAIRS PROGRAM**

**DATE:** 5/6/2020

**INTERVIEWEE:** Jess Powers, Russell County Emergency Management Coordinator

**INTERVIEWED BY WXLZ REP:** Bobby Smallwood

**BRIEF SUMMARY OF INTERVIEW:** Jess gave us an update on the Covid 19 numbers for Virginia today. Virginia with another increase now has 20,256 cases. Russell County has 5 ( 2 new, 2 recovered and 1 hospitalized). Tazewell County has 6 and no deaths. Buchanan County has 16 and no deaths. Washington County has 40 and Wise has 22. The Health District that each county is in is determined by the population. A couple of weeks ago Russell County did a drive thru testing site and tested 47. All were negative. When asked about Russell County opening back up when others are closed, Jess responded that the governor was afraid if certain areas opened then people would travel from infected areas to these areas. Decided it best to stay closed and open as a whole and with restrictions. The governor is looking at opening Virginia May 15 but with restrictions. We are watching other states that have opened to see what happens. Virginia has not peaked yet. As numbers in Virginia increased northward you could see it as it traveled down interstate and finally into Southwest Virginia. We had time to prepare and that preparation has kept our numbers down. When Southwest Virginia finally opens it will be a new normal. The phases will bring about opening up slowly. We will still need to wear mask, wash hands and keep 6 feet apart. Jess stressed that we should wear a face mask to protect others. He mentioned the meat shortage in the United States. Jess says that the supply chain will be disrupted during a pandemic like this. Hopefully it will be temporary. Government is offering help. Russell Meat Packers is still open and Appalachia Meats is still open. We can look to alternatives for meat such as pinto beans which also has protein. Russell County is looking at another testing site. We need to continue to maintain a 6 feet distance, wash hands, wear mask and use PPE correctly. Example, don't touch rest of your body with gloves, remove them by peeling off and rolling into each other.

**LENGTH OF INTERVIEW:** 30 minutes

**DATE OF BROADCAST:** 5/6/2020 9:00am