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Riverside County

NEWS RELEASE

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Cool centers open during heatwave, COVID testing sites to close for the weekend

With the hottest temperatures of the year forecasted this weekend, Riverside County health officials remind residents to stay cool and avoid heat-related illnesses.

For residents without air-conditioning, visit one of the 35 cool centers open at no cost to the public. These centers have served more than 19,000 visitors since opening June 1. The centers will be available through October as temperatures warrant.

“Serious heat-related illnesses can come on suddenly, particularly for the young and elderly,” said Kim Saruwatari, director of Public Health. “For your safety, get out of the heat and drink extra water. Cool centers are open and coronavirus safety measures are in place to keep everyone safe.”

Among the safety guidelines, all visitors and staff at the cooling centers will be asked to wear face coverings and practice social distancing. Visitors are screened before entering and those who show symptoms may be provided an alternative location to cool off. Those who have been confirmed positive for coronavirus will not be allowed into cool centers, but can use the utility assistance program (951-955-4900) to help pay the extra cost of operating their air conditioner for longer periods.

“Cool centers are a life-saving option for our residents,” said Riverside County Board Chair and Fourth District Supervisor V. Manuel Perez. “Our vulnerable low-income residents, such as the

elderly, disabled, and families with infants and young children living in disadvantaged communities, do not have to suffer and risk the dangers of extreme heat.”

The cool centers are coordinated by the Community Action Partnership of Riverside County, in conjunction with Riverside University Health System – Public Health, and are in schools, senior and community centers. Light refreshments and water will be available at some locations. For a list of cool center locations, visit www.capriverside.org.

As a result of the high temperatures, the county’s four drive-up testing locations in Lake Elsinore, Riverside, Perris and Indio, will be closed for the weekend. They will reopen on Tuesday.

Other tips to stay cool, include drinking water, avoid caffeine and alcohol, use sunscreen, wear loose, light-fitting clothing, and limit time outdoors to the early morning or evening when the temperatures are not as high.

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