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Volusia County Council adopts resolution urging the wearing of face masks

The Volusia County Council has ramped up messaging urging the use of face coverings in the ongoing battle against the COVID-19 pandemic.

On Tuesday, the council unanimously adopted a resolution encouraging everyone working, living, visiting or doing business in Volusia County to wear face coverings in any business where social distancing can't be maintained. The resolution also encourages businesses to prohibit entry of anyone not wearing a face covering. Tuesday's council action comes after donation of more than 300,000 face masks to local residents. The resolution complements the recent launch of the Step Up Volusia public awareness campaign reminding residents of the importance of practicing proper hand hygiene and social distancing and wearing face coverings in order to help stop the spread of the virus.

"We know and believe that based on other results from other areas that the masks are what makes the difference," said Councilwoman Barb Girtman.

Council members also said they hope the resolution will spur more businesses to require the wearing of face coverings.

"It truly comes down to personal responsibility," said Councilwoman Heather Post. "If you're uncomfortable going into a business that doesn't have the mask requirement, then you have every right as an American citizen not to go into that business."

While not mandatory, the resolution provides exceptions to the wearing of face coverings – such as children under the age of 2, people with breathing problems or underlying medical conditions, people observing at least six feet of social distancing while exercising and people separated by barriers that effectively prevent the transmission of COVID-19.

Adoption of the resolution is another aspect of the council's ongoing efforts to support community recovery efforts that have included the distribution of more than 300,000 free facemasks to local residents and 3,500 personal protective kits to area businesses. The council also has allocated \$13 million in COVID-19 relief funds to help struggling small businesses and home-based businesses and another \$10 million to assist residents with rent and mortgage payments.

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