

## **Personal Message from Mayor Don Volger**

March 31, 2020

There's no place I'd rather be during a crisis than Pagosa Springs and Archuleta County. We are blessed to live in a small community of people who care about others and have leaders who recognize the value of cooperation and collaboration. Our leaders listen to the opinions of others, even when we don't agree, and we believe people possess great value, regardless of their views and actions.

Last Thursday the town council held a work session to discuss ideas about ways to better serve during this time. Our town manager, Andrea Philips, briefed us on recent events and we shared ideas. I was asked to provide another public statement.

I left the meeting nagged by a key question, "What do people really need right now?" I woke Friday morning pondering the question as I prepared for a meeting with Andrea, County Administrator Scott Wall, and County Commission Chairman Ronnie Maez. I asked for their ideas and here are some thoughts. We would like to thrive, but right now survival has got to be the priority.

To survive for an extended period of time, an individual needs oxygen, water, food, clothing, shelter, and a positive mental attitude (PMA). The most important thing to possess is PMA because, when "lost", the natural emotional response is fear, even panic. As we start to experience that fear we must tell ourselves, "I won't give up", "I can do this", and "I will make it". I've been taught, and I agree, that PMA is essentially 80% of survival.

A group, or community, should possess these same survival essentials, and more. We need each other, and we need to work together with mutual respect and effective communication. We need to encourage and support one another. We need to share. This is a great time to truly help each other develop and maintain a positive mental attitude.

Your local community leaders are currently setting priorities and making many important decisions. We, as individuals and a community, must survive first, then we should strive to thrive. As leaders we must listen, gather information, and make the best decisions possible as unified public servants to promote health; personal, group, community, physical, mental, emotional, spiritual, and economic. Trust must be earned, but I ask you to trust your leadership as a whole. I ask in confidence, because I know many of them well, and they have my trust.

We will survive this season of challenge, and we can thrive in many ways, not necessarily economic. We will be a different community when this specific crisis ends, and we can be a better one. We have a wonderful opportunity to grow closer and work together more productively. It's already happening.

Please do your best to develop and maintain a positive mental attitude. Don't submit to the temptation to fear and be anxious about the future. Let's take one day at a time.

Isn't it interesting that crisis tends to bring out the best, or worst, in people? I see "the best" coming to the surface locally, and I've seen it here before. I repeat, I would rather be here, now, in our community, than any other place in the world. Don't give up. We can do this. We will make it.

God bless and protect you, your loved ones, and your neighbors.