MEDIA RELEASE

OFFICE OF COUNTY MAYOR GLENN JACOBS

400 Main Street, Suite 615, Knoxville, TN 37902

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: April 17, 2020

Knox County to Furlough Employees Beginning May 9

Knoxville, Tennessee—Knox County Mayor Glenn Jacobs announced today a temporary furlough for county government employees as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. The furlough will affect a yet-to-be-determined number of employees in the fee offices and every executive branch department.

Furloughed employees will continue to receive health coverage and other benefits from Knox County in addition to up to $275 per week from the State of Tennessee and $600 from the federal government's Coronavirus Aid, Relieve and Economic Security (CARES) Act funding for a total of up $875 per week while unemployed.

Employees will officially start what's technically classified as an eight-week furlough on May 9 but will continue working—and be paid—through May 8 to give county Human Resources time to file unemployment paperwork on their behalf, though they will have to personally certify unemployment weekly online.

It is the intent of Knox County to bring everyone back to work, though furlough extensions remain a possibility.

"We are facing this challenge directly and making decisions that will help us continue providing the services our residents depend on," said Mayor Jacobs. "The decision to furlough employees was incredibly difficult and the hardest move I've made as Mayor. We held off as long as we could and do not take this lightly because we know it affects real people's livelihoods. We expect these furloughs to be temporary and hope that everyone will be back to work very soon. Though this certainly isn't something we wanted to do, we need to watch our spending during these uncertain times."

Mayor Jacobs continued: "Governor Lee remarked recently that Tennesseans have paid quite a price, that we've worked diligently to help mitigate the spread of the virus but have sacrificed in a great way. This is true in Knox County, too. Our government is like any other business operating in the community and just like the businesses and people we serve, we are experiencing significant loss in revenue because of the COVID-19 pandemic."

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Contact: Mike Donila 306-1177 cell

Abbey Harris 215-4579 office 705-1681 cell