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Loosening of Businesses Hours and Services in USVI are On the Horizon

Coronavirus / **Published On April 28, 2020 04:06 AM /**

Robert Moore **April 28, 2020**

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Easing the restrictions on non-essential businesses may be on the horizon despite uncertainty about the whether the territory has enough COVID-19 tests.

Gov. Albert Bryan said Monday he is preparing to issue a new executive order that will describe the phased reopening of non-essential businesses and the guidelines by which they are to adhere. He also pointed out that the current stay-at-home order expires at midnight on April 30.

Mr. Bryan likened his approach to reopening the economy to a three-legged stool, with one leg representing safety and the public health, one leg representing the USVI's economic concerns and the third leg representing rights to personal freedoms.

“Over the next few weeks, and perhaps months, we will try to optimize the balance of these concerns. That will require some trial and error. As we approach this phased reopening, we will take things one step at a time,” the governor said. “If we find that we are heading in the wrong direction as a community, we will fall back to the prior restrictions. Our progress depends on the cooperation of the general public.

“Part of our roll-out will include an alert system, and we will try to make our decisions and the reasons for those decisions as clear and transparent as possible,” he said.

The governor also said that during the next two weeks he will be sending legislation for consideration to the 33rd Legislature, including efforts to change the definition of “in person,” which the governor said currently is outdated because people are ever-present no matter where they are because of instant messaging, video and cell phones.

“It is past time that our law reflects these technological advancements, and the current situation mandates that we adjust post haste,” he said.

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