



**BENTON COUNTY TENNESSEE  
COUNTY MAYOR  
BRETT LASHLEE**



23 April 2020

RE: COVID-19 Death in Benton County

Citizens of Benton County,

As you may already be aware, the Tennessee Department of Health today reported the first COVID-19-related death in Benton County.

To be clear, due to laws regarding privacy we are not informed of patient information, so we know nothing beyond that a person has passed.

Benton County is our home, and this loss hits us on a very personal level. We assure you that, as local leaders, we share those same feelings. Let us collectively pray for, and grieve with the family, whoever they may be, as they are experiencing the loss of their loved one to this virus. Let us also grant them privacy.

Whatever your approach to or thoughts have been towards this virus, we are all impacted by this tragedy whether directly or indirectly. We must continue to be diligent in our overall health practices and behaviors as this virus is still a grave threat to our community. We must continue to keep the safety of our county as a priority. Please continue to adhere to CDC, White House, and TN Health guidelines.

As local governments, we must continue to follow federal and state mandates. As individuals, we must continue to protect our vulnerable populations, and take extra precautions to care for the elderly and children, as well as those that are struggling emotionally and mentally.

Very Respectfully,

Brett W. Lashlee, County Mayor  
Autumn Ratliff, City of Big Sandy  
Roger Pafford, City of Camden