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NEWS RELEASE

Jury Trials to Resume in Collier County... Slowly and Cautiously

After a suspension of jury trials that has lasted for seven months, jury trials will slowly and cautiously resume in Collier County beginning in October.

In response to the public health emergency, the Florida Supreme Court and the 20th Judicial Circuit suspended or limited in-person procedures and services including criminal and civil jury trials. Using a four-phased transitioning timeline, the 20th Judicial Circuit is gradually authorizing the resumption of services, which includes a handful of felony and misdemeanor jury trials in Collier County beginning Oct. 6.

The Collier County Clerk of the Circuit Court will be mailing juror summonses for two upcoming jury trials that are scheduled to be held in October. A jury summons is a court order directing a citizen to appear in court for potential jury service.

"We are moving forward! Jury trials are a vital part of our justice system and it's great to see them restored in Collier County," said Clerk Crystal Kinzel. *"If you receive a summons, know that you are crucial to the restoration of our court system. I am grateful for your service."*

People entering the courthouse, including potential jurors, are required to follow mandatory safety measures ordered by the Chief Judge. Those measures include wearing a face mask at all times, a brief health screening that will include a temperature scan, and maintaining six feet social distancing.

The 20th Judicial Circuit has authorized COVID-19 related juror excusals and postponements to enhance juror safety, mitigate the spread of the virus, and address hardships related to the pandemic.

Prospective jurors who indicate (subject to penalty of perjury) that they meet any of the criteria listed below may request a COVID-19 related excusal:

- Prospective juror does not meet the court's screening requirements for courthouse entry;
- Prospective juror is at higher risk for severe illness due to COVID-19 infection;
- Prospective juror must care for a child or relative whose regular care provider is closed or unavailable for reasons related to COVID-19;
- Prospective juror is receiving leave pursuant to the Families First Coronavirus Response Act.

Prospective jurors who indicate (subject to penalty of perjury) that they meet any of the criteria below may request a COVID-19 related postponement:

- Prospective juror recently returned to work after being unemployed due to COVID-19;
- Prospective juror has suffered a financial or personal loss due to COVID-19 that makes it a hardship to perform jury service.

For more information, visit www.CollierClerk.com or contact Mike Sheffield at (239) 252-6879.