



Laikipia

The official newsletter of the County Government of Laikipia

**WEEKLY
BULLETIN**

Laikipia Prepares for Visitor Influx Amid Tight Surveillance



Laikipia is readying itself over a possible influx of domestic tourists in case of reopening of the lockdown in Nairobi.

The county is focusing on providing a safe commercial ecosystem, with the priority on enabling businesses to maximize operations within the safety limits of the established health protocols.

All round, the government is strengthening its systems to create a safe environment for interaction as the anticipated ease of travel restrictions in Nairobi is likely to bring more visitors to Laikipia.

This possibility presents both an opportunity to the business fraternity, which has been badly battered by the Covid-19 pandemic, and a challenge of likelihood of new infections from the visitors.

The government has intensified its surveillance and enforce as businesses, particularly those in the hospitality industry cautiously open.

From intensified border surveillance, to an elaborate plan to bolster commerce through financial partnerships to stimulating ailing businesses, Laikipia is cautiously opening its economy, within the context of the "the new normal."

"We expect a serious influx of residents to Laikipia to take advantage of our great diversity of offerings-and we should be a pioneer for managing in the 'new normal'," Laikipia Tourism Association said in brief.

As businesses reopen the department of health providing a safety guide to ensure safety of the public, as the government works out an elaborate plan to simultaneously strengthen businesses through a Kshs 2 billion subsidized loan scheme targeting 5,000 micro and small enterprises.

It has also streamlined the licensing process of food handlers-thanks to a seamless collaboration between the trade and health departments.

By Friday last week, 75 food outlets in the county had been issued with business permits, having complied with the stringent requirements of the new health protocol during Covid-19. Their workers also underwent Covid-19 tests and well general medical health tests.

In Laikipia, the reopening of the economy comes at a time when the county has strengthened its health structures. Nanyuki and Nyahururu Referral Hospitals now have a five bed intensive care unit each, with Nanyuki Teaching and Referral Hospital having a 12 bed high dependency unit.

The hospital bed capacity is now on a high ever acceleration, as the government engages vocational training centres in the manufacture of cheaper, quality beds that are now serving in the isolation units across the county.

With the revival of the Nairobi-Nanyuki railway line, the local tourism industry in Laikipia is set for an explosion, and the systems are in place to afford the tourists and hosts a Covid-19 free environment.

Coronavirus Hotlines: 0110 094 440 / 0738 055 343

Increased Surveillance As Reopening of Lockdown Looms

Laikipia has increased surveillance as it anticipates an influx of visitors in the event of reopening of the lockdown in Nairobi.

The county department of health is strengthening the eight entry points by deploying more community health volunteers and gunthermometers and mobile phones.

The county expects an influx of Nairobian seeking to take advantage of Laikipia's diversified tourism after a three-month lockdown.

While the prospect of reopening presents a big opportunity for businesses, especially those in the hospitality industry, it equally presents a challenge as the visits could see a spike in Covid-19 infections in the county.

Tight measures have been put in place ensure there will be no new infections of Covid-19 as people interact in the course of doing business and as people flock the county even from counties with high number of infections.

At screening points, which will operate for 24 hours, every or motorist entering Laikipia will be expected to provide information on the specific area of the City that they are coming from, their destination and the people they will be visiting.

Their details will be also be captured while leaving in case there will be need for contact tracing. The county has come up with a mobile application for the screening points that saves time in capturing of data.

More community health volunteers will be deployed as there are many people who will be passing by screening points. All vehicles will have to be fumigated to kill the virus that may be on them.

CHVs at the community level have been directed to closely monitor visitors who will come once the country reopens. They are expected to ensure such individuals comply with the laid down protocols like self-quarantine.

Vigilance on health facilities is paramount as more people are expected to visit such amenities. The department is reinforcing on public health measures to keep Laikipia safe.

Inspection and enforcement team have been alerted to ensure compliance of all business premises to the guidelines of safe distancing and handwashing spots.



The department will be checking whether there is a handwashing spot with soap and clean running water. Failure to abide by these will see the premises close down.

Restaurants and any eatery places are bound to have more customers and if not well managed, there could be infections to many people if a single person is infected with the deadly virus. Thus, the Health department is ensuring that all the food handlers in the county undergo a Covid-19 test and the normal medical check-up before resuming work.

They must also be certified to transact such a business through acquisition of medical certificates which are available at the referral hospitals.

Also, the department is ensuring that all hotels adhere to the MOH directives of safe distancing of customers to safeguard no physical interactions. Before a customer is ushered in, they will have to sanitize their hands or wash them with soap and clean running water and their temperatures taken.

Other business premises like supermarkets have been directed to clearly mark where customers are to queue so as to keep a distance of at least one and a half metres apart. They must also limit the number of customers inside the premises in a given time.

The department is calling for all organizations to shun physical departmental meetings and turn to online ones. Generally physical gatherings are discouraged so as to minimize physical contacts as it is hard to identify who is carrying the various without signs (asymptomatic).

Other measures that must be taken to minimize rapture of the virus in the county is to regularly disinfect surfaces which are touched most like counters, tables and door knobs.

County Develops Protocol to Guide Reopening of Hotels and Restaurants

Laikipia county has developed protocols for hotels, restaurants and eateries that wish to re-open to prevent spread of Covid-19.

Copies of the guidelines and directives that food handlers are to abide by can be obtained from Public Health Offices, County Health Facilities or downloaded from the MOH website www.health.go.ke

For a restaurant to open, a tender application using **Form A** must be done. This is the form that expresses interest of interest to reopen an eatery. It is done by the traders or owners of the said facilities.

An inspection then is done using **Form B** which is ideally a checklist used to check on compliance with the directives provided by

MOH. It is filled by County public health officers. Its purpose is to ensure the hotel and restaurants meet the physical, structural and sanitary conditions for reopening- including a mandatory Covid-19 test.

If compliance to the directives is confirmed, a permit via **Form C** is issued. This form is given by the director public health allowing the food establishment to operate. Seventy-five such organizations have completed the three processes and have been allowed to resume operations.

For those that shall not have complied, advice shall be given by Public Health officers on the improvements that need to be done.

The Department is also facilitating the food

handlers with medical certificates at a subsidized price of Ksh. 600 instead of the normal cost of Ksh. 800. By doing so the government is facilitating hotels and other eateries to resume operations without much constrains. Even as the Government continues to play its part in the prevention and containment of Covid-19, all Laikipians are urged to continue observing all the simple measures such as regular hand washing with soap and running water, use of hand sanitizers, observing cough hygiene, observing social distancing and wearing face masks appropriately when in public places.

75 Hotels and Restaurants in the County Permitted to Reopen

By Friday, July 3, 2020, 75 hotels, eateries and food outlets across the county had been certified to re-open after meeting the laid down requirements.

The county government has embarked on a speedy issuance of such permits in a bid to scale up the recovery of the local economy, as businesses gear up for a possible reopening of the economy.

The Departments of Trade and Health have converged operations that have seen faster processing of permits for food outlets, turning an otherwise lengthy process into a smooth one that has seen more dealers get clearance certificates within a short time. The new health directives in the wake of Covid-19 have made the process longer and more stringent.

“This step is set to address the possible strain on the limited food establishments once the country eases up the travel restrictions into and out of Nairobi, as the requirement to observe social distancing remain in force,” CEC for Trade Biwott Tirop said.

The interdepartmental collaboration has facilitated convergence of clinical and other compliance processes that would have



Maiyan is among hotels that have re-opened after meeting health requirements

taken hotel operators and food handlers longer to fulfill.

In Nanyuki, for instance, food handlers seeking medical certificates can now get all the services at the Nanyuki Teaching and Referral Hospital, where medical inspection, payment

and issuance of the certificates is all done under one roof.

The department of trade has been reaching out to hotels and eateries to take advantage of the new and convenient experience to acquire the certifications in readiness for heightened com-

Why Livestock Farmers Are Raring to Go!



Among the many sectors that are eagerly waiting for the reopening of the economy in the county is agriculture. Since the partial lock down of the capital city of Nairobi, the farmers in Laikipia have adversely been affected, especially those in livestock farming.

Demand has been down since closure of restaurants and eateries but this is expected to change drastically once the lockdown is lifted. Farmers are hopeful that the demand of their animals will go up and boost them economically.

According to the chairman Laikipia Farmers Association, Mr. Martin Evans, farmers in the county are fully prepared for reviving of economy. They have been hardened by the Covid-19 environment and have adapted accordingly.



Mr Evans

“We are not going to change much when economy reopens as we have been adhering to government’s directives of keeping safe. We have been practicing social distances and wearing of masks in our work places and we intend to continue doing so”, commented Evans.

The association has been hard hit due to decrease in demand of beef but has still managed to keep all their workers occupied with none losing their jobs in the wake of the pandemic. In Laikipia by end of July 3rd 2020, a total of 75 eateries had been cleared by the department of health to resume operations.

It is expected that the number will businesses seeking to reopen will gradually rise.

Government Puts in Place Measures to Support Businesses

Laikipia County has continued to explore innovative avenues to help businesses hard hit by Covid-19 get back on their feet.

Top on the latest breakthroughs is a deal between the county government and KCB Group that led to the signing of a KShs. 2.1 billion shillings in subsidized loans to retailers, agribusinesses, tourism ventures and livestock dealers.

SMEs, cooperatives and self-help groups in table banking are some of the primary beneficiaries of the subsidized loans that is set to benefit 5000 businesses across the county.

The amount will go into providing the much needed cash flow to enable businesses get back on their feet faster. The arrangement provides the cheapest loans in the market, where the where the government will buy down the cost of credit on the borrowers to 7.5 per cent down from the 12 to 14 per cent in the market. "Businesses have consumed their working capital, they need money to buy stock and reorganize their workforce. If we leave the businesses to build capital on their own, it might take us more than two years to a full economic recovery," said Deputy Governor John Mwaniki, who is spearheading the efforts. By injecting fresh capital into the market, Mr. Mwaniki says, the government is stepping in to cut down the economic recovery time to six months, this way saving more people the economic destruction that coupled by slow economic recovery. "Our decision is informed by the fact that unless businesses get back to normal, the ongoing food subsidy programme to the vulnerable households might not be sustain-

able in the long run," Mr. Mwaniki said. "We want the economy to drive itself as quickly as possible."

The partnership with KCB is the first among three others the government is currently exploring with Absa, Cooperative and Stanbic Banks that is set to build a strong credit line for Laikipia businesses. To ensure proper utilization of the loans, the government has embarked on the training of 200 business development officers drawn from different sectors who will provide the SMEs with the skills and knowledge to assist them make the best out of the loans. The officers will walk the SMEs through the processes of loan application, training on business plan management, marketing and monitoring and evaluating progress.

"We are trying as much as possible to avoid putting businesses into debt, and that is why we are providing every business with a contact officer to walk them through all the stages of their business development," Mr. Mwaniki said. The government and KCB Bank are currently fast tracking the process that will see the first batch of SMEs receive the loans this month.

Customized arrangement

The subsidized loan to businesses has taken into account the diversity of businesses in the county. This means that the requirements will factor in the nature of business and the relevant collateral. For instance, a loan applicant dealing in livestock will have their collateral customized to their need, and may involve the use of animal tags as opposed to a borrower in retail business. "We want to make the process as convenient as possible for the benefit of Laikipian," the Deputy Governor said. Under the arrangement the loan applicants will borrow between Ksh. 5000 and Ksh. 2 million to be repaid in 12 to 24 months.



Deputy Governor John Mwaniki



Promoting roses from Laikipia: Floriculture and horticulture sectors are targets for Government support

VTCs Boost Production of Hospital Beds in Laikipia

Laikipia County has turned to its Vocational Training Centres to meet its needs for hospital beds, in line with the requirement to have at least 300 bed capacity Covid-19 isolation facilities.

The move is informed by the directive that requires each county to meet the minimum bed capacity of 300 in the isolation facilities, and at least 10 intensive care unit beds.

The county department of health has engaged the three VTCs of Nanyuki, Nyahururu and Marmanet to procure the beds, as

hospitals grapple with shortage of equipment due to disruption of supplies following the rapid spread of Covid-19. The locally made hospital beds entered mass production following the approval of the prototypes by the medical engineering team from the department of health in April. As of Thursday, the three VTCs were finalizing the production of 80 beds to be supplied to the isolation units in Nanyuki and Nyahururu. The Laikipia made hospital beds are providing a cheaper

and faster alternative of equipping the health facilities, as they meet international standards with the added low price advantage.

The bed production by the vocational training institutions is part of a wider plan by the county government to turn the education institutions into production hubs. This step will not only help the institutions sustain themselves but also create jobs for their graduates.

Tigithi VTC is well on the path as it recently entered into



bread baking to tap into the growing market, which includes neighbouring secondary schools and communities.

NTRH Staff Trained How To Operate Ventilators

Ventilator are the most sought-after equipment in the field of medicine during this Covid-19 era.

However, the machines are complicated and require extra training for them to be useful. That is why clinical teams at Nanyuki Teaching and Referral Hospital are currently undergoing a simulation-based scenarios training on mechanical ventilation.

The county government has partnered with Gradian Health Systems to provide access to critical care business model that involves:

technology, user training and customer service.

The county recently acquired five mechanical ventilators which have been installed at NTRH in readiness for any emergency, including but not limited to those related to Covid-19. Other five are expected to be installed at Nyahururu County Referral Hospital soon.

Covid-19 is characterized by patients exhibiting difficulty in breathing and that necessitates the need for having a ventilator. Ventilators help in pumping in oxygen to the lungs and removing carbon dioxide to patients who are unable to breath on their own.

The training is ongoing at the Critical Care Unit at the health facility.



Committee Orders the Removal of Obstructive Trees in Nyahururu Town

Removal of hazardous trees on roadsides and near buildings on Nyahururu town streets has started after the approval of environmental committee.

In March this year, the obstructive trees caused four accidents during a heavy rainfall before the committee resolved to remove them. It went around the town and identified all the trees that posed a danger to the residents and marked them for felling.

“The committee agreed to plant ornamental trees in order to replace the felled trees,” the sub-county administrator Mr Ikinya Matindi said.

The committee comprises DCC, ACC 1, the Forester, the sub-county Environment officer and the sub-county administrator.

The wood would be donated to charitable institutions like St Martins, DEB, Ngarenaro, Starehe and Kwa Wanjiku Special Schools.

Cypress trees are soft wood trees that are exotic in Kenya. They are normally planted to feed the local industry.



Business Community Lauds Government for Support

Laikipia business community has lauded the steps the county government has taken to facilitate a full economic recovery.

National Chamber of Commerce Laikipia chair Ndegwa Gitonga says the recent partnership between the County Government of Laikipia and KCB Group to lend subsidized loans SMEs is a good initiative to enable faster economic rebound.

“We urge the county government to fast track the remaining steps to make sure the affordable lending scheme provides the much needed cash flow to stimulate the local economy,” Mr. Gitonga said, adding that it would be unsustainable to let the businesses build the working capital on their own.

The deal to provide subsidized loans is relief to business people, coming at a time businesses are struggling to find working capital to sustain operations.

“Our SMEs have run out of stock, they cannot pay their workers or rent. We are talking of another painstaking process of businesses getting back on their feet, a process that might event take us years,” Mr. Gitonga said, adding that the steps of reorganizing the workforce, the protocols of social distancing might further delay availability of disposable income that is key to the tourism sector.

The county government recently signed an agreement to provide Ksh. 2.1 billion in subsidized working capital to 5000 businesses in all the 15 wards.

On the possible full reopening of commerce, Mr. Gitonga says easing the travel restrictions is inevitable if the economy is to be saved from total col-



lapse.

Mr. Gitonga says as much as Covid-19 poses great health risks, the country has managed to slow the transmission rate down, going by the projections made following the entry of the disease to the country.

“There are greater social-economic risks that will build over time if we do not open up the economic space soon enough. The health capacity has been scaled up to address the possible scenarios, so it is time to reopen our economy” Mr. Gitonga said.

The impact of Covid-19 on Laikipia

Tourism

Like many other tourists destinations the world over, Laikipia has equally suffered the impact of Covid-19.

As the industry gears up for a restart, here's a look at the impact of the Covid-19 on tourism and hospitality operations in Laikipia.

The latest survey shows over 81 per cent have closed operations, with about 18 per cent running some partial operations.

Before Covid-19, over 30 per cent of properties had over 50 employees. Currently, only 3.7 per cent of the properties have between 41 to 50 employees, meaning more people have been rendered jobless. Further, 59.26 per cent of tourism and hospitality properties reported average pay cuts of 50 per cent to employees, making a bad situation even worse.

In addition, 14.81 properties sent their staff on unpaid leave, with 3.7 per cent reporting partial layoffs. Over 78 per cent of the tourism and hospitality properties suffered a complete loss of business, with 65.2 per cent are without any operations left.

The survey shows Kenyans alone form the biggest market share of the tourism industry in Laikipia, standing at 38.1 per cent. The rest is shared by the rest of the global market.



NTRH Mother and Child Hospital



Putting final touches on NTRH Mother and Child Hospital





CS Munya, Governor Muriithi Lead Livestock Vaccination Drive in Segeera Ward



On Saturday, July 4, 2020, Agriculture CS Peter Munya and Governor Ndiritu Muriithi lead a cattle vaccination drive at Segeera ward.

Livestock sub-sector a significant proportion of Laikipia's economy. The county is the home to the world acclaimed Borana breed of beef cattle which famous for withstanding tropical climate. Kenya Vision 2020 had initially earmarked Laikipia county for development of a Disease Free Zone. The focus has since changed to establishment of feedlots as a modern and more productive way of livestock production.

Although it is not given the deserving attention, livestock economy is 10 times higher than that of maize. The livestock value chain has many players.