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PRESS RELEASE

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Coronavirus: RCSCW preps for golf course closures

The Recreation Centers of Sun City West is prepping for the closure of its seven golf courses Tuesday, with the timing aimed at eliminating resident and employee exposure as Arizona heads into its estimated peak Covid-19 weeks.

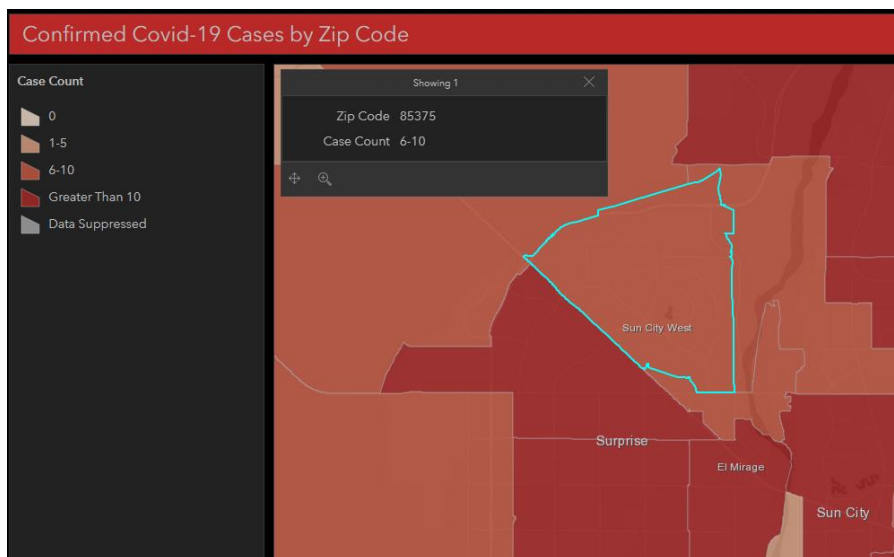
According to the University of Washington's Covid-19 model, Arizona is expected to see its peak number of cases on April 26, and peak deaths per day on April 27. Overall, Arizona is estimated to suffer 974 deaths by Aug. 4.

"Obviously, those are projections, and the estimates change almost daily," said General Manager Bill Schwind. "But our decision to close our last open amenity – golf – is based on watching these estimated dates, as well as the growing concern over our age group, which is most susceptible to this disease."

According to Maricopa County Public Health's Covid-19 Daily Report, "The risk of being admitted to a hospital, Intensive Care Unit, or dying due to Covid-19 infection increases with age." Additionally, "People who are 65+ years of age OR who have a chronic medical condition area at highest risk for severe disease."

"Early interventions by the Rec Centers have saved lives in the community of Sun City West," said Deputy Fire Chief/Fire Marshal Eric Kriwer with Arizona Fire and Medical Authority. "We are just entering our curve in the state. Now we need to be focused during the coming weeks on trying to stay home unless leaving is essential, wearing masks when in public, practicing excellent hand washing, and limiting exposure by social/physical distancing.

"Further action such as temporarily holding off on golfing and keeping gatherings at a minimum will continue to save lives in our community," Kriwer added. "Be a great neighbor, reach out via telephone or Facetime, send emails to loved ones, and together, we will get past this."



Sun City West, which began announcing event cancellations as early as March 9, followed by rec center closures and now golf, has an estimated 6 to 10 confirmed Covid cases as of Monday, lower than the surrounding zip codes, according to the Arizona Department of Health Services' newly published zip code map. There is a severe lack of testing availability in the state; cases that are not confirmed through hospitalization or a coronavirus test do not appear in the stats.

At the state level, 78 of the 115 deaths as of Sunday were 65 and older. For Maricopa County, the numbers show 79 percent of those who died in the county from Covid-19 were 65 or older; 63 percent had a chronic medical condition. Patients with one of those two high risk categories combined (age or chronic condition) accounted for 96 percent of the deaths in Maricopa County.

Additionally, 30 long-term care facilities have had at least one resident with Covid-19. The Rec Centers will provide a link to the county's report on its website at suncitywest.com/covid19.

"This is the demographic in Sun City West. Our average age is 74, and many residents have chronic conditions," said Schwind. "We've kept golf open as long as we thought it was safe. But with cases in Sun City West increasing and the peak just around the corner, it's time to close them and let everyone get through this peak safely."

The golf courses will close at end of business on Monday, April 13. Sun City West joins the 45 percent of golf courses that have closed nationally due to Covid-19. That number is growing, with the Southwestern states around Arizona, including California, Nevada and New Mexico, having already closed their courses.

In Sun City West, maintenance projects that were scheduled a couple weeks from now will be moved forward. This includes aerification and other work. All residents are advised that the closures mean no walking, biking, golfing or other activities will be allowed. The maintenance work and potential mixed use creates an unacceptable hazard. Flags and cups have been removed from the course to discourage trespassing. To ensure residents comply with the closures, Player Assistants who usually work the courses to help golfers during play, will be reassigned to patrol the courses and ensure there is no trespassing.

The Rec Centers is taking this action as an extension of its earlier progression of closures as the state and nation deal with the spread of coronavirus. The Rec Centers Pandemic Task Force and key staff are meeting regularly and will reevaluate that closure date as the situation across the state unfolds.

Member dues are still being accepted via mail, the online portal or a drop box in front of the Member Services Office. Member dues WILL NOT be prorated due to the pandemic. For an explanation of what member dues fund, visit suncitywest.com/covid19. Those who underpay on their dues will not be in good standing when the Rec Centers reopen.

The Rec Centers is working closely with Arizona Fire and Medical Authority, as well as taking guidance from the Centers for Disease Control and Arizona Department of Health Services to provide updates. Information can be found online at suncitywest.com/covid19 and by following the Recreation Centers of Sun City West on all their social media:

- Facebook: Recreation Centers of Sun City West
- Twitter: @rcscw
- Instagram: @suncitywest_az
- Updates also are being shared on Sun City West radio station KSCW 103.1 FM.