**Outdoor Dining and Retail Proclamation   
Press Release**

Bishop, CA – For Immediate Release

A proclamation was signed by Mayor Smith Monday that creates an administrative program in response to COVID-19 to temporarily relax outdoor dining regulations and on-site parking requirements, and waives related fees.

According to the proclamation, Bishop’s sidewalks, parking lots and other public spaces could be turned into outdoor dining and retail areas.

Since indoor restaurant dining and retail sales are restricted by social distancing protocols required by the State of California, opening public spaces for outdoor dining and retail will assist businesses with flexibility in safely reopening.

“This proposal will allow us to assist our local businesses while recognizing the importance of keeping our community healthy,” said Mayor Laura Smith after signing the proclamation.

Several local businesses had contacted the City requesting to use downtown alleyways and parking lots more flexibly to support their business.

The proclamation does not make recommendations about which sidewalks, parking lots, and other public spaces would be eligible for the program. Restaurants and retailers would have to apply for an Outdoor Dining and Retail Permit, that requires diagrams for layout, pedestrian and vehicle paths of travel, trash and clean-up plans, and other considerations to ensure the expansion into public spaces limits impacts to neighbors and the community as a whole. These uses will be temporary and last the duration of the State mandates for phased reopening.

The ability of businesses to reopen is governed by the State of California and administered through Inyo County. Inyo County is currently moving into Stage 3, which allows for businesses including retail, offices, dine-in restaurants, short term rentals, hair salons and barbers, and select personal services to reopen. Additional business sectors are anticipated to open in mid-June.

The original shelter-in-place order, which took effect on March 17, has been financially difficult for everyone, including Bishop’s restaurants and retailers as well as their employees. While many of them have persevered with delivery, curbside pickup, and paycheck protection loans, the reopening protocols will limit the number of customers allowed inside at one time. The City is hopeful that relaxing parking standards and allowing businesses to open into outdoor public spaces will help support local businesses.