



DECLARATION
RELATING TO THE
APRIL 8TH, 2024 SOLAR ECLIPSE

WHEREAS, on April 8th, 2024, Bell County, Texas will be in the direct line of a total solar eclipse that will traverse across North America; and

WHEREAS, this event is expected to see the population Bell County, Texas, which is approximately 400,000, double, if not triple, in size throughout the days leading up to and including the day of the event, leading to extreme traffic congestion, enormous strain on first responder organizations, hospital systems, food, grocery and fuel shortages, along with city and county infrastructure, threatening the safety of all resident; and

WHEREAS, the Bell County Judge has determined that extraordinary measures must be taken to protect the health, safety and welfare of Bell County residents and visitors that may be impacted as a result of the April 8th, 2024, solar eclipse; and

WHEREAS, the Bell County Judge, in consultation with area emergency management coordinators, law enforcement officials, and fire and rescue officials, has determined that the potential exists for roads, streets and highways to be stressed to and above capacity during certain times of the event; and

WHEREAS, the potential stress and over-capacity of city, county, state, and federal streets, roads, and highways may create a public safety event whereby law enforcement and fire and rescue officers will be impeded from responding to calls for service; and

WHEREAS, the Bell County Judge has determined that a registration process for property owners in the unincorporated areas of the County who intend to rent, lease, or

otherwise allow their property to be used for the solar eclipse viewing is in the best interests of the public safety; and

WHEREAS, the Bell County Judge, urges all residents of Bell County to stay at home if they can, avoid driving, if possible, ensure all vehicles are filled with fuel the week leading up to this event, ensure sufficient groceries and supplies are purchased well in advance, and to take all cautionary measures to ensure the safety of all persons and animals in their care.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT DECLARED BY BELL COUNTY, TEXAS:

1. That, pursuant to Section 418.108, Texas Government Code, a local state of emergency and disaster to be caused by the April 8th, 2024, solar eclipse event is hereby declared for Bell County, Texas.
2. That pursuant to section 418.108(b) of the Government Code, this state of emergency for the April 8th, 2024, solar eclipse event shall continue for a period of not more than seven (7) days from the date of this declaration, unless extended by the Bell County Commissioner's court of Bell County, Texas.
3. That pursuant to section 418.108(d) of the Government Code, this declaration activates the Bell County Emergency Management Plans and authorizes the furnishing of aid and assistance under this declaration.
4. That this declaration authorizes Bell County to take any actions necessary to promote life safety and critical infrastructure protection, including but not limited to, requiring private property landowners in the unincorporated areas of Bell County, Texas to register with Bell County if that landowner plans to host watch parties, dry camping, or any other large event that exceeds a population of 50 or more people. These same private property land owners will provide Bell County with site plans that describe the layout of the event, clearly marker number of spaces to be used for dry camping and parking areas, ingress and egress routes leading in and out of the private property, designated routes in and out of the private property for first responder emergency vehicles, and insuring compliance for those who do not comply with the Counties rules and directives.
5. That this declaration shall take effect from February 21, 2024, and after its issuance, and upon approval of the Bell County Commissioner's Court, shall continue in effect until terminated by the Bell County Judge. Pursuant to this declaration, additional directives may be issued by the Bell County Judge at any time deemed necessary.

DECLARED this the 21st day of February, 2024.



David Blackburn
Bell County Judge

Filed with me, the County Clerk of Bell County, on this 21st day of February ,
2024, by Bell County Judge David Blackburn.



Shelley Coston
Bell County Clerk