

Dear Homeowners

A few weeks ago, Gunnison County sent part-time residents an urgent but unfiltered message about the COVID-19 public health order, telling them to leave if here or stay away if not here. The message was delivered in an unmannerly way with a disrespectful ton, and we apologize.

The truth is, this pandemic is unlike anything anybody has ever seen. In our lifetime we have never had a health crisis requiring schools and businesses to close and everyone to stay home nationwide. We are all learning how to deal with something so unexpected and unclear. The Public Health Order was necessary. Our messaging was terrible, and we apologize.

Here's the thing. Colorado has ordered all residents to stay home except for essential needs and has restricted travel within the state. Gunnison County is especially vulnerable. We're a national hot spot for the spread of the coronavirus. Our per capita rate of transmission exceeds that of Detroit, Chicago, New Orleans, and Los Angeles. Our small hospital, with a limited number of beds and no ICU, simply can't handle one of the nation's highest case rates per capita. This deadly virus has already killed some friends. A spike in cases would overwhelm the system and cost more lives.

We have a duty to protect the health and safety of all our citizens, including full-time residents, part-time residents, students, and guests. Our first message implied that part-time residents are outsiders. You are not. You are important and valued member of this community. Without you, this Valley would not be the exceptional place it is. And we can't thank you enough.

Now we need you more than ever. If you love the Gunnison Valley, please help us defeat this pandemic. If you can bear with us while we isolate the country until the threat is over, we'll all survive this crisis as a better, more united community.

Let's work on this together. Honesty, we can't wait till you return to share the trials, the mountains, the communities and the friendships that make this place – your place, our collective place – so special.