



Scott criticizes Trump for ‘lack of leadership,’ says masks are key to beating virus in Vermont

By Jolie Sherman

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Gov. Phil Scott used Vermont Mask Day to encourage residents to continue wearing face coverings to prevent the spread of the coronavirus.

“We’re not out of the woods yet,” Scott said Tuesday. “As cases continue to rise throughout the region, its critical Vermonters and Vermont businesses follow the health department guidelines.”

Scott said the Green Mountain State’s handling of the pandemic is largely due to Vermonters continuing to wear masks. He was also critical of President Donald Trump, who was hospitalized for three days this after testing positive for the virus, but largely refuses to wear a mask.

“I continue to be concerned about the President’s lack of leadership, particularly in the area of mask-wearing,” Scott said. “It’s one of the reasons we’ve been so successful in Vermont.”

Scott and other state officials said they were concerned by a photo from a wedding at the Woodstock Inn and Resort that has circulated on social media. The photo showed people not 40 guests without masks sitting shoulder to shoulder in white folding chairs outside during the Saturday event.

A statement from the inn says they tried to comply with the statewide mask requirement, according to the Associated Press. Up to 150 people are allowed for outdoor weddings if 6 feet of physical distancing is possible between parties.

“They indicated this was the first event of its size that they have hosted,” said Public Safety Commissioner Michael Schirling. “The wedding was originally supposed to be 125 people. There were actually about 25 who did not travel as a result of our quarantine requirements and travel restrictions.”



(continued)

Schirling said guests were also screened and the resort's owners reached out on their own to the Agency of Commerce to implement the best course of action.

"They walked us through a variety of the logistics of how guests were seated and how they moved around," Schirling said. "They actually had assigned seating in pods that related to a travel party or familial unit. So we're confident that together with the plans that they have in place both retroactively and the things they've learned from this particular event that things are going to go as well as possible."

No known cases have been reported from the event, but Schirling echoed Scott, saying the picture did raise some concerns.

Scott says the mask mandate was carefully thought out — and he has no regrets about not handing it down any sooner.

The Associated Press contributed to this report.

"I'm very — extremely — proud of Vermonters, but I'm concerned about this division that we're seeing, this political division due to this mask policy in particular and how dangerous that really is because wearing a mask is altruistic, and it's something that I believe is necessary to prevent the spread," he said.

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