Large Gatherings Still on Hold in Monterey County and Around the State

This time of year in Monterey County, the event calendar would be jam-packed with affairs both large and small: fairs, festivals, racing, music and the local ‘Big Daddy’ of them all - Car Week.

But this is a pandemic year.

While many aspects of the community are reopening after lockdown, large gatherings are still not allowed - not in Monterey County nor around the state. It is a situation that is certainly frustrating for both the economy and for enthusiasts and locals may be wondering the status of some major events.

While California is not allowing large events, many organizers may be waiting to see if the State may relax rules for gatherings before officially cancelling an event. Here are things to know:

- If you are someone who regularly attends one of the county’s major events, be sure to monitor the status of the event in the weeks to come to know whether it will actually be able to occur.
- If you are an organizer of such an event, please be aware that your event may not be permitted to occur under the State’s rules in effect at the time, and you should have contingency plans to postpone or cancel the event.

Why are large gatherings and major events the last to reopen?

Large gatherings are ‘super spreaders’ and create a high-risk environment. At a large gathering, people can be packed together with few options to safely social distance, touch lots of shared surfaces and provide little enforcement of face covering requirements. This same danger is present when large family groups get together and socialize. Monterey County has seen clusters of COVID-19 cases related to families who have gathered and passed the virus to their family members.

Why isn’t an activity like shopping treated the same way as large gatherings? Because it is essential, meaning it’s needed for living and because there are more safeguards and regulations in place to reduce COVID danger in those environments. Large gatherings, which are usually social, are not essential and keeping those events on hold for now keeps more in our community safe.

The state’s Recovery Roadmap currently has large gatherings in Stage 4 of its recovery plan. It will be up to health officials to determine when the risk of transmission has subsided enough for gatherings to occur.

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