



COVID-19 FRIDAY UPDATES

Small Business Updates/resources

Resource Links:

<https://www.sba.gov/page/coronavirus-covid-19-small-business-guidance-loan-resources>

<https://www.coronavirus.gov/smallbusiness>

Golden Leaf Grants - www.goldenleaf.org – grant support for small businesses unable to meet SBA

Economic Support

- On April 14, working group members heard updates on the North Carolina COVID-19 Rapid Recovery for Small Business Loan **Program**. A program currently funded by the Golden LEAF Foundation and Anonymous Trust; and administered by the NC Rural Center's lending subsidiary, **Thread Capital**, in partnership with a host of NC-based Community Development Financial Institutions (CDFIs).
- Working group members reviewed a **draft** bill sponsored by Representatives Stephen Ross (**R-63**), Brenden Jones (**R-46**), and Michael Wray (**D-27**) seeking to appropriate \$25 million to the Golden LEAF Foundation to continue funding the bridge loan program.

Legislators will vote on the **bill** draft next week, which will then be filed once session convenes April 28.

Golden Shovel Agency - www.goldenshovelagency.com – disaster economic development agency – they have great resources listed on their site

Forest City/Rutherford County Global Facebook SMB Grants - The application for the Forest City/Rutherford County Global Facebook SMB Grants is live. [You can click here](#) to access the application. When you click on the available location list, select Forest City/Rutherford County from the drop-down menu. You will then be taken to a partner page for the application component. **The application will be open until April 28, 2020 at midnight.**

To be eligible, the business must have these qualifications:

- Be a for-profit company
- Have between 2 and 50 employees
- Have been in business for over a year
- Have experienced challenges from COVID-19
- Be in or near a location where Facebook operates

US Chamber of Commerce Foundation Grants - To extend a helping hand to small businesses suffering from the impacts of the coronavirus pandemic, the U.S. Chamber of Commerce Foundation – in partnership with Vistaprint and a coalition of supporting companies, foundations, and philanthropic donors – is working to provide financial relief through the [Save Small Business Fund](#). This fund is a key pillar of the U.S. Chamber's [Save Small Business Initiative](#).

The Fund is providing \$5,000 in short-term relief to employers across the United States, including chambers of commerce. These one-time supplemental cash grants are for businesses that have between three and 20 employees and operate in an economically vulnerable community (you can search eligibility by zip code [here](#)).

The grant application will go live on Monday, April 20 at 3:00 PM ET / 2:00 PM CT. To learn more about the Save Small Business Fund and to apply for a grant, visit savesmallbusiness.com.

Mountain BizWorks - Mountain BizWorks, working with Dogwood Health Trust, announced a targeted effort to provide increased access to the highly anticipated Small Business Administration (SBA) Paycheck Protection Program (PPP) for nonprofits and small businesses in the region, with a focus on rural and minority and women-led organizations. The PPP was created to provide loans to organizations impacted by COVID-19 and are forgivable if they are used to cover payroll, mortgage, rent and utility costs over an eight-week period after the loan is issued. The Mountain BizWorks regional application process opens for nonprofits on Wednesday, April 8 and will open on Friday, April 10 for small businesses. Information and application materials can be found at www.mountainbizworks.org/ppp/

Important resources/links

Chamber Website has a COVID-19 section with valuable resources listed across several subjects - <https://hickorynutchamber.org/> Click on the COVID-19 tab.

211 – Please remember to call 211 with any COVID-19 questions, and 911 is for emergencies only.

Rutherford County Health Council created a new website -

<https://www.rutherfordhelp.com/>

Great resource for information on

- Find assistance (housing, child care, mental health & food as well as CDC & Dept of Health & Human Services information). Also addiction recovery information.
- Medical Screening Hotline
- Latest Community Information (from the emergency operations center of RC)
- Volunteer Opportunities

No Kid Hungry If you have children, or know of someone with children, and those children need food text FOODNC to 877-877, they will then ask for your address (zip code based), and provide you with a list of locations that have a “No Kid Hungry” distribution site.

New mental health Helpline – Hope4NC – Call 1-855-587-3463 open 24/7

Local Mental Health Links:

Partners Behavioral Health Management for Rutherford County-

<https://www.partnersbhm.org/>

Family Preservation Services- <http://www.pathways.com/ncfps>

RHA Health Service- <https://rhahealthservices.org/our-locations/north-carolina/>

Blue Ridge Health- <https://www.brchs.com/locations/blue-ridge-health-lake-lure>

If a patient calls 828-625-4400 someone on site can direct them toward the best way to access care and at what time. It is always best to call ahead, but we do welcome walk-ins as well. Right now, we have screenings at the front door to keep patients safe – but folks are welcome to show up and access the care they need any time Monday-Friday 8am-5pm.

They can also contact Blue Ridge Health through our online contact form at -

<https://www.brchs.com/contact>

Stories of Compassion in the Gorge

Several women in Lake Lure have adopted the name “**Masketeers**” who are making cloth masks for first responders and the medical community. Women include Nancy Evans, Yvonne Cooley, Mary Ellen Jones, Carol Wolfe, Yates Marsic and Julie Parsell.

Last Friday evening - full of abundant sunshine, we thought it was the perfect opportunity to boast a bit about a little group at LLC&A that you have probably never heard of - our Sunshine Committee. Their purpose is to show appreciation to teachers and staff during the school year. They gather funds by asking staff to pay \$2 on Fridays to wear jeans to work. They take that money and use it to celebrate holidays, such as Appreciation Days for Police, Nurses, Guidance Counselors, Custodians, etc....and to show appreciation to our teachers through goodie bags and breakfasts. With all of us being apart from one another, our Sunshine Committee decided to make a \$300 donation to Hickory Nut Gorge Outreach, an organization that has long been a collaborative and supportive partner to our school. They need those funds now, and our Sunshine Committee was happy to help. #RaptorsRock #loverules

Gift Card Campaign - To help our local small businesses & restaurants in the Gorge, a gift card campaign was created two weeks ago. Goal was to not only provide financial support but to encourage people to come back and spend their gift cards once we start back up. Since it went live, over \$1,700 worth of gift cards have been purchased. To buy yours and to see which businesses you can support, go to www.hickorynutchamber.org

Unemployment Updates

Unemployment is filed and paid through the Division of Employment Securities - <https://des.nc.gov/apply-unemployment>

COVID-19 Numbers/Resources

Local link to Emergency Operations Center on FB:

<https://www.facebook.com/rcemergencymanagement/>

Map - https://www.rutherfordcountync.gov/alert_detail.php

Rutherford County (as of 4/17/20) – Positive Cases 63; Deaths 3; Individuals Tested 532; Negative Tests 382; Pending Tests 87

County/State/Health Dept. Updates

No new EO's since Governor's New Executive Order #131 – Tightening social distancing in essential businesses/retailers, unemployment streamlining & long term care:

<https://governor.nc.gov/news/governor-cooper-signs-order-tighten-social-distancing-measures-strengthen-long-term-care-rules>

In Rutherford County, citizens have been abiding by both the Local Stay at Home Order and Governor Cooper's Executive Order 121. In order to reduce confusion between the orders, our local order was allowed to expire at 6:00 am this morning. **All North Carolina citizens must still abide by the Governor's orders, until the Governor terminates or extends his order.**

Local Needs

Hickory Nut Gorge Outreach needs our help. They are struggling to supply food to all those in need right now.

Here are some non-perishable items that Outreach could use-

Canned ravioli, beef stew, Hamburger Helper- any canned meal

Canned Chicken

Chunky Soup

Boxed Mac and Cheese

Cereal

Bottled Juice

Vegetable Oil

You can also make a monetary donation by going to their website-

www.hickorynutgorgeoutreach.org and click on the DONATE button. You can use PayPal or mail a check. Outreach is open on Monday, Thursday and Friday 10:00am-4:00pm.

Want to be one of our "masketeers" If you are able to help – please send an email to info@hickorynutchamber.org.

Q&A

Why is Buncombe County showing less positive COVID cases than Rutherford County?

Currently the Rutherford County Emergency Operations Center has been successfully replenishing test kits and keeping the Foothills Health Department stocked. The Foothills Health Department has been "tracing" anyone who tests positive in Rutherford County. Meaning, anyone having close contact with a positive COVID case is contacted and tested. All positive cases, and members of their household living under the same roof, are put into quarantine and monitored daily. While it is the Governor's goal for all Counties to Test, Trace and determine Trends,

there can be challenges. It is unclear if it is a shortage of test kits, or other factors that can be unique and a challenge to each County that impact the numbers. We know Rutherford County, and all surrounding counties, are doing everything in their power to protect its citizens, businesses, and front line workers and put an end to the spread of COVID-19.