



WARREN COUNTY PARTNERSHIP *FOR RECOVERY*

Situation Report on COVID-19 and Recovery Needs
• Updated May 12, 2020





Introduction

◆ This report is intended to provide a snapshot of Warren County’s current challenges with respect to COVID-19 recovery. We have solicited updates across multiple sectors and compiled them here, in one place. It is our hope that this information will be a useful tool for federal-level and state-level elected and governmental officials to more fully understand our needs here at the local level, as well as the steps we will need to take in order to safely and successfully reopen.

The “Warren County Partnership for Recovery” aims to be representative of every sector impacted by COVID-19. It is, at this time, a loosely organized coalition of those motivated to lend a hand in recovery planning. We expect this group to grow and we welcome further participation.

We have identified experts in each sector who have helped author this report. Their names and contact information are included at the conclusion of each submission in the event that you have questions or concerns requiring follow-up.

On behalf of the Warren County Board of Supervisors and our administrative staff, I express my sincere thanks to all who are currently involved in this effort and all who will become involved as our work continues. We are all eager to get the regional economy moving again, and to do so in a responsible manner that safeguards public health.

Sincerely,

Frank E. Thomas

Chairman

Warren County Board of Supervisors



Adirondack Regional Chamber Of Commerce & EDC

◆ We at the Adirondack Regional Chamber of Commerce and the Economic Development Corporation of Warren County are pleased to report that Warren County continues to be optimistic, passionate and proactive in our plans to re-open Warren County.

We have been concentrating on a three-pronged approach from a business perspective in regards to health and safety by:

- 1) Using best practices parallel with government guidelines;
- 2) Working with suppliers and sources on the same;
- 3) Communicating with each other and our community on our health and safety initiatives. Our goal is to make sure that our employees and our customers, both local and from “out of the area,” are protected and safe to the highest degree.

Our businesses know that to maintain trust with all, they will work hard to maintain and exceed health and safety initiatives.

We all have been learning much from our essential businesses like our paper producers (Irving Tissue and Finch Paper) and our healthcare device manufacturers (Bard and AngioDynamics) to take us to the next level on re-opening.

Along with being proactive with our three-pronged approach, we are continuously working together to disseminate the latest and most accurate information available from the County, State and Federal levels to our business partners.

We have been fielding thousands of calls and emails in order to support our business community. We continue to be integral information resources to our community regarding the Paycheck Protection Program (PPP) and the Economic Injury Disaster Loan Program.

All of our local banks have taken an overwhelming situation regarding PPP, mortgages, and banking services and have worked with us and our business community with a top level of customer service, grace and care.

Locally, the Warren County LDC and the Lake George Lake Champlain Regional Planning Board have opened loan opportunities to our small businesses.



Adirondack Regional Chamber Of Commerce & EDC

Our region continues to work together successfully, such as the Glens Falls Transit Authority safely bringing essential employees to and from work. Our Glens Falls Farmers Market kicked off May 2 with huge success thanks to both our Washington County farmers and our local customers.

Social distancing and use of masks, gloves and other guidance are in full effect. Our community wants to reopen and wants to be safe. Our business community will make sure that happens.

Our schools have banded together to make sure our students throughout Warren County are receiving the needed education and tools to make this school year as successful as can be. Our healthcare system is working with our business community and our Warren County government on the tracking and tracing of COVID-19.

Warren County front-line police, fire and emergency medical personnel have been exemplary throughout this pandemic. There are many individual citizens and group organizations who have stepped up to help our neighbors during this unique time.

The business community has been instrumental in helping raise funds, distribute masks and food to those in need. Our non-profit community is feeling a lot of pain through this time and our generous businesses continue to help. The Salvation Army blew through its entire fiscal year 2020 food budget in 40 days.

Across the board, people are out of work and the need for assistance has never been higher. People are suffering from being out of work. Non-profits are overwhelmed. Many businesses are on the brink of not being able to re-open, ever. Many of these issues can be addressed by safely going back to work.

While our EDC and Chambers of Commerce continue to work well together, we also work well with our Warren County government. Working together today and tomorrow is what will get us through these times and to brighter days. We all want the same thing and we all want to do it properly.



The EDC and the ARCC are pleased to meet on a weekly basis with members of the Warren County government, other chambers, and those in the business community to move us forward. It has been a true collaboration of community leaders to take us “to the next level.” We are utilizing the Governor’s seven-part matrix on re-opening a region. This can only be achieved by a strong business and government partnership.

What is the bottom line?

Warren County is ready to open for business the minute we get the green light. You will see from the testimony and summaries from so many of our business community members we are ready, we are willing, and we are able. Most importantly:

We are in this together.

Blessings,

Ed Bartholomew

EDC of Warren County

Michael Bittel

Adirondack Regional Chamber of Commerce



Executive Summary

◆ The human and economic toll of the COVID-19 pandemic on Warren County has been significant. As of this writing, 25 Warren County residents have died. Two hundred thirteen residents have tested positive for COVID-19; about half of them live in nursing homes or assisted living facilities, the rest in the community. One hundred thirty-three Warren County residents who tested positive or were presumed positive have recovered. Glens Falls Hospital has treated more than 40 COVID-19 positive patients. Residents of Warren County have suffered the loss of loved ones and friends locally and elsewhere. They've been separated from parents and grandparents in the hospital and nursing homes. Weddings, funerals, graduations, proms and other important personal celebrations and family events have been postponed or canceled. And many have lost economic security.

The costs associated with the treatment and prevention of COVID-19 and the statewide shutdown of non-essential business activity and community services has imposed unprecedented economic burdens on essential public institutions, businesses of every size and in virtually every sector, human services agencies, non-profits and arts and cultural organizations. While many employers and employees have benefited from Paycheck Protection Program funds and other assistance from the Small Business Administration and employees have received enhanced unemployment payments, this assistance is temporary. Many community leaders are worried that these funds will run out before businesses and organizations are capable of resuming normal activity. Local governments, small business and non-profit communities are likely to be especially hard hit.

◆ *Impact on Public Services*

Warren County's economy is driven by tourism and manufacturing. The county funds its operations with a combination of property and sales tax revenue and state aid. All are in peril. The County Treasurer forecasts a decline in sales tax revenue approaching \$10 million in the current calendar year. To mitigate these losses, the county is developing a plan to reduce current year expenses by \$4 million to \$5 million. This could require, among other things, a hiring freeze, staffing consolidations, mergers of county departments, postponement of collective bargaining negotiations, and salary and wage freezes for nonunion personnel.

Warren County also stands to lose millions of dollars in state aid if Congress and the President fail to include substantial state and local government assistance in a stimulus bill. The New York State Association of Counties is warning that the state may be forced to reduce aid to local governments by 50 percent, a potential \$8.7 million loss to Warren County. The result would be a dramatic loss of vital local services, massive property tax increases or a combination of the two.



◆ *Higher Education and Health Care*

SUNY Adirondack, which employs more than 450 people and serves 2,500 students, is facing a similar challenge: potential state aid reductions as high as 50 percent, beginning as soon as June, a loss for of \$1,320,921. If the 50 percent reduction were applied to the college's state aid in 2020-2021, SUNY Adirondack would stand to lose \$4,009,652. The college's reserve fund amounts to \$2,905,814. These losses would force significant reductions in courses and services at the college that educated many of the community's healthcare employees, including those serving on the front line.

Glens Falls Hospital, the essential health care services provider and largest employer in the county, is facing major financial challenges. The hospital sustained a 2019 operating loss of \$14.9 million, the result of insufficient federal and state reimbursements and overall declines in patient volume. It sustained operating losses in the first quarter of 2020 totaling nearly \$11 million. In March, New York State ordered all hospitals to develop plans for a surge of patients and to halt elective procedures to ensure there were sufficient beds for COVID-19 patients.

As a result, Glens Falls Hospital sacrificed \$27 million in revenue while investing \$5 million in the required COVID-19 preparations. The financial pressures led to the furlough of more than 360 employees and reductions in salaries for administrators and physicians. Thus far, the assistance Glens Falls Hospital has received from the federal government totals \$6 million.

The Hudson Headwaters Health Network, too, has experienced a significant drop in revenue as a result of the restrictions on non-emergent and elective medical procedures. During the week before the state of emergency was declared, Hudson Headwaters had 7,013 patient encounters at its 19 health centers, with only 29 percent of the appointment slots empty. In a recent week, HHHN had only 3,122 in-person patient encounters, and half of an already reduced number of appointment slots went unfilled.



Executive Summary

◆ *The Threat to Tourism*

Tourism generates millions of dollars in sales and occupancy taxes that help fund Warren County government. The industry generates more than \$600 million in direct spending annually and more than 9,000 jobs. Warren County lodging facilities sell 1 million room nights a year. In 2019, the county's 4 percent occupancy tax produced \$4.8 million which, in turn, was invested in tourism promotion, marketing and events. The closely related second home, real estate, construction, cultural and retail sectors generate significant additional economic activity. This year, tourism community leaders believe that visitor spending may be reduced by as much as 50 percent. Already, hotel occupancy appears to be down 75 percent from normal levels and the numbers of employees working in year-round operations have been reduced as much as 80 percent.

A task force of Warren County tourism leaders has developed a detailed plan based on CDC guidelines and national industry standards for the safe reopening of amusements, hotels, restaurants, stores and other facilities. While many major annual events have been canceled, some are tentatively scheduled to continue, assuming there is no government prohibition on them. National and local visitor surveys suggest that, despite the pandemic, many Americans still want to take a family vacation this summer and are looking forward to healthy outdoor activities, including hiking and boating, and destinations to which they can drive rather than fly. Warren County and private-sector tourism leaders are preparing marketing plans to attract vacationers when a safe reopening is possible.

But even as they approach a possible reopening, the hospitality, food and beverage, recreation and amusement businesses are concerned about the potential difficulty of recruiting employees. The Pandemic Unemployment Assistance payments available through July 31, 2020, are higher than wages customarily paid to seasonal employees. Federal travel bans may result in the loss of approximately 1,000 J1 Visa workers, predominantly international students, who fill critical local tourism jobs. Childcare and accessibility to transportation, which long have been major barriers for many tourism employees, are likely to be even more difficult this summer.

Since mid-March, the campground and RV park industry has been in a consistent state of decline, with a growing number of cancellations and fewer new reservations. Ironically, many campgrounds and RV parks are well designed for social distancing. Memorial Day weekend is historically a sold-out weekend at many facilities. It is not clear that they will be operating by this Memorial Day.



◆ *Manufacturing and Construction*

The highway construction industry is worried about the road ahead. Much of its business is driven by government spending. Sales and gas tax revenues are down because driving is down and stores are closed. Under mounting financial pressure, municipalities are expected to shift money from public works to general operations, forcing the deferral of highway projects. This and a decline in commercial construction activity has led to a sharp reduction in cement sales, with furloughs resulting at Lehigh Cement Co.'s Glens Falls plant.

Ames Goldsmith, which refines silver and makes advanced silver powders for medicine, photography, electronic components and consumer products, reports that the pace of customer orders has noticeably weakened since the beginning of the year when a strong start seemed in prospect. Projected orders from some sectors (mainly electronics and solar energy) are down as much as 40 to even 60 percent.

Loggers and foresters report that the market for lumber domestically and the export market to Canada is weak to non-existent, threatening many small local loggers' businesses. Pulp and paper operations like Finch Paper remain the most reliable buyers of logs, but they continue to suffer as competitors in other states and nations take orders away. They can afford to charge lower prices because their regulatory costs are so much lower than New York's. In the middle of the business shutdown in New York, New York State government itself decided not to pay the higher price for paper that its own regulations drive, awarding a major contract to a foreign manufacturer.

◆ *Re-Opening the Schools*

Warren County's school districts also are planning for a possible return to traditional classroom instruction in the summer or fall, depending on direction from the state Education Department. Educators are addressing the special challenges of requiring face masks and enforcing social distancing and handwashing among children and acquiring sufficient PPE for teachers and staff. Having been physically out of a classroom for months, students' academic progress and needs have to be assessed. Students with special needs may need specific additional support as they return to school.

Deep cleaning and disinfecting schools and buses every day will cost more money. Schools are exploring options for continuing extracurricular and sports activities with social distancing. These activities are not only important to students' development, but some students depend on sports, music and theater scholarships to attend college.



Executive Summary

Even though students and teachers have been working remotely since March 14, school districts have continued to provide essential services, such as free lunches and food-in-backpack programs. The Glens Falls City School District, for example, prepares, packages and delivers 1,000 meals twice a week. Since late March, the Queensbury School district has provided 25,000 meals to students. With schools closed, child care also has been a major focus, especially for the children of essential front-line workers. The WSWHE BOCES has provided child care at locations in Glens Falls, Hudson Falls and Saratoga Springs.

◆ *Retail, Arts and Culture*

The impacts on the retail community have been significant. At Aviation Mall, only two businesses are open on a daily basis. April and May rent payments are down in excess of 80 percent and well short of the revenue required to pay operating costs, property taxes and debt service. Some bricks-and-mortar retailers are filing for bankruptcy. Some national estimates suggest 25 percent or more of small businesses will not be able to re-open following the pandemic.

Local arts, theater and cultural organizations, whose annual events attract thousands of local people and visitors, are in danger of having to cancel their seasons and forgo the financial support necessary to support their continued operation. The organizations have lost grant, ticket and sponsorship revenues, and some report a decline in charitable donations. Yet most still bear rent and other contractual expenses. Staff have been furloughed at several organizations. Some groups are reluctant to engage in detailed planning for future events until there is clear guidance on a date for reopening and social-distancing regulations that will need to be followed.

Human service agencies are also considering how to reduce services to the vulnerable populations they serve. CWI has been informed of a 20 percent cut to its funding at a time when many of its services already were operating at a deficit.



◆ *What's Ahead*

What is clear from this initial, baseline assessment is that significant recovery funding from the federal government is urgently needed. Without it, Warren County local governments and agencies, colleges and schools, public services, essential health care providers and private-sector businesses and community organizations will suffer steep and continuing economic losses. Some businesses and organizations will recover; others may cease to exist. By no means is Warren County alone. A broad federal stimulus program of assistance to state and local governments to support vital public services and investments in infrastructure, health care, education, rural broadband and other priorities, and Buy Local programs that support basic industries and major employers, is necessary to catalyze a more robust and sustainable economic recovery.

The Warren County Recovery Partnership sees this report as a first draft and the start of an extended community-wide conversation and collaboration with the goal of lighting a path to greater economic stability and security for the people we serve and employ. We invite comments, suggestions and future contributions from all sectors of the community.



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Warren County Government

◆ *Physical Environment, Workforce and Governmental Functions*

Since March 19th, County government has operated under “Restricted Access” protocols. Members of the general public have not been allowed inside County buildings unless due to public safety or public health necessities. Official meetings of the Board of Supervisors, Standing Committees and Ad Hoc Committees thereof have been conducted remotely in compliance with state law as amended under the executive authority of the Governor of New York. Meetings of other public bodies that would otherwise utilize County Premises have not been held on Warren County premises. All non-essential in-person meetings or gatherings have been banned on Warren County premises. Essential in-person meetings of employees authorized to have access to Warren County premises have abided by the social distancing and COVID-19 prevention protocols recommended by the Centers for Disease Control and New York State Department of Health.

The following protocols have been in effect among Warren County employees:

- 1} Essential departments playing a direct role in the COVID-19 response (including Health Services, County Sheriff, Office of Emergency Services, County Administrator, County Attorney and others as determined by the Board of Supervisors Chairman) may continue working on site, at the volume necessary to respond to this emergency, and in a manner that complies with Centers for Disease Control and New York State Department of Public Health guidelines.
- 2} Work activities that ceased to be necessary by virtue of the public no longer having physical access to county premises are suspended, personnel performing these activities are deemed “nonessential” unless repurposed by the county to perform essential services, and such nonessential personnel are on paid administrative leave.
- 3} Department heads have discretion to designate certain work activities as being essential for the public welfare or the continuity of government and which can be performed remotely. Essential work activities that cannot be performed remotely are performed on site, at the minimum volume necessary to serve the public, and in a manner that complies with Centers for Disease Control and New York State Department of Public Health guidelines.

At the appropriate time and in a manner that protects public health, these “Restricted Access” protocols will be phased out and the regular operations of Warren County government and all of its employees will be phased back in.



◆ COVID-19 “Front Lines” Activities

Warren County Health Services is the lead agency on all personal outreach to COVID-19 positive and presumed positive individuals. Health Services staff are available 24 hours per day, 7 days per week for direct communication with these individuals and their families, friends and neighbors. For every positive and “presumed positive” case, Health Services has conducted and will continue conducting contact tracing. This process involves a thorough investigation of potential exposures, outreach and education, the administration of mandatory and precautionary quarantines, and coordination of necessary supply deliveries to quarantined individuals. The Warren County Sheriff’s Office (WCSO) and Warren County Attorney’s Office assist in all quarantines. Warren County is ready and able to continue these functions for as long as they are needed.

Health Services also works closely with Glens Falls Hospital to coordinate a public drive-through testing clinic hosted at the Warren County Municipal Center. The clinic opened on April 9 and is accessible by appointment only, scheduled by healthcare professionals on behalf of their patients. The clinic also serves Essex, Hamilton, upper Saratoga and Washington counties. Daily capacity is 72 tests, which is a function of both workflow and testing supplies. The clinic runs daily, Monday through Friday from 9:00 am to 1:00 pm, and testing samples are delivered to the Wadsworth Laboratory. Warren County is committed long-term to hosting this clinic and we are also open to expanding testing capacity, provided the federal and/or state governments are able to augment our testing supplies. We would also welcome the opportunity to host antibody testing and blood drives related to COVID-19.

◆ COVID-19 “Front Lines” Activities

The Warren County Office of Emergency Services (OES) serves as a conduit for PPE, cloth masks, hand sanitizer and other COVID-19 related materials and supplies to entities within Warren County, including our own County employees, town/city/village employees, healthcare entities, emergency first responders and community organizations. OES distributes supplies purchased by New York State according to the state promulgated protocols. OES is also the collection site for donated materials, including hundreds of cloth masks that are being made by members of the public under Warren County’s “Mask Up!” initiative (www.warrencountyny.gov/masks). OES will continue in this role for as long as necessary. We request additional PPE from both the federal and state governments.



Warren County Government

The Warren County Sheriff's Office (WCSO) performs a critical role enforcing New York State's PAUSE restrictions. Sheriff LaFarr and the County Administrator are the state's designated PAUSE points of contact, and we receive all violation complaints in real time from Empire State Development (ESD). The WCSO follows up on all credible complaints either directly or via the appropriate local enforcement entity (i.e. the Glens Falls Police Department). The Warren County Probation Department has also dispatched Probation Officers to assist the WCSO in "patrolling" public congregation points such as parks to remind those present to socially distance, wear masks, and otherwise observe best public health practices.

◆ *Financial Considerations*

As a primarily tourism-driven economy, Warren County is expected to be harder hit than more diversified local economies in New York State. The County Treasurer estimates sales tax revenue losses approaching \$10 million in the current calendar year. To partially mitigate these losses, the County is finalizing a Fiscal Austerity Program with the goal of cutting current year expenses by a minimum of \$4 million to \$5 million. This program involves painful measures including but not limited to: a hiring freeze; cancellation of events and work-related travel including meetings and trainings; cancellation of material, supply and equipment purchases; termination of contracts for outside services; postponement of nonessential official business; internal restructuring of Warren County departments including staffing consolidations; mergers of county departments; postponement of collective bargaining negotiations; and salary and wage freezes for nonunion personnel.

In addition to the loss of revenues associated with the economic downturn, the prospect of greatly reduced State Aid poses a dire threat to Warren County's financial stability. The New York State Association of Counties (NYSAC) is warning that absent direct support to local governments in a forthcoming federal stimulus package, state budget shortfalls resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic could result in cuts of up to 50% in aid to local governments. A 50% reduction in Warren County's annual State Aid translates to an impact of approximately \$8.7 million. Combined with the loss in our local sales tax revenue, Warren County could not survive cuts of this magnitude without dramatic reductions in so-called "discretionary" services (primarily law enforcement and public works), or massive property tax increases, or more likely a combination of the two.



The specific impacts of a 50% across-the-board State Aid reduction include:

- \$2,064,244 cut for individuals with mental illness;
- \$1,361,500 cut for economically disadvantaged adults;
- \$1,256,927 cut for economically disadvantaged children (including \$562,729 for Foster Care);
- \$1,075,211 cut for children with special needs (encompassing Early Intervention and Preschool Special Education);
- \$673,662 cut for senior citizens (including \$389,396 for aging-in-place programs like Meals on Wheels);
- \$497,849 cut to homeland security grants;
- \$431,724 cut to indigent legal defense;
- \$309,817 cut to general government support;
- \$288,396 cut to public health programs;
- \$242,901 cut to law enforcement;
- \$208,610 cut for troubled youth;
- \$95,608 cut to NYS Court System expenses;
- \$73,081 cut to crime victim support;
- \$58,144 cut for veterans;
- \$50,000 cut to healthcare system improvements; and
- \$45,118 cut to tourism promotion assistance.

Submitted by: *Ryan R. Moore*
 County Administrator
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Healthcare Providers

Glens Falls Hospital

◆ Glens Falls Hospital plays a uniquely important role in Warren County as its only hospital and largest employer. Glens Falls is the largest hospital between Albany and Montreal. It provides care for a largely rural, five-county area. The majority of its patients are eligible for Medicare and/or Medicaid. Fewer are privately insured. The federal and state programs under-reimburse hospitals for services provided. Across the country, hospitals like Glens Falls Hospital that serve aging, rural populations are experiencing significant financial problems. As a result of this combination of insufficient government reimbursements and overall declines in patient volume, Glens Falls Hospital ended 2019 with an operating loss of \$14.9 million. A hospital-wide cost reduction initiative was underway when the COVID-19 pandemic struck.

In March, New York State ordered all hospitals to develop plans for a surge of patients and to halt elective procedures to ensure there were sufficient beds for COVID-19 patients. Glens Falls Hospital complied with these orders. The ban on elective procedures began in mid-March. If it continues through the end of May, the hospital will have sacrificed at least \$27 million in revenue. The hospital already had sustained operating losses of \$1.6 million in January, \$3 million operating in February, and an estimated \$6 million in March. At the same time, the value of its investments declined sharply due to COVID-19 market uncertainty. This \$7.5 million loss affects operations because the investments generate cash to supplement patient charges and support hospital operations. As a result of the shutdown in elective procedures and the attendant financial pressures, Glens Falls Hospital in April was forced to furlough more than 360 employees. It also reduced the salaries of administrators. Thus far, the assistance Glens Falls Hospital has received from the federal government totals \$6 million.

Glens Falls Hospital has treated more than 40 COVID-positive patients, including three who were transported to Glens Falls from downstate New York. The hospital also led a comprehensive, community-wide response to the pandemic. It set up and staffed community testing sites first at Glens Falls Hospital and then at the Warren County Municipal Center. It reactivated closed hospital units to accept the expected surge of patients. Its staff converted anesthesia machines to ventilators and built a UVC sterilization room, using 4 UVC light robots to sterilize N95 masks, extending their useful life. It put 3-D printers to work making face shields. In its laboratory, new equipment was purchased to allow Cepheid rapid testing, ensuring that COVID-19 results could be provided to patients and providers more quickly. The hospital invested more than \$5 million in COVID-19 preparations.



Glens Falls Hospital

Because visits to the hospital were banned, the hospital developed video conferencing capabilities so that families of both COVID and non-COVID patients could stay in touch with each other. To ensure non-COVID 19 patients with other medical concerns would continue to receive care, the hospital set up telemedicine services and, in a matter of days, went from zero telemedicine visits to 1,200 a week.

Community education is central to the hospital's mission, and Glens Falls Hospital established a COVID-19 hotline to answer questions and created an array of on-line resources to provide information, including a community education video.

The future financial impact on the hospital is difficult to project. Hospital officials expect that they will need to prepare for new COVID-19 outbreaks and additional personal protective equipment. It is unclear whether, when and in what amounts additional federal and state funding will be made available.

Submitted by: *F. Raymond Agnew*

Vice President of Hospital and Community Engagement
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Healthcare Providers

Hudson Headwaters Health Network

- ◆ Hudson Headwaters Health Network, a not-for-profit 501c3 organization, has served the Adirondack region of Upstate New York as a Federally Qualified Community Health Center since 1981. Hudson Headwaters provides comprehensive primary care services and select specialty services to the entire community in our service area with an emphasis on addressing the needs of the uninsured and those covered under the Medicaid and Medicare programs. In 2019, Hudson Headwaters served nearly 91,000 unduplicated patients through over 350,000 visits at 19 service sites.

Hudson Headwaters service area includes the southern and eastern regions of the Adirondack Park, the City of Glens Falls and its surrounding suburbs, and the northern corridor communities centered on the Town of Champlain along the Canadian border. The service area is large, over 5,600 square miles, and includes all or parts of Clinton, Essex, Hamilton, Saratoga, Warren, and Washington counties. The region is also a designated Health Professional Shortage Area, with few doctors and health centers outside of the larger towns. In most of the region, Hudson Headwaters is the only safety net provider.

In Hudson Headwaters' service area, health disparities are primarily a matter of economic means, education, and age. A seasonally driven economy, low educational achievement, and an aging population have created ongoing challenges in addressing the needs of the underserved population. Before the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, for example, the unemployment rate exceeded the state average in four of the Network's core service counties. Most of the counties in Hudson Headwaters' service area also exceed the regional average for the percentage of individuals under the Federal Poverty Level. Across the region, the portion of the population covered under the Medicaid program has grown from 17.6% in 2016 to 23.9% in 2019. This increase reflects both stagnant regional income levels and the impact of the Affordable Care Act.

There also is a sizable elderly population in the region. Comparatively, Hudson Headwaters' service area is second only to southwest Florida as the highest percentage of people 65 and older in the nation. This population, not surprisingly, has very high health care needs requiring a substantial component of Hudson Headwaters' resources.



Hudson Headwaters Health Network

Immediate Needs

Hudson Headwaters, like many health care organizations, has been directly affected by the pandemic in two ways: (1) a sharp decline in revenue, and (2) a sharp increase in COVID-19-related expenses.

Following the declaration of a public health emergency in New York, most non-essential visits have been canceled, rescheduled, or conducted via telehealth. As a result, like many health care organizations, Hudson Headwaters has experienced a significant drop in revenue as a result of COVID-19-related restrictions on non-emergent and elective medical procedures. During the week before the declaration of the emergency, we had 7,013 patient encounters at our 19 health centers, with only 29 percent appointment slots being empty. By contrast, in the past week, we had only 3,122 in-person patient encounters, and half of an already reduced number of appointment slots went unfilled. Other healthcare institutions in the region have experienced similar (or higher) drops in appointments and revenue. Some have furloughed or laid-off providers and staff. Smaller institutions, particularly those providing elective and specialty services, have temporarily closed. Many of these are unlikely to reopen without economic relief. To date, Hudson Headwaters has kept 18 of its 19 health centers open, closing only a single school-based site that provides care during the school day. Closing some of our smaller clinics would require some patients to travel over an hour to reach the next closest access point.

Concurrent with this decline in revenue, Hudson Headwaters and similar health care organizations have experienced an increase in expenses related to their pandemic response efforts. These unanticipated expenses include the commercial purchase, often marketed to health centers and others at inflated prices, of personal protective equipment (PPE) to ensure that providers, staff, and patients are safe from the SARS-CoV-2 virus. Facilities have been quickly reorganized or renovated, and temporary sites established to ensure social distancing and isolation of patients suspected of having COVID-19. Finally, to provide continued care for acute and chronic conditions, many organizations have greatly expanded their use of telemedicine. At Hudson Headwaters, for example, we have invested over \$150,000 on COVID-19-related expenses, including but not limited to establishing telehealth pods at two non-clinical sites, providing essential equipment to enable providers to conduct telehealth visits with patients, and providing training to health center staff in the use of telehealth technologies.



Healthcare Providers

Hudson Headwaters Health Network

This substantial investment has allowed us to ramp up our telehealth capacity quickly. In the past week, we conducted 2,264 telehealth appointments (1,476 video encounters and 788 telephone encounters). Unfortunately, while these appointments take as long as a traditional in-person encounter, they are not reimbursed by many public and private insurance programs at the same rate.

INDUSTRY NEEDS:

- Payroll protection programs to ensure retention of critical employees, including for organizations that do not meet the requirements of traditional programs like those run by the Small Business Association.
- Loans and grants to cover COVID-19-related expenses, including the purchase of telehealth equipment.
- Regulatory changes to permanently require that telehealth encounters are reimbursed at the same rate as in-person appointments.

Intermediate Needs

Once the public health emergency ends, Hudson Headwaters is expecting to see a surge in the number of in-person appointments and telehealth encounters. This anticipated surge is driven by three factors: (1) an anticipated increase in new patients associated with unemployment and relocation, (2) rescheduling of previously delayed or canceled appointments, and (3) emergent conditions associated with the COVID-19 pandemic.

For example, as a result of the short- and long-term effects of the shutdown on the local economy, unemployment rates in the region are likely to skyrocket. Most newly unemployed individuals will likely lose their commercial employer-provided insurance; some will be eligible for public insurance programs like Medicaid, but others will lack coverage. Currently, Hudson Headwaters' patient population is comprised of 25 percent covered under the Medicare Program, 30% uninsured or covered by Medicaid, and 45percent with commercial/private coverage. However, we expect those numbers to shift with the influx of new patients. As a federally-qualified health center, Hudson Headwaters provides primary and urgent medical care to all regardless of the ability to pay and thus is likely to be the health care provider of choice for many of those who are furloughed or laid off as a result of the pandemic. Similarly, many smaller, often privately-owned, health care providers may close, particularly in more rural and remote areas. For residents of these communities, Hudson Headwaters may be the only remaining provider in the area.



Hudson Headwaters Health Network

Similarly, as mentioned earlier, many existing patients have delayed or canceled appointments for elective procedures, acute care, or management of chronic diseases like diabetes. Since the start of the pandemic, for example, Hudson Headwaters has canceled a total of 32,413 appointments cumulative. Of these, 16,786 were canceled by patients, 9,944 by Hudson Headwaters' providers, and 5,683 were patient 'no shows' or canceled by someone else. Many of these appointments will need to be rescheduled once current social-distancing requirements are eased.

There also will likely be an increased need for the management of acute and chronic conditions associated with the pandemic. Many patients recovering from COVID-19 will need continued care and treatment for the lingering effects of the disease, including respiratory therapy. There is also an anticipated need for behavioral health services, given the emotional strain and mental burden of the current shutdown. In many parts of New York, providers already see an uptick in the number of patients with depression, anxiety, and other mental health problems. Thus, there is a need to plan for a surge in behavioral health appointments.

Finally, primary care providers like Hudson Headwaters and its hospital partners will be crucial in the public health response of COVID-19 testing and contact tracing. During the pandemic, for instance, Hudson Headwaters has established temporary tented and drive-up testing locations. Molecular testing for SARS-CoV-2 infection and antibody testing for prior infection and potential immunity needs to be expanded during the economic recovery and into the foreseeable future should COVID-19 turn out to be an epidemic or endemic disease like seasonal influenza. These are essential public health exercises to ensure that New York State can be reopened safely.

INDUSTRY NEEDS:

- Delay of proposed changes to Medicaid as recommended in April by the Medicaid Redesign Team II (MRT II).
- Increase reimbursement rates for telehealth, including Medicaid wrap payments.
- Increase reimbursement rates for behavioral health and care management.
- Investment in testing and contact tracing infrastructure at the state and at local public health departments, to be done in coordination with primary care providers.



Healthcare Providers

Hudson Headwaters Health Network

Long-term Needs

Even before the COVID-19 pandemic, it was challenging to recruit and retain healthcare workers in the region, as reflected in the Hudson Headwaters' service region being a designated Health Professional Shortage Area. Current lay-offs and furloughs among health care providers in the region, the potential collapse of smaller health care organizations and medical practices, and the anticipated surge in demand described above will exacerbate the existing problem.

Hudson Headwaters has always recognized that geographic size and general isolation of much of Hudson Headwaters' service area has a significant impact on access to care. As indicated previously, the region is vast at just over 5,600 square miles. One major road, Interstate 87, traverses north-south, and there are no four-lane highways east and west in the service area requiring the population to travel on two-lane mountainous roads to access services. Travel is also affected by nearly six months of Adirondack winter conditions. The distances are significant in that most of the specialty services are limited to the cities of Glens Falls and Plattsburgh, a long way to travel for patients living within the Adirondack Park. Telehealth is one way to address some of these challenges, as Hudson Headwaters' providers have been able to use video and telephone encounters to manage patients' acute and chronic conditions during the COVID-19 pandemic. Expanding this service, however, will require additional investments in infrastructure, technology, and training. Moreover, in many regions of Northeastern New York, broadband internet and cellular service are either non-existent or prohibitively expensive for many residents.

INDUSTRY NEEDS:

- Additional healthcare workforce recruitment and retention programs, including dedicated funds for rural areas in state-run programs like Doctors Across New York (DANY).
- Additional funding and support for new programs to train Advanced Clinical Providers and Resident Physicians in rural health care, increasing the number of providers serving in Health Professional Shortage Areas like the Adirondack Park and North Country.
- Funding for expanded telehealth services, including additional equipment to establish internet hotspots/hub and the establishment of a 'vitalist' workforce consisting of trained healthcare workers who can be deployed to patients' homes to collect vital signs and other data for centralized providers to use in their management of patients. This program is particularly needed in rural areas where internet and cellular service is limited.
- Increased investment in broadband and cellular infrastructure.



Hudson Headwaters Health Network

State Policy Recommendations

Several specific policies have been suggested above, but primary care providers like Hudson Headwaters also face considerable regulatory hurdles related to their status as an Article 28 Diagnostic and Treatment Center (DT&C). Not only do current regulatory requirements often result in significant additional expenses when designing new facilities or renovating existing clinics, but they also place restrictions on our ability to provide efficient integration of clinical and behavioral services, such as laboratory and imaging services, substance abuse treatment, and mental health. The New York State Department of Health would be wise to study the impact of the current regulations on the provision of integrated services and identify solutions for reducing barriers to affordable integrated care, such as greater use of Article 28 waivers.

In addition to the investments in primary care, telehealth, communications infrastructure, and workforce development mentioned earlier, other local investments that need to be made as part of a robust economic recovery package include: (1) increasing the amount of affordable housing, (2) improvements to the transportation infrastructure, including public transportation services, and (3) addressing food insecurity. These same investments will also help address many of the socioeconomic factors that affect community health in the region.

Many of the same geographic and socioeconomic features described above also make New York's Adirondack Region and neighboring communities an excellent laboratory for the New York State Department of Health to pilot new programs for health care delivery reform, looking at new ways of providing affordable access to all. Health care providers like Hudson Headwaters are some of the largest regional employers and key drivers of the local economy. Moreover, local primary and tertiary care providers have a long history of collaboration, and they benefit from a tightly-knit community eager to support investment and improvement in the region.

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Education

SUNY Adirondack

- ◆ Since 1961, SUNY Adirondack has been educating and training the citizens of Warren County in degree programs, workforce training, and personal and professional enrichment classes. Many of the community's healthcare workers at all levels who are currently on the front lines were educated at SUNY Adirondack. We have been here for the community through its best and we will continue to be here for the community as it renews and thrives. The challenges ahead are many, but the current collaboration we are experiencing presents a bright future for our region.

Current state

As a result of the rapid spread of COVID-19 in New York State, on March 11, 2020 Governor Cuomo directed all SUNY and CUNY campuses to move instruction to a remote method. SUNY Adirondack responded by extending its spring break an additional week to allow its faculty to quickly transition over 600 courses to a remote model that accommodated over 2,500 students. Thirteen students remained in our housing to avoid homelessness, or other severe impacts on their ability to remain enrolled. We immediately eliminated public access to campus and have 90% of employees working remotely to do our part in reducing the spread of COVID-19 in our community. To date, no employee or student to our knowledge has tested positive for COVID-19

Reports from both faculty and students about online/remote instruction have been mixed. Some students have transitioned well, others have not. The challenges of students who might have limited access to the internet and technical devices is extensive. We've loaned over 100 devices to students (laptops, Chromebooks, and even PCs), bought software licenses, advised on ways to enhance cell service to make their phones hotspots, and offered 35 locations in our three county service area (Saratoga, Warren, and Washington counties) for "hotspot" access in parking lots. The technology divide is a reality and we will need to continue to provide technology support as the college continues in a remote instruction model for summer 2020 courses.

The second largest barrier to success has been for students whose disrupted home lives have made it difficult to focus on their academics. Enhanced needs for childcare, loss wages, illnesses in family, etc. have been reported. Our student success response team has contacted hundreds of students for wellness checks, advice on community services, or provided emergency funds for food, housing, and transportation through our Community Hub support system. We are kicking off a fundraising campaign to increase our emergency fund to raise \$50,000 that will include a 1-1 match from a gift through the SUNY Impact Fund producing \$100,000 for future students' needs.



SUNY Adirondack

Financial impact

The COVID-19 crisis has impacted the college now and will in the near future. Like many organizations dependent upon public funding, our stability is dependent upon our ability to generate revenue through tuition and programs, as well as from our funders. New York's community colleges are funded by student tuition, state aid based on enrollment, and their county sponsor(s). The college's current fiscal year will end on August 31. Due to enrollment shortfalls in Fall 2019, the college had to close a budget deficit of over \$600,000. This was done through holding several administrative positions vacant, reducing expenses in discretionary items such as food, travel, professional services, and professional development, and foregoing academic equipment expenditures. The college is currently constructing its 2020-2021 budget that includes \$1 million in reductions (on a \$30 million budget), a 3% increase in tuition, no wage increases unless contractually obligated, and maintaining position vacancies for the foreseeable future.

However, due to the significant financial impact of COVID-19 on New York's economy, the state budget director is proposing state aid reductions to community colleges as high as 50% and as soon as our final state aid payment for this fiscal year. A 50 percent cut in aid to our June payment amounts to \$1,320,921. If the 50 percent reduction applies to the college's state aid in 2020-2021, the college would stand to lose \$4,009,652. The college's current reserve fund amounts to \$2,905,814. This type of reduction would be very severe and put the college in tremendous fiscal stress. The results will be significant cuts in courses and services, and it would be almost impossible to avoid layoffs. The college currently employs over 450, 80% who live in the region.



Education

SUNY Adirondack

Future state

The college's President has established Advance ADK, a collective of work groups to prepare for reopening. Contingency plans are being discussed around 4 potential instructional delivery modes: Open fully face to face; open fully remote; open some remote; and open with some face to face, and Open face to face and pivot to remote should a surge of the virus occur. All decisions around reopening will be guided by the Governor, SUNY system administration and our local public health officials and inform the delivery of instruction and services for our fall semester. The uncertainty around testing and possible vaccination protocol requirements is a large hole in our planning and will require support from public health officials and local healthcare providers.

Community colleges have always been one of the bright stars in an economic recovery. In 2008 during the great recession, the community college sector became the hub for economic recovery through retraining and putting people back to work with higher skills. In a "normal" recession, this might be expected again for the coming fall. However, the complication of an ongoing public health crisis may disrupt this pattern, so our fall enrollment projection is conservative and precarious.

The devastating combination of state aid reductions, declining enrollment due to uncertainty and in some cases, an aversion to learning online, will require substantial financial assistance. We are hopeful for continued federal support to recognize the need for a strong community college system to prepare the workforce of tomorrow. Our dedicated faculty and staff stand ready to be part of the solution to this regional crisis.

Submitted by: *Kris Duffy, Ed.D.*
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Glens Falls School District

- ◆ School buildings have been closed since March 16th, but we are still operating through online learning for students. We are also providing breakfast and lunch to nearly 1,000 students each week and we have been tasked with childcare for essential workers. Employees have been working either from home or on a modified schedule if they need to be in our buildings.

With the latest executive order closing schools through the remainder of the current school year, we will continue to operate as we have been. Our next question will be whether or not we will be able to provide a summer school program within our buildings. If not, we will provide an online program for students who will need summer school.

Whether we are able to open for students in July or September, we need to be prepared with very specific protocols for screening staff and students and with a plan on how we will implement social distancing for over 2,000 students. It may need to be a combination of modified scheduling in our buildings and online learning with students at home.

Submitted by: *Paul Jenkins*

Superintendent
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Education

◆ *Queensbury Union Free School District*

◆ Looking back at the last eight weeks, I cannot fully put into words about how proud I am of the Queensbury Union Free School District (QUFSD) community. To me, it comes as no surprise that our students, teachers, staff and community members have continued to rise to meet any challenge placed before them, but to do so amidst constant uncertainty is another thing entirely. I am so proud of their strength, flexibility and resilience.

On March 14, as the COVID-19 pandemic started to escalate and out of an abundance of caution, QUFSD joined all 31 WSWHE BOCES school districts and canceled all classes and school events beginning on March 16 through April 19. (From there on out, the district followed the extended closing guidance from New York state.)

On March 20, the district communicated to its 500 employees that only 49 were deemed essential, and the work from home and distance learning cycle began.

Throughout the extended closing, the district has continued to instruct and support its students with 1:1 Chromebook access for K-12 students, as well as provide meals for those in need; and ensure our community's essential workers have had access to child care resources.

On Friday, April 24, the district met the milestone of 25,000 meals served, as that number continues to rise.

After Governor Cuomo's May 1 decision to keep schools closed for the remainder of the 2019-20 school year, district plans are now focused on how to continue to educate and feed our students, coordinate the retrieval of their belongings safely and efficiently, and how to best honor our Class of 2020 graduates.

Over the next few weeks, as we receive guidance from the state, we will develop a plan for summer meals and programs.

Looking ahead, the district has been developing a comprehensive reopening plan, but many unknowns will need to be answered before QUFSD can confidently reopen its doors.



Queensbury Union Free School District

Challenges include:

- What does school even look like? How is social-distancing possible when an average class size is 23-25 students?
- How do you social distance on our school buses?
- How do we sanitize our school buses in between runs?
- How do students eat lunch?
- How do students safely walk through the halls in between classes?
- Do we use staggered schedules?
- How do you get children to abide with wearing face masks?
- Will we have the resources and equipment available to perform temperature checks upon entering?
- How rigorous must our cleaning protocols be?
- What about our interscholastic programming? Sports? Music? Assemblies?

Over the summer months, as we hope the COVID-19 cases continue to decline, the district will continue to think creatively and plan for a safe school environment for our students to come back to.

The main challenge that remains is the uncertainty surrounding the pandemic. Even if schools do reopen in September, further outbreaks could force subsequent closures. Experts suggest that additional waves are possible. We will prepare as much as possible, and as always, keep the safety and security of our students as our number one priority.

Submitted by: **Kyle Gannon**

Superintendent

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Education

WSWHE BOCES

- ◆ WSWHE BOCES is the sole supervisory district over Washington, Saratoga, Warren, Hamilton and Essex County BOCES operating in thirty-one School Districts with over 38,000 students.

Where has the K-12 education arena been?

In early March, WSWHE BOCES developed an emergency online toolkit for educators in the region to assist them with a possible transition to online teaching. K-12 classes in the WSWHE BOCES region have moved to a remote platform since March 16. Educators quickly adapted to a new way of teaching and engaging students using Google Classroom and Google Meet. The projects, activities and work that is being accomplished is amazing. The creativity of teachers and the dedication to students is very impressive. In the Special Education area, services such as counseling sessions, and related services such as occupational therapy and physical therapy have continued. Some students and families have even had home visits from a distance, from their teachers, counselors, aides, therapists and principals in the WSWHE BOCES and school districts throughout the region.

In order to assist teachers, intensive support for remote learning, through a new dedicated, WSWHE BOCES website, has been offered both from the BOCES and from individual school districts.

School districts and WSWHE BOCES distributed Chromebooks and other devices to those students who do not have computers at home. Spectrum has provided free Wifi access to students without internet and has increased hotspots where connectivity has been difficult.

Where is the K-12 education arena now?

Continuity of instruction will be provided through remote learning plans until the end of the school year. Although instruction is remote, school buildings across the region have remained open. Districts continue to provide essential services, such as providing free lunches and backpack programs during this critical time, either by pick-up at school buildings, or delivery by school bus. They also coordinate learning materials distribution. Social distancing guidelines are in full effect to those staff who are still working in school buildings or driving buses. Staff wear masks and are encouraged to wash their hands frequently. Hand sanitizer is also provided. All school buildings continue to be sanitized on a daily basis.

The WSWHE BOCES Regional Childcare Center for families of essential workers has opened at three locations: the F. Donald Myers Education Center in Saratoga Springs; the Sanford Street Teaching and Learning Center in Glens Falls; and the Southern Adirondack Education Center in Hudson Falls. This service will continue until the end of the school year.



WSWHE BOCES

Schools have developed counseling resources websites for the community. They have coordinated food donations and acted as food pantry distribution sites. WSWHE BOCES has donated PPE and assisted Glens Falls Hospital to increase bed capacity by donating 27 mattresses. STEM instructors from across the region have produced hundreds of face shields for front line workers, especially in rural areas.

Where does the K-12 education arena need to go?

While remote teaching and learning has been successful given the circumstances, schools need to get back to a somewhat regular schedule in the fall. Academic needs and possible deficits will need to be addressed. Remediation may be necessary. Students with special needs will continue to need specific supports. Schools are now developing re-entry plans for the fall and possibly summer session, in keeping with guidelines provided by NYS Department of Health and the CDC. Delivery of thousands of meals to the community will continue to be needed. Glens Falls City School District, for example prepares, packages and delivers 7,100 meals to nearly 900 students twice a week.

What are the challenges to getting there?

Some challenges will be transitioning to having all students wear face masks, coming up with multiple social distancing options for many different scenarios, and hand washing compliance. Public information campaigns will need to continue to ensure that parents are on board and will work as partners with schools in managing this important public health issue. Acquiring adequate PPE for students and staff will be tricky and will require additional resources. Deep cleaning and disinfecting schools every day will cost more money. Transportation of students while keeping them socially distant is another challenge, as well as serving meals safely. Providing options for extracurricular clubs and sports to continue with social distancing will need to be on the table also. These are very important to students and need to be done safely. Some students depend on sports scholarships, others enjoy orchestra or theater. Getting those and other activities organized safely will be key. Administrative staff across the region are working on solutions.

Any further extensions of online teaching and learning will have to take into account connectivity issues. On a temporary basis our rural districts have been able to adjust to existing conditions, but long term, broadband solutions will be critical.

Submitted by: *James P. Dexter*

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Tourism Hospitality Arts and Culture

Warren County Tourism Department

◆ *Where we have been:*

Tourism in the Adirondacks is a \$1.5 billion industry, with Warren County representing 42 percent of the region's tourism sales and \$629 million in direct tourism spending in 2018. The lodging sector represents 36 percent of this spending and food & beverage represents an additional 22 percent. Factoring second homes and recreational spending into this equation, it is clearly evident that tourism is a driving force behind the Warren County economy. Additionally, tourism-generated employment in Warren County results in 9,148 jobs directly/indirectly attributed to the industry, and the tourism industry has produced 42 percent of the Adirondack region's tax base, just over \$77 million in 2018.* (*New York State Tourism economic Report, 2018)

Tourism in Warren County has seen continued growth in the last 10 years, which is tracked through a number of key performance indicators. Smith Trend hotel reporting tracks room supply, demand and revenue. Demand, the number of rooms sold, has increased every year since 2008, with over 1 million rooms sold in 2019 and 2020. This is the first time we have reached 1 million rooms since the Great Recession. At an October 2019 county-wide presentation by STR, Hannah Smith noted "Even with soft June performance, Warren County has posted strong year-to-date results with its highest occupancy since the recession as well as record-high levels in average daily rate and revenue per available room."

The introduction of the Short Term Rental market has added another type of guest tracking to our visitor population. In 2019, an additional 93,000 units were rented, with entire homes representing approximately 90 percent of rentals, at a higher Average Daily Rate than a typical hotel room.

Beginning in 2003, an occupancy tax of 4 percent has been collected on hotel/motel rentals in the County. Collections have risen each year to \$4,864,331.73 in 2019. Occupancy tax collections fund the Tourism Department and Lake George Regional CVB budgets; provide marketing support for municipalities, Cool Insuring Arena, local events, and more. Sales tax collections are also supported by a robust tourism economy.



Warren County Tourism Department

Where we are now:

In light of the Coronavirus Pandemic, The Tourism Department immediately paused all paid media campaigns in early March and focused on our strong digital presence, communicating through e-blasts, business newsletters, and organic social media, to maintain top-of-mind awareness of our destination. It is important to note that our channels did not go dark, but rather shifted to effort-based marketing.

After a thorough review of the Department's 2020 budget and cuts to promotional expenditures, we are prepared to reserve funds now to apply to a 2021 budget. We recognize that not spending advertising dollars may result in a market share loss, but at this point, it is difficult to justify spending that will not translate into room nights.

In a typical advertising season, all promotions placed by the department redirect visitors to our website, www.visitlakegeorge.com, as the most comprehensive information available to our guests, with over 1.8 million visitor sessions to our site in 2019. January-March 1 traffic to the site saw an increase in visitor sessions over 2019; but from March-May 1, there was a drop of 26 percent in visitor sessions.

Conversely, social media interactions have shown an increase in engagement, as our team is highly engaged, providing timely content and real-time interaction with our followers.

Since Gov. Cuomo declared a State of Emergency on March 7, a sharp decline in hotel demand was immediately apparent, with occupancy down as much as 75 percent. This decline translates into decreased occupancy and sales tax collections, furloughed employees, and cancelled events, along with a host of other ramifications. We are currently using weekly reporting to develop a forecasting projection analysis. The reality of the current situation is that all lodging properties will suffer and smaller properties may not open for the summer season. Of note, a short-term rental report provided by All The Rooms shows a steady demand for Airbnb and VRBO rentals.

The Tourism Department works closely with our industry partners at I Love New York and the Adirondack Regional Tourism Council. A New York State Matching Funds award of \$89,577 is currently in jeopardy. While New York State has not specifically notified us that funds are being withheld, funds typically dispersed by now have not been received. A portion of our Matching Funds award is redirected to the Adirondack Regional Tourism Council, as each county in the Adirondack region funds this entity. Without Matching Funds awards, the future of the Adirondack Regional Tourism Council is in immediate jeopardy.



Tourism Hospitality Arts and Culture

Warren County Tourism Department

A visitor sentiment survey has been sent to the Department's opt-in email list and social media users. The same survey link has been shared with our business partners who can, in turn, share with their guest list for a good representation of our guest demographic. The survey asks about intent to travel, safety concerns and what type of activities would be considered safe. Insight from this survey will prove invaluable in decision making.

Warren County is fortunate to host a number of large annual events that bring visitors back to the area year after year. At a time when the Governor has paused large gatherings, the future of many events and the positive economic impact that accompanies each, hangs in the balance. Americade, for example, hosts 60,000 visitors in June each year. Organizers are hopeful that a rescheduled July date will attract a portion of these visitors, but there are a number of concerns from local residents and businesses, along with the Governor's re-opening schedule to take into consideration.

Where we need to go:

The Tourism Department is working on a Promotional Recovery Plan that would convey to our visitors the Lake George Area is a safe destination and we are preparing to welcome visitors when traveling resumes. We need to let our guests know their safety and well-being is of paramount importance to us. We are developing content now to share when the time is right. The message will largely be digital, as we can deploy in-house, quickly, and at little cost. The message will begin as regional, but with a focus on overnight visits. Outdoor activities that can allow for social distancing will be worked into visitor itineraries allowing guests to envision their safe visit to the Lake George Area. Communities in the southern portion of the county are able to provide the majority of lodging availability, while communities in the eastern and northern parts of the County are the perfect destination for hiking, paddling, cycling and other outdoor adventures.

The department is also working alongside supervisors and industry partners on an Economic Recovery Task Force, and specifically working with Tourism sector partners. A guest sentiment survey will offer insight to visitor intent to travel, safety concerns and COVID safe activities. A sub-set of this group is working to develop specific policies and best practices needed to be "Open for business," which will be shared with business partners, employees of local businesses, local communities and our guests.



Warren County Tourism Department

Challenges to get there:

The challenges faced by the tourism economy in Warren County are many. The uncertainty of not knowing when we will be able to safely welcome guests is one of the first hurdles to tackle. We look to County and NYS government for this guidance.

In preparation for a safe re-opening, the aforementioned “Open for Business” message needs to be communicated to our guests. We need to effectively send the message that we are a safe destination and our properties are prepared to safely welcome guests.

We also need to be sensitive to our local residents. There is concern that our primary markets of greater New York City, Westchester, Long Island and New Jersey, the areas with most virus cases, will bring new cases to our county. A regional approach to advertising and promotion will be in place for the remainder of the year, with a broadened market added as our health climate allows.

Promotional spending will be decreased this year, in an effort to save advertising dollars for a more robust 2021 season, with the understanding that reduced spending may result in a market share loss.

Many destinations will be sending the same message – we need to set ourselves apart as a unique vacation destination. Warren County is fortunate to be the destination that many people are yearning for. We are inherently an outdoor vacation mecca that has welcomed vacationers for generations. If we play to these strengths – our natural beauty, sparkling water, peaceful mountains and genuine hospitality, we become a favorable destination in the minds of the traveling public.

Ultimately, it is the joint responsibility of Warren County as vacation destination and the guests who visit to follow safety guidelines that will offset chances for a spike or second wave of the virus. But with the cooperation and support of all involved, we are cautiously optimistic about a successful re-opening of the Lake George Area.

Submitted by: *Joanne Conley*

Tourism Director

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Tourism Hospitality Arts and Culture

Lake George Regional Chamber Of Commerce & CVB

◆ *Overview:*

As an organization, we operate three areas of business: The Lake George Regional Chamber of Commerce (450 members), the Lake George Regional Convention & Visitors Bureau (meetings, conventions & sports events) and the TasteNY vending program at the Adirondacks Welcome Center. Our organization employs 13 full and part-time seasonal staff.

As an organization, we complied with the Governor's orders and all office staff are working remotely while continuing the work of our organization. The Adirondacks Welcome Center is deemed an "essential" operation because of the TasteNY vending program, providing food and essentials for highway travelers. We currently have one staff member furloughed, as they are in the "at risk" employee pool and their position would require them to interact with the public as an essential employee at the Adirondacks Welcome Center.

We have continued the work of the Lake George Regional Chamber of Commerce & CVB, disseminating applicable information for our membership regarding all aspects of COVID, New York State business operations, and health and safety including: Governor's daily briefings, Warren County daily updates and New York State Hospitality & Tourism Association updates, among others. Information is updated daily on our website: lakegeorgechamber.com/covid/. We were also very quick to survey and post our members information regarding open operations and closings: lakegeorgechamber.com/memberupdates/. E-news updates continue to be distributed to all members and partners as information becomes available.

Since COVID lockdowns began, we have operated our business, communicating with all staff, board of directors, members, and partners remotely. Our plan for recovery includes specific marketing of the destination in collaboration with all county partners, with the continuing message that we are in this together — working virtually — while New York is on "Pause." We are here for our community, Chamber members, CVB partners and clients, AWC vendors, and the visiting public who relies on us as a source.

Audiences:

Each specific area of our business operations has focused audiences: Chamber of Commerce, Convention & Visitors Bureau & Adirondacks Welcome Center.



Lake George Regional Chamber Of Commerce & CVB

Marketing/Communication Tools:

E-mail Newsletters, Website, Social Media, Online Forums, Earned Media, Paid Advertising — Traditional Media, Paid Advertising — Digital Media, Radio Commercials. For all marketing activities, messages and outreach are being measured locally, regionally, and nationally and results shared, as necessary.

Current / Ongoing Activities:

We are working with various member/partner industries to ensure their collaborative opening strategies relative to the Governor's phases. As restrictions lift, we will shift our marketing message of empowerment and reflection to what is available for the potential visitor to enjoy and discover in the region, specific to our three audiences and contact lists.

Submitted by: *Gina Mintzer, executive director*

Lake George Regional Chamber & CVB
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Tourism Hospitality Arts and Culture

Hotels & Accommodations

COVID-19 Impact

As we are all well aware, the impacts of the current COVID-19 pandemic have been felt by all aspects of society both personal and professional. Spruce Hospitality Group, which currently manages The Queensbury Hotel and Fairfield Inn & Suites by Marriott, have been no exception. Since March 16, we have been forced to reduce our operations drastically and as a result our workforce has been reduced by 80 percent, or 85 employees, and revenue shortfalls continue to mount.

At the Queensbury Hotel during the first six weeks of the mandatory shutdown, actualized revenues have decreased 78 percent over prior year and a 90 percent reduction over this year's forecasted revenues. For the Fairfield Inn & Suites actualized revenues during the same period have decreased 91 percent in forecasted revenues. Looking ahead into May and June if the current "pause" orders remain in place our group is forecasting the following outcomes:

May (Forecast)

- Down 85 percent in occupancy
- Down 88 percent in revenue

June (Forecast)

- Down 82 percent in occupancy
- Down 85 percent in revenue

Events and social gatherings account for approximately 45 percent of the current operating budget at The Queensbury. Luckily the majority of all of our events aside from a few weddings and one-off conferences have all rebooked for the Fall of 2020 or Spring of 2021. If we are forced to cancel all events for July and August, the property will experience an additional 25 percent reduction in group F & B for the year; and naturally the loss of additional group and leisure room revenue would be even greater.

The New Normal

Much has been discussed about the "new normal" in both personal and business circles; however as a hospitality company our number one responsibility has and will always be the health and safety of our guests and team members. Hotels, conference centers, restaurants and bars have always worked alongside public officials from the Department of Health, Building and Codes Office and Fire Department to ensure we are following all necessary procedures for accessibility, fire safety, cleaning, disinfecting and food production. We feel our "new normal" will be the old normal intensified.



Hotels & Accommodations

Within the next week we will have a detailed guide for all team members and guests on what we are and will be doing to ensure their continued health and safety. Currently at both properties we have always and will continue to use only hospital grade disinfectants, we have also increased the regularity of public space cleaning and will increase further as business levels increase. All team members have been provided recommended PPE and signage has been posted informing all patrons to do the same. We are and will continue to follow all social distancing recommendations and when restaurants are allowed to reopen we will be removing tables in the indoor and outdoor dining areas to ensure all tables are placed 10 feet apart, therefore even with chairs all patrons would maintain the 6 feet recommendation. All bar stools will be removed and counter dining will be reduced accordingly.

In the guest rooms we have removed all in-room collateral and converted most materials/guides digitally to be seen on the in room TV's or sent electronically after the guest checks in. All in-room dining has and will continue to be served in disposable single use containers. All public ice machines have been turned off and bagged ice is available through room service if requested. All entrances, elevator landings and other areas throughout the property have touchless hand sanitizer stations and we are working with local distributors to provide each guest room with hand sanitizer in addition to other common guest room amenities. In addition, upon every guest departure, rooms are being taken out of service for a minimum of 48 hours and then properly disinfected and cleaned prior to a return to guest use.

Overall we will continue to monitor and implement all CDC and Local Health Officials recommendations to ensure the health and safety of our guests and team members as we anxiously wait to begin our "new" normal.

Submitted by: *Tyler C. Herrick*

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Tourism Hospitality Arts and Culture

Cool Insuring Arena

- ◆ In late 2014, the arena formerly known as the Glens Falls Civic Center was looking to close. The burden on the taxpayers of Glens Falls was between \$600,000 and \$800,000 annually. The arena was no longer sustainable. A group of local business leaders, teachers and concerned citizens formed the Adirondack Civic Center Coalition, a 501(c)(3). This group raised and contributed funds to lease the arena from the City of Glens Falls. This group simply believed the arena was too important to the City and Warren County to close.

Fast forward to 2017 and the main tenant of the arena, the Adirondack Thunder of the East Coast Hockey League, owned by the Calgary Flames of the National Hockey League, were on the verge of leaving the area and leaving the arena without its major tenant. For the second time, the Adirondack Civic Center Coalition stepped up and raised funds and contributed to buy the Adirondack Thunder from the Calgary Flames and keep hockey in Glens Falls.

The Coalition has done two Economic Impact studies since taking over the arena. In 2015, the impact of the arena was \$10.6 million and an updated study in 2017 found the impact of the arena was \$13.2 million and supported 155 jobs.

The Cool Insuring Arena is more than just hockey, sporting events, concerts, graduations, high school sports, and community events. It's a place where the region comes to socialize, root for its teams and students. In a city of fewer than 15,000 people, the arena hosts many events attended by over 5,000 guests. On an event day, area restaurants, taverns, hotels, and retail stores see revenues increase because of what's happening at the arena.

The Adirondack Civic Center Coalition and Adirondack Thunder have 22 full-time employees and over 100 part-time employees. The shutdown of New York State has resulted in all but 4 full-time employees and all part-time employees losing their jobs for the short-term at least.

The arena has lost significant revenues and events due to the shutdown, including the NYSPHSAA Boys Basketball Championships and the remainder of the Adirondack Thunder season. Concerts have all been cancelled. Events, trade shows, and community events have stopped. The arena currently has no events scheduled until August.



Cool Insuring Arena

We understand the significance of the COVID-19 virus and the impact it has had on New York State and the economy. We understand the health and welfare of the public must be the priority of our local and state officials.

If the arena cannot open in the near future and the Adirondack Thunder cannot play the 2020-21 season, the chances that the arena and team can survive are lessened substantially. The arena and team are owned by the community. We are a significant part of the community and give back to our community.

Quite simply, we need to be able to open our doors in the near future. We will be prepared to keep our guests safe and healthy and abide by the regulations that are put in place by the Health Department.

On behalf of the Adirondack Civic Center Coalition, thank you for all you are doing during these unprecedented times. We know that sporting events and community events are not the most essential part of a community, but the economic impact and quality of life they provide to our community are essential to the well-being of its residents.

Submitted by: *Jeff Mead*

General Manager

Cool Insuring Arena & Adirondack Thunder

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Tourism Hospitality Arts and Culture

Fort William Henry Museum

- ◆ Fort William Henry Museum has never been a location that hosted large events. Most activities are families or school groups (not happening this year) who stay to themselves besides the guided tours. We have marked our facilities, at least 75 percent of which is outside in the open air, to assure one-way movement and no guest overlapping. This is similar to grocery stores. We are confident we can easily achieve social distancing and safety guidelines which the guest can easily adhere to and our employees and the guests will be safe.

Prior to opening for the season, all areas will be thoroughly cleaned in line with CDC guidelines and museum association guidelines for COVID safety.

These procedures will be in effect for initial opening of the property and will change in accordance with CDC or government restrictions or their removal. The primary purpose is to provide a safe experience to our guests and staff.

Safety Protocols:

1. Schedule will be written to stagger arrival times for staff.
2. All staff will be screened upon arrival for work.
3. Anyone showing signs of illness, regardless of cause, will be sent home.
4. Staff becoming ill at work will immediately be sent home.
5. The FWH company wide safety protocols will be followed without exception. This includes masks and gloves to be worn by all staff until restrictions are lifted by authorities.
6. Non-employees and employees not scheduled to work will not be permitted to be on site.
7. Volunteers will adhere to the same rules as paid staff members.



Fort William Henry Museum

Cleaning & sanitation:

1. Public hand sanitizer stations will be located at the fort entrance door and entrance to the Sutler Shop.
2. Restrooms will be cleaned and sanitized hourly.
3. Breakroom will be cleaned twice a day. Tables sanitized after each use. No more than 2 employees will be permitted in the breakroom at one time.
4. Social distancing will be practiced.
5. Glass cases – wipe down twice a day.
6. Chairs – audio visual room – spray with Mediclean after each use. Close room to public after each use. Max: ½ capacity when restrictions of 10 is removed. Social distancing practiced.
7. Outside areas: parade ground, walls, etc. – advise guests of social distancing requirements.

Tour schedule:

Rather than one large tour at 10, 12, 2 and 4 each day:

- A. Activities will be held every hour to accommodate guests in smaller groups
- B. Musket and cannon firing demonstration will be held on the half hour simultaneously to divide the groups.
- C. History presentations will be held in various places throughout the fort including the audio-visual room on the one-quarter hour and three-quarter hour interval.
- D. All activities will be shown on a schedule at the entrance and within the parade ground as well as PA announcement. Reservations may be taken.
- E. Ghost tours within the Fort will be handled as private tours, with reservations required. Groups will be less than 10, all with masks and any additional New York State guidelines for safety introduced will be followed.

Walking tours for history and ghost tours will be introduced. Small groups will leave the Fort William Henry grounds and travel along Beach Road and/or waterfront with guide to explore various areas throughout the Village of Lake George and Battlefield Park.



Tourism Hospitality Arts and Culture

Fort William Henry Museum

Traffic control:

1. Entrance – stanchions will be set up to split the entrance hallway and museum entrance hall in half creating one-way traffic flow. The left side will be the entrance to the admission desk and museum. Right side will be exit from Sutler and museum.
2. Exit from the parade ground will be through the left side double doors (facing inwards); into the Sutler shop area. From there customers may shop or continue to the exit side of the hallway.
3. Traffic through the museum buildings may be set up in a one-way sequence with numbered stops.
4. Powder Magazine room will be closed while any restrictions are in place due to its small size and narrow passageway.

Sutler Shop:

1. Plexiglass barriers between cashiers and patrons.
2. Wiping down and sanitizing of counter surfaces near registers as well as ice cream machine and soda machines will be assigned to be done at least hourly.
3. Wiping down of credit card processing machines, POS system, keyboard/mouse will be done on a regular basis and between cashier shifts.

Submitted by: ***Kathryn Flacke Muncil***

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The Hyde Collection

- ◆ The Hyde has been a very important resource for not only our local community but the northeast region as well as the entire United States. In 2023, we will be celebrating our 60th anniversary. Of the approximately 24,000 visitors we welcomed last year, more than 50 percent came from outside of Warren County. In fact, we had visitors from 41 states and 8 foreign countries. Last year alone, 208 visitors came from outside the country including from Australia, Belgium, Canada, England, France, India, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Japan, Lithuania, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, and Russia.

People come from far and wide to visit the Hyde. When our visitors come to town, they visit our restaurants, hotels and shops. The Hyde contributes to our local economy in a very significant manner. We are a destination venue and an economic engine.

The Hyde is unique in that its art collection is a world class collection matched by a very few number of museums of similar size in the United States. The phrase “world class” is overused today but the Hyde’s collection actually meets the true definition. It is an exceptional small art museum with a distinguished collection of European and American art. The core collection includes works such artists as Sandro Botticelli, El Greco, Rembrandt, Peter Paul Rubens, Edgar Degas, George Seurat, Pablo Picasso and Pierre-Auguste Renoir, Thomas Eakins, Childe Hassam, Winslow Homer and James McNeill Whistler. The Hyde offers significant national and international exhibitions that draw visitors from through the United States as well as foreign countries.

While the museum is closed, we have been actively engaging with our audience with a vigorous schedule of virtual programming via our social media channels. The programming has been very well received.

We anticipate reopening as soon as we are legally allowed. Work on a reopening plan has been underway since we closed. We want to insure that we offer a safe and comfortable environment for our guests. Again, we anticipate opening as soon as we are allowed.

Submitted by: *Norm Dascher*

CEO

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Tourism Hospitality Arts and Culture

Six Flags Great Escape

◆ At Six Flags Great Escape amusement park, the safety of our guests and team members is our top priority in consideration of every aspect of our plans to reopen. In the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, and as New York State transitions to open business, we are actively ready to reimagine our resort to create a safe and fun-filled experience for all guests and team members.

In consideration of the Governor's plan to reopen, our plan will protect our team and guests, make the physical workspace safer and implement processes that lower risk of infection in the business.

We have the unique ability to manage, limit or control attendance levels based on policies or procedures thus ensuring social distancing and the reduction of density while providing families much needed recreation time:

- We can control and/or limit our attendance via ticketing processes.
- We can control and limit the density of our guests within our parks via procedures and protocols to ensure recommended social distancing is practiced and reduced contact.
- We are an established local community recreational area and a place of leisure in a controlled environment.
- New York has parks spread out geographically across the state to help manage density.

The principles and considerations outlined below were gathered from attraction operators around the world in consultation with an epidemiologist. They are designed to provide some approaches that our Theme Parks, Amusement Parks, and Water Parks in New York State specifically are considering as we attempt to reopen the facilities in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic. The information is designed to demonstrate the implementation in assurance that we operate safely and within guidance of all local regulatory mandates.

Plan Overview (Base Principles/Core Strategies):



Six Flags Great Escape

Our plan includes many new procedures and/or procedural guidelines. These internal policies and guidelines have been written to execute clear responsibilities, frequencies and requirements for each department. A dedicated safety manager in conjunction with department heads will continually evaluate, train and progress this plan.

Social Distancing:

- Install distance markers in all queue lines throughout the park.
- Set up all guest and team member area to meet social distance protocols.
- Seating adjustments in dining, patio, etc.
- Proactively modify indoor venue capacity.
- Reduce guest and team member contact with operational adjustments (i.e.)
 - Mobile Dining Ordering
 - Ticket Reservation Systems
 - Adjusted Operating Hours
 - Limit Park Capacity (less density and provide proper social distancing ratios)

Screening:

- Implement screening procedure for both guests and team members.
- Guest and team members will be screened at all entrance points.

Sanitization and Disinfecting:

- Increase hand sanitization stations throughout the parks – Rides, all point-of-sale (POS) locations, and midways.
- Provide handwashing stations for guests throughout the park.
- Continue existing and increased sanitization and disinfecting procedures park wide with concentration on high touch points (Rides, Railings, Counters, POS, etc.)
- Staff dedicated clean teams.
- Increase sanitization frequency of public seating, patios, tables, entertainment venues, etc.



Tourism Hospitality Arts and Culture

Six Flags Great Escape

Signage - Communication – Training Touchpoints

- Implement multi-tier guest and team member communication for health, hygiene and social distancing to ensure coverage throughout the park.
 - Audio and video boards where applicable
 - Signs inside and outside of the park
 - Reinforced on Website for pre-visit planning
- Implement COVID-19 training and in-services for team members
 - Post Hygiene standards in common workplace break areas, time clocks and high frequency team member locations
- Protocols in the event of a positive COVID result – guest or team member

PPE Equipment – Supplies

- Team Member PPE (each team member will be required to have and use PPE)
 - Cloth face mask
 - Hand sanitizer
 - Specific items if required by job duty (I.e. Safety Glasses, Gloves)
- Spray bottles
- Low pressure sprayers, back pack sprayers
- Sanitizers and disinfectants
- Plexi-Glass separators
- Distance markers at attractions where lines form

All of these strategies/tactics will also comply fully with any existing, new or evolving regulatory guidelines. Our business is and always has been safety-first guest service and we look forward to our community having fun in our Safe-Clean-Fun environment.

Submitted by: *Rebecca Wood*

Resort President
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Restaurants, Bars & Food Service

- ◆ The restaurant business, like every business in this pandemic, is facing massive challenges. When we were first forced to shut down in March, switching to a takeout-only model was not as difficult for my two establishments (The Bullpen and Talk of The Town) as it may have been for most. We are quite fortunate that both businesses are well established, have always done a brisk takeout, have little debt and strong liquidity. We knew as long as we could keep the takeout steady, we could keep our heads above water.

One of the biggest challenges has been employee morale. Two weeks into the shutdown, the federal government decreed that every unemployed person in the country would receive, on top of their weekly sum from their respective state, an additional \$600 per week for 4 months. It is difficult to explain to staff how the folks sitting at home are making more than those who stayed on and in most cases are working harder than before.

Next, we applied for and received PPP loans for both establishments. This was certainly appreciated help, but also posed some problems. To hit the forgiveness parameters, we needed to get a majority of our staff to go back on our payroll. This meant I had to explain to them why they should come back on for less (sometimes substantially less) money. Once again we are fortunate that our staff has always been treated and feel like family. We got the majority to return.

Now we need to focus on getting back to work. This is unsustainable for everyone: the government, the businesses and the workers. We have been telling everyone to “stay on the bus,” stay home and stay safe. Now I fear we are at the point where everyone has “stayed on the bus” but we are about to push the bus off a cliff. We need to open society up. The restaurant business had very thin margins before this whole mess. When we reopen, we have to be creative to keep our patrons and employees safe. We also must be allowed enough room to make money. The government cannot be so restrictive in its distancing regulations that our industry can’t survive. I fear the Governor is not going to allow restaurants to open until at least June if not later. If he continues this into the summer and the PPP loans expire, do we again have a massive layoff? We need to be progressive in our thinking. The restaurants will be diligent in terms of disinfecting our spaces. We are a resilient industry. We know how to adapt and survive. We just need the “powers that be” to let us get back to work.

Submitted by: *Paul Bricoccoli*

The Bullpen

Talk of The Town

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Tourism Hospitality Arts and Culture

Arts & Theater

◆ *Lower Adirondack Regional Arts Council (LARAC)*

Since mid-March the LARAC offices, gallery, and gift shop have been closed and the staff has been working from home. We were approved for funding in the second round for the Paycheck Protection Program, which will be a small relief. Our projections show a budget deficit of \$30,000 to \$85,000, which is needed to cover general operating expenses. The deficit will depend on the restrictions needed for safety that will cause events to cancel or we may need to downsize the LARAC “June” Festival, Fall Festival, and other LARAC events. We also expect disruption in revenue of membership, sponsorship, and grant support. The 49th Annual June Arts Festival has been rescheduled for August 29 and 30; if we are able to meet on this weekend we expect to downsize the number of vendors to allow for social distancing. LARAC’s greatest need is direction on procedure for large group gatherings as well as the opportunity to apply for financial support to help us make it through to be able to continue to serve the community for years to come.

◆ *Adirondack Theatre Festival*

ATF is at risk of losing its entire season, along with its biggest fundraiser (the annual gala was canceled in April), and even the film festival if things don’t improve. Without a vaccine, the impact on attendance could continue on into the 2021 season. It’s hard to predict the losses at this point, but they could easily exceed \$100,000, which is no small amount for a small non-profit to overcome. What ATF needs is access to more grant opportunities to cover operational costs while they’re unable to generate any income for as much as another year.

◆ *Art in the Public Eye*

Art in the Public Eye (APE) has canceled all of its spring programming including programs with the Hyde, LARAC and other area organizations. The re-launch of Art Cart and Gallery 99, two signature APE programs, are now on hold. The summer and fall, as well as 2021 is uncertain. APE is worried that it will have to cancel all of its other programming for the foreseeable future but are looking at how it can still bring programs to the community, and support area artists, in this challenging time. All of its programming relies on the ability to bring groups of people together in the community. Plans are starting for virtual events and new formats to provide outlets for the artists and our community. Outdoor Cinema brings hundreds of families together in the summer months for free family entertainment. APE is working to determine if it can safely do that program and other events during the summer to help the community come back together and heal.



Arts & Theater

◆ *Chapman Museum*

Postponement or cancellation of the Chapman Museum fundraising events will lead to a potential deficit of 20 percent. Losses in investment funds will reduce income for general operations. Closing for part of the year will reduce earned income through admissions, program fees, and shop sales. Establishing CDC protocols for sanitizing the facility will add new costs. Funding is needed to create virtual exhibits and to stream programming.

◆ *Lake George Arts Project*

Since March, LGAP has had to cancel three fundraising events that help it invest in artists and general operating expenses throughout the year. That is a loss of approximately \$50,000. LGAP also expects support from individual donors, corporations (sponsors) and foundations and/or granting organizations to be greatly decreased. Overall, LGAP finds itself in a situation where it will have to operate with between 50 percent and 70 percent less revenue than it would earn over a typical year. Like many organizations in Lake George, LGAP is cautiously planning for the summer and fall, but expects major programming to be cancelled or greatly adapted to ensure they are able to enforce and maintain social distancing guidelines as outlined by New York State.

LGAP's greatest needs are direction about mass gatherings for the summer, as it can't afford to invest in the planning for events that will inevitably be cancelled while simultaneously developing contingency programming. And, like all non-profits, money is a major concern. LGAP has to find a way to make up some of its financial losses at a time when people are being more cautious in their own personal finances, there is increased competition, and LGAP can't bring people together for events and programs where they would typically generate revenue.

The immediate challenge is to just simply maintain operations. Over the course of the next few months, LGAP's greatest challenge will be developing and implementing feasible programming that adheres to state/local mandates while not sacrificing quality. Over the course of the next year (as we hopefully get back to normal) the biggest challenges will be not having the cash flow necessary to invest in programs and events, but also that arts organizations will have to reimagine our audience engagement efforts and build a new momentum and excitement for what LGAP does.



Tourism Hospitality Arts and Culture

Arts & Theater

◆ *North Country Arts (NCA)*

Cancellation of its next scheduled exhibit at the NCA Gallery at the Shirt Factory and closure of the Gallery for two months means that two months of rent had to be paid from savings. The impact is also on individual artists, as no one is seeing the art for purchase in person and the current show is on Facebook. The City Hall Gallery is closed so the artist there had to leave his work for two months without visitors. Fees for the next two exhibits that were cancelled had to be returned to the artists. The exhibit, Expressions 2020, had to be postponed and it will depend on the situation in fall.

◆ *Our Town Theater Group (North Creek)*

OTTG's artistic and financial positions have both been compromised. OTTG has several monthly expenditures that must be paid regardless of whether they have income. Operators pay \$100 rent to the Town of Johnsborg for use of the theatre, \$150 rent for costume storage at a private home in North Creek, and \$150 rent to Murphy's storage units in Wevertown for theatrical flats, furniture and some props. OTTG is deeply concerned about its finances. Its bills are paid for the moment, but as the lockdown continues, and as no revenue comes in from either grants, performances or donations, OTTG is faced with having to draw on reserves without being able to replace them. It would be very discouraging to have to discontinue the organization which has brought great theatre to this area for 20-plus years.

Submitted by: *Candice Frye*

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Arts & Theater

◆ *The Park Theater*

The Park Theater is a recently restored historic venue in Glens Falls, N.Y., which was first opened in 1911. The theater reopened its doors to the public in early 2018, after a lengthy renovation that brought the building back to its former glory. The theater is home to two parallel businesses, a non-profit 501(c)(3) organization, presenting a wide variety of artistic programming to the surrounding areas, and Doc's Restaurant, a for-profit business offering upscale American cuisine and catering. These two organizations provide a combined total of five full-time jobs and seven part-time positions to the local work force. Since the onset of the current health crisis, we have retained three of our full-time employees, with assistance from the SBA Paycheck Protection Loan program, and have furloughed the remainder of our staff.

Despite the support of the SBA, this pandemic has put incredible strain on these two businesses. They have both closed their doors to the public and have earned no new revenue since mid-March. We have retained our three most essential employees, all of whom are working from home, only in an effort to remain focused on re-opening both businesses when it is safe to do so. Despite our own financial hardship, the safety of our employees and patrons is our utmost concern. We hope that local and federal officials will work tirelessly to create a plan that keeps the health of our economy, as well as our staff and patrons, at the forefront at all times.

Submitted by: *Elizabeth Miller*

Owner

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Retail Sales

Aviation Mall

- ◆ Aviation Mall opened in 1970, and is home to 70 different businesses, and through its tenants, helps employ more than 870 local residents. Similar to other properties owned by Pyramid Management Group LLC (“Pyramid”), Aviation Mall has been working to diversify its tenant mix and attract new dining and entertainment venues.

COVID-19 Impact

Unfortunately, COVID 19 and the subsequent government-mandated shutdown on March 19 has put a significant strain on the property. Only two of the businesses within the property are able to open their doors on a daily basis. As a result, April and May rent payments are down in excess of 80 percent; and well short of the income required to pay operating costs, property taxes and debt service.

Opening of Aviation Mall is dependent on guidelines and regulations set forth by the State of New York and metrics/milestones being met by the Capital Region. At this point, it is not clear when (what date) all of the venues will have the green light to open. Further complicating matters is that national estimates are that 25 percent or more of small businesses will not be able to re-open following the pandemic. In addition, there have been some indications that certain bricks-and-mortar retail tenants may be filing for bankruptcy. Finally, it won't be until all of the customers are comfortable returning to public venues that there will be some sense of stabilization. There have been some public reports that will occur when a vaccine is in place.

Unfortunately, until stabilization occurs, the loss of rent and other income will further challenge the asset.

Re-Opening

Pyramid has developed detailed plans to re-open Aviation Mall (and all of its properties) in a safe manner. It has followed the recommendations and guidelines set forth by the CDC and the International Council of Shopping Centers (ICSC) in creating best practices for opening, cleaning and maintain the complex. The comprehensive plan includes a wide range of social distancing, safety and sanitizing policies and procedures, all designed to make Aviation Mall as safe as possible for our employees, and our guests. Re-opening will be closely coordinated with our tenants and our government partners at the state and local level.



Aviation Mall

Challenges

As of this date, none of the federal programs have been directed at the private sector economy to support economic drivers like Aviation Mall.

Given the shutdown of Aviation Mall for an unknown period of time and the lack of rent being paid, it is critical that support from the federal government be offered to back-stop the crisis that COVID-19 has caused. This will allow for tenants to stay in business, rent to be paid, taxes to be delivered to government and other operating expenses to be paid. There are multiple legislative actions under consideration that could provide the necessary capital. By way of example, the American Recovery Fund Coalition, which includes over 100 different organizations, is supporting federal funding to make sure businesses stay afloat.

Help is needed now as Congress plans the COVID 4 Recovery Act.

Submitted by: *James Griffith*

General Manager

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Retail Sales

◆ Factory Outlets Of Lake George

◆ *Where We Have Been*

Retail in general entered 2020 facing continued challenges with significant pressure and uncertainty for multiple stores, including several in our market. Excess available space was going to continue to be challenging to fill with tenants. In mid-March, tenants communicated various plans for closure/reopening, Landlords have heard a wide range of information regarding closing and re-opening plans and mass layoffs of store staff.

Where We Are

All stores in the Factory Outlets are currently closed as per New York State guidance regarding non-essential business. There are 2-3 exceptions for stores that are operating to some extent with product related to food (Beef Jerky, Harry & David, Lindt). Moose on the Loose Deli announced a limited re-opening for Saturday, May 2 as well. In many cases the national headquarters for the various retailers have also closed their offices and furloughed many of the staff, so additional information at the local level is sparse. It is unclear when or how many of the tenants will actually re-open, even when allowed by New York Pause guidelines. While the “Outlets” generally work together to present a united message to the consumer in this situation every store is independent and operating based on directives from their chain of command.

Where We Are Headed

The three landlords communicated this past week to coordinate plans that include increased sanitizer options throughout the Outlets, increased cleaning of the centers, and coordination of messaging on hours and best practices. Advertising budgets are being reduced through the end of the year and redirected to highlight re-opening and safety measures.

It is widely anticipated that consumer sales will be significantly depressed. And the stores themselves now face inventory issues as the product in the stores is out of date for the seasonality and it is unclear how they will manage existing inventory along with all of the shipments to the stores that are now backlogged.



Factory Outlets Of Lake George

It is also likely force majeure clauses will be cited with regard to leases and stores will close in this market (as well as many others through-out the country) that will then be very difficult to re-tenant. Each individual tenant has their own lease and literally every single lease needs to be reviewed and renegotiated with regard to how the mandatory closure impacted each store locally & nationwide.

The longer New York stays “On Pause,” the more pressure on our specific locations as well. The Outlets of Lake George is strongly tied the tourism & hospitality of the region and many of the stores located here rely on the next 4 to 6 months of the season for the profits to make a year-round location sustainable in the market.

Submitted by: *Laura A. Kohls*

KDA Hospitality LLC
Adirondack Outlet Mall
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Retail Sales

The Wood Carte

◆ After having been closed for business for the last six weeks, I can say with much certainty that now is the time to reopen the upstate New York economy. My retail furniture business has suffered substantial loss of revenue during this period. Sales are down 85 percent. Mine is not the kind of business that lends itself to online sales. Fortunately, having planned for the future in maintaining a small financial cushion, I have been able to continue to pay my employees during these weeks, even while they are not working. They all have families and they mean a lot to me. However, our emergency reserve is not unlimited. My employees don't want file for unemployment insurance and become a burden to an already overwhelmed system. They want to get back to work and I want them back. This is not possible without customers.

The months of May, June and July have traditionally been our strongest months of the year. May is upon us and might not be salvageable. However, the remainder of the summer months are vital to not only my business but also many other small businesses in our part of upstate New York.

In the early stages of this crisis I was fully behind the concept of shutting down while the extent of the problem was determined. It was prudent and necessary. I applaud the Governor and his team for their handling of a very difficult situation. Having said that, we must not let the cure for this crisis end up being worse than the disease. That, I believe, is exactly what is happening now. Thankfully, the numbers of new virus cases is decreasing in our area. The vast majority of our problems here in Warren and Washington counties have been in our area nursing homes and assisted living facilities. I pray for our elderly and their families and the suffering they have endured. That is where all of the state's resources and attention should be directed. And the sooner we can get back to business, the sooner we can begin to add to the state coffers again, and to help that cause.

What is/was appropriate for New York City and the surrounding areas is no longer appropriate for our area. In my opinion, the reopening of our state economy needs to be handled region by region, with the understanding and belief that the people of New York State are smart and capable. Thanks to the guidance of the Governor and his team, we now know what precautions are needed and can be trusted to respond accordingly going forward.

Submitted by: *Cristopher Carte*

Owner







Community/Public and Human Services

◆ Nonprofits

◆ Overview

During the past couple of months, I have communicated with a number of not-for-profit professionals and their associates. They include Duane Vaughn from the Tri-County United Way, Kim Sopczyk from the Family Services Association, Margaret DeVries from The Wait House, a North Country Ministry/Warrensburg case worker, the Salvation Army, Kim Cook from The Open Door, and Johnsbury Town Supervisor Andrea Hogan concerning Adirondack Outreach Services in North Creek. I will do my best to incorporate their comments and concerns into this.

Since March, North Country Ministry (NCM) has been without an executive director, a case worker for their North Creek and Pottersville operations and all of their 20 or so volunteers have been “furloughed,” mostly because all are senior citizens. Before filling these two important positions, the NCM board wants to get a better sense of their finances going forward. NCM has lost one source of revenue, that being area churches, but last month added an online donation area on their website that has been very successful so far.

Surprisingly, many food pantries that I have spoken to and visited throughout the county are often seeing fewer customers. Catholic Charities’ NOEP confirms with many food pantry providers that many working families who were receiving SNAP, HEAP, WIC, and/or Day Care Allowances, etc. prior to COVID-19 had recently received their tax returns, Stimulus checks and unemployment insurance and/or compensation from their employers and didn’t see the immediate need to seek assistance.

None of our crystal balls can honestly predict the economic impact of the coronavirus on non-profits in coming months or even years. However, every professional from this industry/sector that I have spoken to concludes that hard, conservative decisions will need to be made. Most of the Tri-County Regions non-profits employ 25 persons or less.

Agencies that supplement sizable portions of their budgets through fundraisers and special events, may not be able to schedule those or, if they can, will be happy to receive a much smaller percentage of recent year’s revenues.

Organizations funded by federal, state and/or local governments could very well see, in the near future, a decrease in grants and service contracts.



Nonprofits

Personally, I fear for Warren County residents who benefit from existing programs and services that are designed to improve the physical, developmental and emotional quality of their lives. Prevention programs both empower and save lives often resulting in cost savings to tax payers for incarceration, dependency, mental health and other related social needs.

Family Service Association

Family Service Association expects to see an increase in requests for assistance in our Crisis Intervention and Prevention Program area through the next several months. Typically, our busiest month each year is April. April 2020 was not especially busy but we believe that it is because people affected by the COVID-19 Pandemic most likely have received the recovery stimulus check, unemployment benefits where applicable and these came on the heels of their tax refund / Earned Income Credit refund. Also, the community-at-large has been extremely generous in donating food, personal care items, and financial support at the beginning of this pandemic.

Family Service Association is a member partner of Tri-County United Way. Due to this unprecedented situation, we are uncertain about the allocation of funds moving forward. We are a private nonprofit agency and depend on the United Way allocation, donations, grants and our small endowment to fund our agency activities and three full-time equivalent staff salaries. We have not had to reduce staff hours and have explored all grants, emergency funding opportunities, and fundraisers that can help us help those in need.

We typically have five volunteers who regularly give their time to us each week with several more donating their time when we have a food delivery or special event. During the COVID-19 Pandemic, we do not have any regular volunteers. We have structured our food distribution differently so clients and staff do not have any direct contact with each other and our financial assistance applications are completed over the phone and we must rely on fax and email to receive supporting documentation for the request. This is a challenge for our low resource population as they do not always have access to fax machines or have an active email address and most of their technology is with their cell phone. It is so much easier to document a need when clients can bring paperwork to us and we can sit with them to complete an application. Many of the people we serve have limited technology skills but everyone has been very accommodating to the changes.



Community/Public and Human Services

◆ *Nonprofits*

We are preparing for what may be several months of increased requests for financial assistance and resources for the social determinants of health: rent, emergency housing, transportation, child care, health costs and increased requests for food, infant care items and personal care items. We appreciate all the support this area has given with pop up pantries and emergency funding appeals. But we must look ahead when NY begins to open again and what that will look like to the population we serve: low resource, low income. We expect to hear from ALICE, “Asset Limited Income Constrained Employed” or also referred to as the working poor.

Many of our clients work in the service sector of our economy which may be slower to open than construction or manufacturing. The employees may not be offered full-time hours during the traditionally busiest time of the year. We expect that families and individuals will struggle to afford the basic needs of rent, utilities, transportation, personal care items, diapers and even food. We are preparing now because we believe that we will hear from more and more people in need throughout the summer.

Family Service Association of Glens Falls, Inc. provides financial assistance and resources for rent, emergency housing, utilities, transportation, daycare, medical costs in situations that are beyond someone’s resources. We have been assisting people since 1910 and are celebrating 110 years in 2020. We have been here to help during war, The Spanish Flu of 1918, The Great Depression, The Great Recession, and now we plan to be here for the community at large during the COVID-19 Pandemic.

◆ *Tri-County United Way*

There is no doubt that many of the non-profits will be deeply affected by the current financial crisis. Many non-profits rely on fundraisers for a significant portion of their already limited budgets. Without these, critical positions go unfunded and only programs that are directly grant of government funded are paid for. Many of the non-profits are working harder and changing their missions to make sure their clients are being served. As far as government funded agencies, it is hard to see what will happen in the next funding cycles as the Feds and State re-align their missions and budgets that are also being curtailed. We know that at the United Way, we currently cannot even guess if workplace campaigns will stay in place with furloughed and laid off staff. Right now, many non-profits are the safety net of the community more than ever with resources flowing out of our doors with less coming in. You may want to break down the non-profits on how they are funded and what they do.



Nonprofits

◆ *WAIT House*

We expect a decline in individual contributions for years to come.

We have had to postpone an event which we have held for 18 years. This is an unrestricted revenue source for us in which we raise over \$20,000. Typically WAIT House has two big events each year, we may not be able to hold either to the extent that we would like.

We struggle with the inability to meet the expectations of the youth and families that we serve due to the barriers of this pandemic.

The overall uncertainty of the future as far as state and federal funding and what that will look like. Without those funds, we cannot provide shelter to homeless youth in Warren and Washington County.

We provide an essential service to our community. Homelessness does not disappear because we are living in a health crisis.

Although we are in the middle of a crisis, I have seen firsthand how our community has risen to the occasion to help others in need. We truly live in a wonderful place.

Submitted by: ***Ben Driscoll***

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Community/Public and Human Services

Warren County DSS

- ◆ The Department of Social Services offers a daycare subsidy to support employment-related day care to low-income families residing in Warren County. This is a state and federally funded service which involves the non-residential (less than 24 hours a day) care of children placed by their parents, guardians, or other persons responsible for them. Daycare subsidy eligibility is determined by family income and a parent fee is required by all participants. The parent fee is determined on a sliding scale, based on the family's income for all employment related day care. Daycare is a critical support service in the implementation of the work requirements for Temporary Assistance recipients. Daycare also provides a necessary level of support for low income families that may otherwise need to access temporary assistance benefits.

Warren County contracts with six daycare centers located throughout the county. Warren County Daycare also works closely with Southern Adirondack Child Care Network, a not-for-profit resource and referral agency which serves Warren, Washington, and Hamilton counties. Southern Adirondack Child Care Network offers services to assist parents with finding and selecting childcare and works with employers to assist with the childcare needs of their employees.

In response to COVID-19, Warren County Social Services requested a waiver from New York State Office of Children and Family Services (OCFS), which allowed our local district to make amendments to the childcare services portion of the county's Child and Families Services Plan. The amendments included permitted families a 30-day extension for those who would otherwise need to have their eligibility for childcare assistance re-determined and allow families' parent fee to be waived for those families impacted by COVID-19. The waiver also expanded the total number of absences that the Department of Social Services would make payment on during the recovery period on behalf of a child who is temporarily absent from childcare due to extenuating circumstances resulting from the child being quarantined due to the effects of COVID-19. This portion of the waiver extended payment of absences from 12 to 30 days for our contracted Day Care Centers. This waiver was approved by OCFS on March 18, 2020 and an additional 30-day extension to the waiver was approved through May 17, 2020.

In March, three of the six contracted daycare centers closed temporarily due to COVID-19. Of the three remaining daycare centers still open, one has openings for every age group (8 weeks to 12 years old) and is willing to accept new children. The other two centers have limited availability due to limited staff and/or not willing to accept new children due to precautions related to COVID-19.



Warren County DSS

In addition to the contracted daycare centers, there are “family daycare” and “group family daycare” providers. Family daycare providers can provide care for three to six children at a time in a residence, and may add one to two school-age children. The maximum allowable number of children will depend on whether the provider has infants in their care and the number of infants. A group family daycare provider can provide care for seven to twelve children at a time in a residence, and may add one or two school-aged children. The maximum allowable number of children will depend on whether the provider has infants in their care and the number of infants. A group family daycare provider must use an assistant when more than six children are present. Currently, there are approximately six to seven family daycare providers accepting new children depending on their age and spots available. Other family daycare and group family daycare providers are either at maximum capacity or unwilling to take new children due to precautions related to COVID-19.

WSWHE BOCES is currently offering childcare for children of essential workers (as defined by Governor Cuomo’s order) at three locations: Hudson Falls, Saratoga, and Glens Falls. Each location has two classrooms, one for 3 to 5 year olds, and one for 6 to 12 year olds. Each classroom has a capacity of eight children and two staff members with hours of operation from 7:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. According to WSWHE BOCES website, further expansion is possible based on additional need.

There have been some ongoing challenges in finding childcare even before COVID-19, such as providers who offer non-traditional hours (7 p.m. to 6 a.m.) and weekends, and limited providers in the northern locations within Warren County. Many of the essential workers that are currently employed and unable to work from home, are also required to work outside of the typical 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. hours.

The current challenges as a result of COVID-19 include limited day care providers willing to accept new children and/or limited spots available. Also, finding providers able to take school-aged children. This is a high need amongst the community with the closure of schools for the remainder of the school year. A foreseen challenge in the upcoming months will be finding school-aged childcare for those families that typically rely on summer camps for childcare if Governor Cuomo does not approve to open summer camps. The YMCA and Camp Fun Spot are two contracted day care providers that offer summer camp in Warren County. Both providers decided to temporarily close due to COVID-19 and remain closed.

Submitted by: *Chris Hanchett*

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Community/Public and Human Services

Warren County Employment & Training Administration

- ◆ Located in the One Stop Career Center, the Employment & Training Administration works collaboratively with the regional New York State Department of Labor employees to provide services outlined and funded by the Workforce Innovation & Opportunity Act (WIOA). Due to the pandemic, remote work began on March 17, and staff began to offer 90 percent of services via phone or email. Workshops and classes were halted but residents in Warren County still receive support with one-on-one telephone appointments, resume updating, Metrix online learning, job searching and matching, training opportunities, and virtual mock interviews.

One of the services offered is financial aid for training that supports individuals seeking to enhance their vocational skills or change careers due to job loss or business closures. Many clients enrolled with BOCES or SUNY Adirondack had to transition to online or distance learning and some programs were paused altogether during the pandemic. While online learning programs offered through Metrix, BOCES, and SUNY still provide excellent educational experiences, they are only available to people who are computer literate and have consistent access to a computer and internet. Many clients relied on using the One Stop Career Center for free access to computers, printers, fax machines, and copiers. The community rallied to provide internet access to students by listing public Wi-Fi spots and many educational and technology businesses made their services free to students to access their courses, but some of these resources will come to an end and additional support will be needed in order to continue to support access distance learning. Training programs with significant hands-on or applied learning components have also been suspended or, in some cases, temporary solutions have been implemented for student completion. In order to fully address the workforce training needs in our region, these hands-on programs will need guidance and support to get back up and running with any necessary changes to truly meet workforce needs.

Additional funding is critical to keeping under resourced students equipped with technology, Wi-Fi, books, and other educational materials. Furthermore, the continuity of the Career Center's partnerships with SUNY Adirondack and BOCES is dependent upon further funding to meet the needs of the most impacted industries and successfully connect those programs to the local workforce needs.



Warren County Employment & Training Administration

The Summer Youth Employment Program (SYEP) is on pause until further guidance is received from the Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance. However, preliminary plans include a combination of virtual work experience opportunities and limited worksites at essential businesses to complete outside work under safe guidelines and supervision. It is imperative that local youth have opportunities for constructive use of their time this summer as it is necessary for their healthy development and safety to avoid risky behaviors or dangerous situations. Further, many have already experienced a loss of learning while schools have been closed and virtual learning has not been accessible to many rural and/or low-income students.

The local tourism industry has been gravely impacted by the pandemic and much of the workforce is directly or indirectly involved with tourism in the region in the fields of hospitality, food and beverage, recreation and amusement. If the season partially opens, it will be a challenge to recruit employees who will be willing to earn less money in these fields of work than they are receiving with the additional Pandemic Unemployment Assistance payments through July 31 as these payments are higher than the local salaries and are not adjusted for the cost of living. In addition, the travel bans may likely result in the loss of approximately 1,000 J1 Visa workers who usually fill up to 1,500 local jobs. Finally, childcare and transportation were already local barriers to employment and have only been exacerbated further with the closure of schools, many daycares, afterschool and athletic programs, and limited bus services.

When the One Stop Career Center is reopened to the public by the state Department of Labor, continued safety measures will be followed to include but not limited to: facial coverings required for clients and employees, physical distance markers from the door to the front desk, limits to the number of guests on the computers at one time, sanitizing practices throughout the day, limits on the number of class participants and more virtual workshops offered instead.

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Community/Public and Human Services

Public Transportation

- ◆ Below is a brief update provided by Greater Glens Falls Transit (GGFT) regarding current public transit services in the greater Glens Falls area.

Where We've Been

On March 23, GGFT suspended scheduled transit operations in response to the statewide PAUSE shut down. During the suspension, GGFT continued to assist with food delivery to congregate senior housing complexes in collaboration with the Salvation Army. We also offered demand-responsive service for individuals for essential trips to doctors, grocery stores and employment.

Beginning on April 20, GGFT began to reestablish a limited amount of fixed route trips with a number of precautions based on updated new Center for Disease Control, New York State and USDOT recommendations regarding the spread of COVID-19. Steps that GGFT is taking include:

- Buses are cleaned and disinfected before they leave GGFT's garage;
- Interior bus ventilation is set to improve the venting of air through and out of the passenger compartment;
- Available seating capacity on buses has been reduced to allow better distancing between passengers;
- Collection of fares has temporarily been suspended.

Additionally, all GGFT passengers are required to observe the following:

- Transit service is being made available at this time for essential travel only (trips to doctors, grocery stores, & essential employment).
- Do not ride if you have a fever, cough, or do not otherwise feel well. Maintain social distancing & avoid contact with other people who are sick.
- All passengers are required to wear a mask, scarf or similar face covering of their nose and mouth. Passengers without one will not be allowed to ride GGFT at this time.
- Allow space between you and other passengers. Do not sit in seats marked off with rope or with yellow tape.

GGFT is offering a reduced schedule on seven of its nine year-round transit routes (see our website www.gftransit.org for details).



Public Transportation

Where We Need to Go, and Challenges

- Older workforce. GGFT's existing full-time drivers have an average age of 63, with part-time drivers even older. The oldest drivers have not returned to work but will be needed to return to full service.
- Seating capacity has been reduced by over 50 percent. To this point, that has not been a problem but will become one if and when businesses fully open. We do not see expanding seating capacity as an option until a vaccine or effective treatment is readily available.
- Summer tourist season uncertainty. GGFT operates the Lake George trolley service and many workers and tourists use the service. Many questions remain about this as we look to the 2020 season. These include:
 1. What will open? When?
 2. Where will the seasonal workers come from (J-1's or local)?
 3. Potential trolley capacity problems with reduced seating.
 4. Availability of trolley drivers – many of GGFT's past trolley drivers are older (over 60), and it is unknown how many will be willing to drive under the current circumstances, and what exactly the summer circumstance will be is unclear at this time, so recruitment is on hold. Normally at this time of year, all summer driver hires have been identified and training has begun. To date in 2020, we have been unable to move on this at all.
 5. Potential driver fear of tourists. Related to above, many summer tourists come from downstate areas hard hit by COVID-19. The prospect of transporting significant numbers of downstate residents may be a significant deterrent to hiring.
- At the present time, thanks to a CARES Act grant that GGFT received, the lack of fare revenues is not a major issue at least through the summer.
- GGFT currently has adequate PPE and disinfectant supplies, but long-term supply is uncertain.

Submitted by: **Scott Sopczyk**

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Community/Public and Human Services

Family YMCA of the Glens Falls Area

- ◆ The mission of the Family YMCA of the Glens Falls Area is to strengthen community through youth development, healthy living and social responsibility.

Where We Have Been

Leading up to the COVID-19 outbreak, we were positioning the YMCA to impact the underserved in the Southern Adirondacks. The YMCA Adirondack Center in Brant Lake was opened. The YMCA Regional Wellness Center in Chestertown was also established in partnership with Hudson Headwaters Health Network, the town of Chester and many service organizations. A long range capital planning project was nearing its end. In addition, Child Care was to be added to the YMCA's support to the region to impact 200 children. The goal was to partner with businesses to support work force development initiatives and also provide affordable care for the "Asset Limited, Income Constrained, Employed" (ALICE) families that currently are not supported. Membership grew this past Fall at a rate that has been unprecedented for the organization. This would have provided additional resources to impact those in need, mission related initiatives and organization sustainability.

Where We Are at Now

- All long range capital planning is on hold for possibly 12-24 months.
- Child Care is on hold for possibly 12-24 months or completely eliminated if the economy lags or the need is not there after the crisis subsides.
- Membership has declined by 844 (30%) as of today with additional cancellations happening daily.
- We are partnering with two organizations to provide needed food, paper products in the Glens Falls Area as well as the Southern Adirondacks.
- Providing, at no charge to the region, virtual wellness and youth development programs.
- We furloughed 225 part time employees.
- All management staff (25) are still employed. This is not due to need, but so we have leadership to reopen and grow.
- We were able to obtain a PPP SBA loan. We did not bring back all staff because we feel we will not have all staff returning by June 30th. It will provide some relief but, will not pay for all a staff currently employed.
- We are using savings, which is small, to pay for staff. This will not last.
- We have asked members to stay with us and continue paying membership fees as a donation. Some have but, many have canceled due to loss of employment.



Family YMCA of the Glens Falls Area

Where We Need To Go and Associated Challenges

We need to reopen to connect the community to needed services. Examples include supporting those in recovery, child care for those who are returning to work, connecting to mental health support etc. The challenge: many of the community will either be afraid to gather or fearful for members of a population that is vulnerable.

The need in our area will be much greater for services we provide or other non-profits provide. Government resources will be limited. The challenge: our income has been significantly decreased due to the impact in membership and program revenue. "No money, no mission."

We need to fundraise to provide mission services to those in need. We raise \$300,000 and provide \$400,000 in scholarships. Challenge: we feel that contributed income will decrease 40 percent.

Our staffing will be minimal when we reopen and not sustainable if we cannot grow to the levels pre-pandemic. This will lead to reorganization and refocusing our purpose.

If our revenue trends the same, this will impact our \$4.5 million organization by over \$1 million.

First, the impact of non-profit organizations is helping those who do not qualify for government assistance but do not make enough money to live. These are the forgotten. This group has been growing for many reasons, but the pandemic but will thrust many more into this group.

The reality of where we are, from the lens of a non-profit, is that our community need will be greater than before the pandemic. We will have fewer resources. Many non-profits will cease to exist or have limited means to provide help. This will impact the smaller non-profits greater than the larger non-profits. Progressive organizations will pivot to survive but will not thrive. This struggle will not be short term.

Submitted by: *Brian Bearor*

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Community/Public and Human Services

Community, Work & Independence, Inc.

- ◆ The impact of this virus really began to hit CWI on March 17, when we were mandated to close all of our Day Habilitation sites (8 locations, 14 programs serving approx. 266 people) and our site-based Community Prevocational services (2 locations, 3 programs serving approx. 36 people). These closures prompted a layoff and/or reduction of work hours of more than 120 staff (day, pre-vocational, transit and other support staff.) By the end of the following week, the state announced an approach to services and funding for these that required that no staff be laid off. We brought back all the staff by March 30.

This prompted the next wave of impact. Employees with child care issues, employees who had medical conditions qualifying them as “high risk” and those who were simply afraid to be working flooded human resources with the process to determine who was eligible for the various new programs to support employees to be out of work. Approximately one-third of the laid off employees have remained out of work.

In the meantime, CWI’s focus was on protection of those people we support in our residences and those in the community who rely on us for vital supports, and their staff. As guidance came out daily (sometimes multiple times a day), CWI worked to secure personal protective equipment focusing first on this group. As all are aware, PPE was difficult to get. We have benefitted from some generous community donations and with the diligence of our purchasing administrator, now believe we have an adequate supply of PPE to meet the expected “burn rate” should one or more people in our homes become infected. This includes hand sanitizer, masks, shields, goggles, gowns, etc. We’ve had to purchase these plus additional thermometers, alcohol wipes, pulse oximeters to meet the needs. We have implemented recommended safety checks such as temperature readings including staff and people served. These added supplies come to an expenditure thus far of more than \$55,000. It is anticipated that this cost will continue to rise as we experience positive or presumed positive cases and burn through the PPE.

Given the generosity of our community and ability to purchase/get shipments, we have been able to provide homemade masks or basic surgical masks to the rest of our team who are working and supporting their colleagues in the houses by grocery shopping, delivering PPE and other tasks outside of the home. Masks have also been offered/provided to people we serve in the community.



Community, Work & Independence, Inc.

We have taking many steps to minimize exposure: where possible, staff work from home/ work from office concept even though we are an essential employer. We have closed off certain entrances, limiting visitors to only necessary ones to offices etc. The clinic has shifted as many services as practical to be delivered telephonically. We scrambled to get team members set up with laptops, Microsoft teams, ability to e-sign documents that were signed in person before etc. Our clinic counselors, day habilitation, community habilitation and community pre-vocational staff are reaching out regularly to the people and families of those we serve. Our employment services continue to support people who are still working in the community and are assisting them as to how to be safe in working at their job. Training and information overload is real and we put forth effort to keep everyone updated including our daily meetings and communication via use of conference calls and Microsoft teams to not miss a beat. Training of new employees being done in one on one settings when we are able to bring on new people.

Our current challenge is that of staffing the residences 24/7 without introducing more people/different staff than absolutely necessary. Dedicated staff are working longer hours and more days than they used to while dealing with the fears and anxiety related to exposure to the virus and their families. We had been able to assign some day habilitation staff to work M-F day shift hours. The evenings, overnights and weekends are a growing challenge as staff are fatigued and have growing concerns of a resident acquiring the virus. CWI works with SEIU Local 200 and effective May 4 have implemented “compassion pay,” hourly rate increases to reinforce those working in the homes and to entice others to pick up those hard to cover shifts. In addition, we have added an enhanced rate for when someone in a house is “suspected” to have the virus and another level for when a person has tested “positive”.

This brings us to the other huge challenge: Financial implications of the virus. Certainly, our ability to deliver and bill for services has been impacted. The losses for March and April are still being calculated. The costs related to PPE and staffing of our homes has sky rocketed. We are applying for grants and loans as they become available.



Community/Public and Human Services

Community, Work & Independence, Inc.

Specifics related to COVID-19 testing and diagnostics:

- Residents in our homes—as of May 5 we have had two residents who were being seen by their physician for other medical complaints and were tested for the virus. Both came back negative. One was treated as a “presumed positive” based on symptoms and the number of false negative tests out there. He was placed in Isolation at his home and all residents and any staff who had been in contact with him within 48 hours prior to symptoms were placed under quarantine. We worked closely with Saratoga County Department of Health throughout the 14 days.
- Community-based People we serve—three people have exhibited symptoms, were tested and all are negative but “presumptive positive” quarantine practices were put in place. We have worked with the local Department of Health for the county they reside in.
- Staff—as of May 5—14 staff have been tested based on symptoms. Ten of them came back negative and have returned from the 14-day presumptive positive quarantine. Four others are also negative but remain in the 14-day presumptive positive quarantine. We have worked with the local DOH for the county they reside in.

These all have added responsibilities such as communicating with families, staff and people served and care managers, as well as with NYS JC, OPWDD Incident Management, BOD etc.

Going forward:

- We await state guidance as to how our services can “re-open”. As social distancing rules stay in effect, our challenge will be similar to schools—how to safely transport busloads of people to sites and how to effectively serve them in group settings. We anticipate it will be a slow reopening and potentially with some regulatory changes, some portions of our population will not return to this model but instead, continue to receive services from their home.
- For our clinic, we will be able to implement environmental changes to protect staff and people needing OT, PT, Speech, etc. with utilization of larger rooms to provide distance during therapy as well as ongoing use of PPE when seeing people one on one.
- We are already being informed of a 20% cut to our funding. Given that many services were already operating at a deficit, we are struggling with how to continue to deliver services to the full population that we have historically served.



Community, Work & Independence, Inc.

- Staffing—in order to resume services as we had been providing, we need to know that our workforce will be back to work. Staff with child care issues need support addressing that, especially if school schedules will be changed. Staff who are “high risk” need to be able to come back with physician support of working with PPE. Staff who are doing well with the rate of unemployment, may not be motivated to come back.

What do we need to get there:

- Continued relaxing of regulations to allow for remote service delivery.
- Child care options for our staff
- Cooperation of local medical providers to understand that the employees are essential workers. Advise us on what protections are necessary for the staff to safely work.

Submitted by: ***Debra Rowell***

VP/COO

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Construction and Engineering

Peckham Industries, Inc.

◆ Peckham is a fourth-generation family-owned construction company based in the Hudson Valley. We have almost 1,000 employees split into four divisions. The Southern Division includes Westchester and Putnam counties, as well as New York City, Long Island and Connecticut. These areas have been hard hit by Covid-19, but as we are primarily involved in highway and heavy construction, we have not yet seen severe impacts to the business in this region. In fact, (for the moment) we are seeing a slight uptick in activity as officials take advantage of reduced vehicle and airline travel. As an example, we are currently supplying blacktop for the Westchester County Airport and the Cross Bronx Expressway projects. Our Central region covers the mid-Hudson Valley. As our work is primarily seasonal, we were not hit hard due to normal slow spring start up. It has been a little sluggish to start but we just commenced a NYSDOT project on Route 44. As our employees are very “visible”, we are highly scrutinized by the traveling public and we have many Covid-19 protocols in place and work hard to maintain the safety of our workers.

Our Eastern Division covers the I-90 corridor in Massachusetts from the New York line to Worcester. Surprisingly, our aggregate sales have been steady throughout the spring as Massachusetts was more liberal than NY in allowing continued “non-essential” work. We have strict rules in our workplace and for the most part have seen little labor interruption.

The Northern Division covers the North Country and our operations in Vermont. We also have a large precast concrete operation in Shaftsbury, Vt.; Dailey Precast built the parking garage at Glens Falls Hospital and is ready to erect the new garage at the City Center in Saratoga Springs. At this plant, we employ over 150 people. The precast plant is where we had the biggest setbacks. Vermont rules and regulations were some of the strictest in the country and social distancing is all but impossible with the work we do. We closed the plant on March 23, and are slowly reopening production with approximately 25 employees returning this week with massive training and oversight as we learn to comply with new worker standards and protocols.

Our primary business, paving and the supply of blacktop and crushed stone, is very slowly ramping up. The road construction business has been deemed “essential” and as a supplier, we have been allowed to produce and sell stone products for the last 6 weeks. Needless to say, sales have been minimal. Blacktop typically ramps up in May and we began our first municipal job May 4 (Town of Kingsbury). Our road construction crews are doing prep work on a carryover NYSDOT project in Raquette Lake, but it has been a slow start. We await direction from NYSDOT on our I-87 project in Schroon Lake.



Peckham Industries, Inc.

As much of our business is primarily driven from government spending, we are extremely concerned going forward. There is little driving, so not much gas tax is being generated. The economy is on PAUSE, so there is a very small amount of sales tax generated. Many stores and restaurants will remain closed, and likely many will not reopen. Like most businesses, we are approaching the balance of 2020 very, very conservatively. So far, we have heard that Essex County gave \$1 million back from the county public works budget to the general fund. Saratoga County Department of Public Works reportedly gave up \$3.5 million, and Warren County did not award four of the highway projects we bid on (out of 9). Obviously, loss of any budgeted funds is very important to us.

One of our largest concerns is the CHIPs funding. These monies are given (by New York State) to counties, towns, cities, and villages for capital projects. For most of our customers, it is their primary funding source for road improvements. As state officials predict a cash crunch, Albany has not made it clear that municipalities will definitely receive this money. As it is a reimbursement program, local officials are nervous about spending money with us and getting caught without their funds if the state withholds the “promised” funds. Any definitive language from the Governor’s office to these local government leaders would restore confidence and “get people back to work.” Paving is one of the fastest ways for the government to put money out on the street and stimulate the economy. Other public projects do the same, but with the myriad rules of engineering, environmental permits, etc., they tend to take multiple construction seasons to actually put people back to work. There are not a lot of “shovel-ready” big jobs on the shelf!

On the private and commercial side of the business, we have significantly scaled back our forecasts. If we are looking at a serious recession (with property values declining), who is going to invest further by paving a driveway or a parking lot? Who will be pouring concrete and doing additions, renovations, a further development? We think many will be very cautious and our sales will reflect it. Is it possible that we see a resurgence as more people migrate away from the cities and “work from home?” Perhaps, but (likely) that’s not a near-term 2020 economic boom.

Anything the Governor and other state officials can do to reduce paralysis and restore confidence will help the Upstate New York economy. In the meantime, like many others, we will proceed very cautiously with reduced spending and very little overtime, pacing ourselves not expecting things to bounce back quickly.

Submitted by: *Peckham Industries, Inc.*





Construction and Engineering

The VMJR Companies

- ◆ The COVID-19 pandemic has been devastating to the construction community. Fortunately for us we had most of our projects deemed essential. Unfortunately for us meeting those operational requirements to protect our employees has been a challenge and a costly proposition.

We have instituted both field and office operation plans and instructed our team partners in response to COVID-19. We have modified and changed these plans as we became more cognizant of the effect of the virus (attached). Our staff has been quick to promulgate and initiate these changes but, supplies of PPE, sanitizers and wash stations etc. on the other hand has been difficult to obtain.

As an essential employer we needed to function as usual in an unusual environment. We are swinging office staff in a rotating schedule having geared up a remote workforce in the matter of days. We have several employees with health issues and compromised immune systems. Those employees are working at home for the foreseeable future and the remaining office staff are floating in and out of the office on a prepared schedule, limiting office capacity to 50 percent. We communicate, mostly within the office and home offices with Microsoft Teams. We had the foresight to equip all of our workstations with cameras and we added laptops to the mix. Having in place capabilities and network capacity has made this transition seamless, though it has been less so for the field operations, who are and have always been slow to embrace technology. They had all the tools they needed but communication has been more of a traditional basis (emails, phone, text and tablets). Keeping our field staffed has also been a challenge. We have found keeping staff on the job very difficult, for various reasons, the biggest of these are fear, family and social welfare (The Federal Government awarding everyone an additional \$600 on top the unemployment benefit). Productivity due to protocol and social distancing constraints have added over 35 percent to our labor cost and some, though not all, clients will not recognize those costs quoting various contract clauses. Supply chains are being affected, especially material coming from Canada sometimes requiring expensive substitutes and delays.



The VMJR Companies

We have applied for and received the PPP funds only to find out that the IRS has now ruled that the forgiveness of these funds is subject to taxes as ordinary income, as we are unable to expense the cost of labor rents and utilities as ordinary business expenses. This makes what was perceived as an economic lifeline to small businesses a government grab. Don't get me wrong, it is beneficial but, with losses constantly circling us, the offsets are now diminished and will directly affect our bottom line. This is something that will affect every one obtaining PPE funds not just the construction industry. For us, the eight-week limitation on spending the funds won't be a problem if we can get employees back. But those nonessential businesses who received funds weeks ago and can't ramp back up to expend the money well, it is inconceivable that the eight-week couldn't be extended.

In regards to the overall construction sector we believe that residential sales will slow dramatically as businesses from all sectors will be slow to recover and slow to rehire. On the commercial construction side, we believe that there will be a shrinking of the market. Well capitalized businesses will survive but, volume will decrease, competition for work as well a related COVID cost will increase leading to additional layoffs.

Let's face it, the prospect of building new offices will diminish, working from home will be the norm, creating excess office inventory and lower rent. The medical sector will take years to recover and will be slow to initiate and plans for new construction. Retail was dying and the nail is being driven in the coffin for a large chunk of that sector. Public sector work is dicey at best. Projects are already being canceled or postponed as tax revenues will be hard hit. Airline and transportation sectors will also constrict. Entertainment, sports, food and events will be hit pretty hard and well those who receive economic benefits from those industries. They will be the last to open up effect all service sectors.

The question will be what is the pivot point? Will banks be willing to extend credit to those struggling to make payments and undercapitalized. What happens to the insurance industry with claims topping the worst natural disaster ever? It's not a rosy outlook for the foreseeable future. We can only hope that this is a few years of pain and recovery is swift.

Submitted by: *Vic Macri*

The VMJR Companies
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Construction and Engineering

Rozell Industries

- ◆ We are a business that has been deemed essential because we serve a large number of pulp, paper and food industry businesses. However, that being said, many of our customers that have non-essential projects are placing these projects on hold. This has reduced the amount of work we currently have and therefore will decrease current revenues.

As the state begins to “open back up,” we believe one of the biggest hurdles we will encounter is getting skilled employees to return to work. Lack of skilled tradespeople is always a hurdle but with the increased unemployment benefits, both dollar amount and length they can be received, employees are uninterested in returning to the workforce. We understand that the “rules” behind unemployment are the same but if we deny employees benefits, how motivated are these employees going to be when they come back to work?

We need to find a way to motivate both employees and businesses into coming up with solutions to get back to work as quickly and safely as possible. We do not need to continue to find ways to promote and encourage lengthening a stalled economy.

Submitted by: *Jen Whalen*

Treasurer/Controller, Rozell Industries
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Hilltop Construction Company

- ◆ The PAUSE has affected many companies and organizations as well as construction. Stefan Fleming and Stephen Hunt from ESD have been very helpful to determine what projects were essential or non-essential as the Governor set forth restrictions without specific details as they would streamline out as the days went along.

I have been very careful to adhere to the Governor's order and to protect our people with the guidelines set forth by CDC with specific information on how to continue working in construction that include, hand washing stations with soap and water or sanitizer, posters posted, hands-free waste container. Most importantly, we have provided a handbook with instructions to each employee on the use and application of cleaning and maintaining social distance.

We currently have four essential projects going with multiple employees and several other projects that are non-essential projects where we can have one employee that is a bit challenging and slow. The blessing in all of this is we filed immediately for the Payroll Protection Plan that we received in the first wave thanks to our local Glens Falls National Bank that gave us some assurance that the future is promising. Our employees remained on the payroll until the PPP come forth and let's hope that our area can fully go back to work before the PPP expires, during its duration of 8 weeks.

We currently have 50 percent of our workforce working with hopes of bringing more back to work as soon as we get the green light. It's interesting during this time of uncertainty, the phone has been ringing off the wall and we have secured over \$4 million of work during this pause. Important to know that in our circle of employees and their immediate families plus with the owners of more than 100 people, there have been no cases of the COVID-19 or symptoms. It was hard at first to get everyone to buy into the restrictions but as lives continue to be lost the effect starts hitting home. Another piece of information to be noted is, who is policing the Governor's request? It seems to be the municipalities, as they have stopped unannounced to our jobsite to check if folks are conforming; furthermore some area building departments are closed and others are continuing to process the inspections which is another challenge. But we are trickling along.

Submitted by: *Tom Albrecht*

President & CEO, Hilltop Construction Co.

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Recreation

Camping

◆ *Where We Have Been Since the Start of the COVID-19 Pandemic*

Since President Trump's televised address that the USA would be closed to European nationals on March 12th, the campground and RV park industry in Warren County has been in a consistent state of decline, with a growing number of cancelled/refunded and fewer new reservations as we get closer to the summer season. At the time of the announcement, the Lake George RV Park had 3,300 reservations confirmed for the 2020 season and was ahead of prior seasons by 10%. LGRV Park typically receives 7,300+ reservations every season. As of May 1, we have lost 400 reservations and we will voluntarily cancel another 300 reservations in the coming week as we announce that we now plan to open on June 1 and forgo operations entirely for the Memorial Day Weekend, which is always a sold-out weekend.

I believe LGRV Park's stats are indicative of the sector with the potential for a greater number of cancellations in campgrounds that are primarily tenting facilities and less in seasonal (6 month stays) oriented campgrounds. Campgrounds that primarily cater to seasonal guests, who leave RVs on campsites all season, were more likely to open under the current guidelines set by Warren County on April 6. The current County guidelines were created primarily to accommodate guests that require shelter as residents, not short term vacationers.

Warren County's 30 private and 8 public campgrounds were on course for another successful season prior to the start of the COVID-19 Pandemic. All NYDEC campgrounds stopped taking new reservations for the summer in early April and have now declared their first possible opening date is June 1. Many private campgrounds have also postponed their openings based on daily information updates from government officials.

Following Gov. Cuomo's launch of "New York on PAUSE," Empire State Development issued conflicting opinions regarding campground and RV Park's status as "essential businesses" under the category of "other places of accommodation." While it remains clear that many RV Parks and campgrounds have onsite lodging facilities and full hookup campsites that allow patrons to experience their facilities like most traditional accommodations, some parks have primarily tent sites making them more difficult to treat the same as lodging accommodations.

The current Warren County and State Health Department guidelines are too restrictive to cater to non-essential travelers coming to the region for recreation and vacation purposes. Many parks have applied for SBA PPP and EIDL loans to get them through until June 30. The very design of these programs gave our industry the reason to hope that our parks would reopen by July 1 at the latest. We need confirmation that this is still possible as these relief programs cannot carry our businesses any further than June 30. Additional financial support of our sector by the government will be necessary if re-openings cannot occur by July 1.



Camping

Where We Are Now

Presently, we face a 2020 season where we will have a significant reduction in revenue and the possibility of devastating, permanent financial ruin if we cannot come up with a plan to allow our facilities to open to guests and employees safely for the summer season.

Camping guests bombard us daily with inquiries about when we will open and what facilities and amenities will be available when we do open. They are also asking about other supporting services like restaurants, attractions, and services, and how their schedules will be impacted by COVID-19. Currently, it is difficult to find up to date information on what restrictions affect our sector in one place. Campground owners are frustrated by not knowing when we may see changes in the current restrictions, so we can prepare our facilities for an eventual opening and save resources until that expected date. Due to the lack of clarity about what the summer season may hold, guests are no longer making reservations at a normal rate. For instance, LGRV Park is taking less than 10% of the reservations it would weekly at this point (15 instead of 150 or more).

Campgrounds have been busy educating themselves about CDC safety guidelines and what actions they may need to take to safely reopen to guests and employees. We are holding off on hiring and training our seasonal staff as we wait for clarity on an opening date. It is expected that it will take most facilities 2-6 weeks to prepare their facilities and staff for opening once that date is determined. We are holding off on all unnecessary purchases to reserve revenue to hold us over until we can start taking reservations again for the summer season.

Where We Need To Go

Not permitting the private campground sector to open at all this season is not a viable option. Cancelling and refunding all of our current 2020 reservations will drain our bank accounts and leave most campgrounds with no way of generating new revenue and paying bills until presales for the 2021 season, which does not begin for most parks until October or later this year.

In coordination with County and State administrators, we must declare an opening date in June that we can all agree is manageable and safe. To do this we will need to consider reducing maximum occupancy levels in each type of campground facility. For instance, the total number of guests in a camping facility that caters only to guests with self-contained, full hook up RVs may be higher than tenting campgrounds, as the need for guests to share facilities in each type of property is very different.



Recreation

Camping

We also need to define what amenities and services can be open to guests in these facilities and when. We will also need to define new maximum occupancy requirements for specific services and amenities within campgrounds. Special attention must be given to aquatic facilities within campgrounds, as they are one of the most popular amenities in parks during the heat of summer. Campgrounds will need to reopen these facilities following CDC guidelines closely and educate guests about personal responsibility for their safety in addition to the parks taking all reasonable measures to ensure the health and safety of all guests and employees.

If we were to open at 50 percent maximum capacity in our campsites and swimming pools, most facilities would be able to generate enough revenue to break even assuming that the demand for campsites would also be at least 50% of their normal summer business. Should the COVID-19 challenges significantly be controlled by the time of the scheduled opening, or any time after that, the total occupancy levels could be lifted if it was determined by authorities that greater than 50 percent of the facility could be occupied and still assure the safety of the public. The overall goal would be to increase occupancy limits to normal levels as the summer season progresses.

Also, we must develop a one-stop place on the web for all hospitality businesses and visitors to go where they can check to confirm the Dos and Don'ts for every type of facility. This is crucial, so the entire tourism industry can adjust to updates and changes uniformly and we can all communicate the same information clearly to every visitor before their arrival.

The Challenges in Getting There

This is uncharted territory for campground and RV Parks in Warren County. We must be careful of optics. We need to work in unity for the betterment of everyone. In many ways, campgrounds are the best positioned facilities in our county to deal with reopening requirements as, for the most part, our facilities are designed for guests to congregate on private campsites and most guest experiences take place outdoors where there are lower risks of COVID-19 transmission.

The public areas in campgrounds (i.e. aquatic areas, pavilions, restrooms, campground stores, playgrounds, activity rooms, ect.) can be restricted and monitored by staff to assure the CDC guidelines for social distancing and maximum occupancies are practiced. We believe that campgrounds and RV Parks offer some of the safest and most desirable properties for visitors to our region to consider this summer. Of course, we face many challenges in reopening and serving camping guests:



Camping

- County & State officials need to set a target opening date that needs to be announced soon so property owners and guests can prepare facilities and make reservations for June and later this season.
- Define Dos and Don'ts for all types of campground facilities and post on web where all owners and guests can check for up-to-date guidance.
- Depending on the level of threat in Warren County on date of campground openings, we need to define who we will be able to serve at that time (i.e. serve only guest from specific home areas, disallowing guest from certain hot spots), the maximum number of guests we can serve in each type of campground and amenity/service inside campgrounds.
- Open complimentary services in our area on the same schedule as campgrounds and with similar restrictions so guests can spread out in the region, avoiding the attraction for large groups to congregate in any one place, and provide guests with easy access to food, supplies and services needed when visiting our region.
- Create “best practice” safety guidelines to outline CDC recommendations for facility sanitation and guests who will practice personal responsibility while in our facilities based on these shared guidelines.
- Controlling public optics. It is imperative that we carefully communicate to the public our plans for a scaled reopening of campgrounds in our region so we can avoid negative information from being projected to large media audiences. If we do not carefully control these optics and fail at our reopening plan we could endanger the promise of successful summer and fall seasons.
- Reopening plans in neighboring counties and states must also be coordinated with our reopening plan as it will be more difficult to meet camping guests' expectations if they are coming from neighboring communities with significantly different guidelines and permitted activities.

Submitted by: *David King*

Chief Operating Officer, Lake George RV Park
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Recreation

Adirondack Sports Complex

- ◆ All spring programs and leagues, three softball tournaments, all school rentals, and all event rentals (Great Upstate Boat Show, and IREVA Volleyball) were suspended as of Thursday, March 12th. All of these were eventually canceled for 2020. This period typically represents approximately 12 – 14% of our total annual revenue. The canceled softball tournaments for this period would have generated between \$250,000 to \$300,000 in local economic impact.

All of our employees were laid off as of Sunday, March 15th.

All of our May through August programs, leagues, camps and tournament are currently on hold. We have already had some out-of-state teams request to cancel out of, and be refunded for, some of our summer softball tournaments. Many of the tournament team registrations that would have typically come in during March and April for our summer tournaments have not happened because of the COVID-19 situation. Our three June softball tournaments are going to have to be cancelled. We are still in hopes that our July tournaments will be able to take place. However, if they do, I am anticipating a 50 to 60 percent reduction in the number of teams. Collectively, the cancelled June tournaments and reduced summer tournaments, will likely result in approximately a \$400,000 to \$550,000 loss in economic impact.

As for our Summer Youth Camp Programs, it's currently undecided if we are going to be able to run our summer day camp programs. Even if we are able to run them, I would anticipate at least a 50 percent reduction in registrations.

I am also hoping to be able to offer and run our Summer Adult Softball Leagues and our Summer Soccer Leagues. However, I expect to have to start these leagues at least one month late, and with a further reduction in teams.

I am currently anticipating at least a 40% - 60% loss in revenue for the period from mid-March through August.

My next concern is two-fold: (1) What will be the lingering concerns of parents and the resulting impacts on all of our registrations for next winter's programs? Our winter programs typically account for 80 to 85 percent of our total annual revenue. (2) Will there be a resurgence in the fall or winter of the COVID-19 that could further impact our winter activities, or even possible result on another shutdown? This could prove fatal.

Submitted by: **Doug Miller**

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Beaver Brook Outfitters

- ◆ Beaver Brook Outfitters operates a ski rental business from November to March. In April we transition to whitewater rafting, guided canoe, fishing, hiking and caving trips. Those run through October. We also have three “Glamping” tents on premises. Our staffing in the winter is three full-time and two part time employees. In the spring we ramp up to a full summer staff of 35 to 40, roughly split between full-time seasonal and part-time.

We closed our doors on Monday, March 16. Since then we have had no income. In fact, we have refunded deposits for upcoming trips, resulting in a negative income. We have cancelled trips through the month of May and I fully expect to have to cancel our trips in June as well, resulting in more refunds. Currently I am the only person working.

Some of the mitigation steps we have taken include getting, our mortgage deferred three months, getting a reduction on our phone bill, working with the Dept. of Health to reduce reporting requirements until we re-open, contacting our workers compensation carrier to work on adjusting premiums based on lower staffing. I also applied for the EIDL & PPP loans. We just received funding from the PPP loan. I am working on how to best utilize that loan now.

Going forward, our challenges are many. Can we open, if we can, will people show up, if they do, what measures will we need to take to insure their safety as well as that of our staff, and will those measures allow us to be financially viable? Those are just a few of the questions that need to be answered. The unknown is possibly the biggest hurdle. What we really need is some direction so we can make informed decisions. Even with the PPP loan our situation will be unsustainable within a couple more months. We truly need to know in the next 30 days or less what the parameters will be for us to re-open. I realize that these are unprecedented times and crystal balls are pretty hard to come by, BUT without a focused strategy going forward we will be left to wander, while our businesses wither on the vine. That is what I would ask of our elected officials.

Submitted by: *Pete Burns*

Beaver Brook Outfitters
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Recreation

Chic's Marina

- ◆ Chic's Marina n Bolton Landing has been serving the Lake George area for over 50 years, and has the largest rental fleet on the lake. Chic's also sells new and used boats, services and sells motors, and offers inside, covered boat storage.

Where We Have Been

Over the years, marina business has been very good. We've been able to grow our business, buy merchandise, hire seasonal and full-time employees and offer health insurance and retirement packages. We provide tourists and home owners with access to Lake George and its islands, which in turn provide a large amount of tax dollars in a short seasonal time period.

Where We Are

Presently, we are accommodating boat storage and service customers. We have found that 80 percent of our business is boat rentals. Boats have already been purchased and need to be prepped for rentals and sales. Without rentals we lose the ability to pay for stock, support our employees, pay insurances and support our local economy.

Where We Need to Go

We need to go into full rental operation. Without it, the trickle-down effect will become monstrous. It will affect: suppliers; fuel; permits (local & county); insurance; bank payments; employment; property taxes (newly assessed at a higher rate); sales tax revenue (county & state); and the list goes on.



Chic's Marina

Challenges in Getting There

The state government is our challenge. We can adjust to renting, improving cleanliness, video instruction, social distancing, and different safety measures in order to ensure that both our employees and customers stay safe. There are many ways we can implement these measures to let us maintain full operation. A large number of our customers rent boats for multiple days staying at private houses, private islands, and longer stays at hotels. Some rent monthly or rent for the entire season. There is already demand for our services, and we are currently turning all of those people away. We are starting to lose revenue as it is.

If there are no rentals, our challenge is staying in business. Our insurance premiums are not less, our costs in running business are not less, rent is not less. Registrations, permits, dock fees are still expected to be paid, among many other costs to open our business. These fees are not being cut back, so our business should not be cut back. Without rentals in operation, running our marina business on Lake George will not be an affordable reality.

Submitted by: *Kristen DePace*

Chic's Marina

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Manufacturing

◆ *Andritz USA, Inc.*

◆ Our first quarter was okay. It is difficult to predict the remainder of year due to the pandemic. We have locations in many states and provinces with varying local guidelines. In Glens Falls, presently there have been no local layoffs. Most employees are working from home. There has been no traveling. Liquidity is acceptable, however efforts have been undertaken to preserve liquidity including:

- Temporary Pay cuts
- Hiring Freeze
- Focused Management and Reduction of controllable expenses

Additional adjustments will be made as needed.

Submitted by: *John E. Morphis*
Andritz USA, Inc.





Ames Goldsmith

- ◆ The past several weeks have been challenging for our business, our employees, and our customers. An overview of our main sectors, which are specialty chemicals, petrochemicals, and conductive fillers for printed electronics would be as follows:

Past:

We had a very strong run up to the pandemic starting in March. Our business was very robust, orders were strong, and forecasts into the summer were very promising. We were gaining market share in many areas and the business was “running on all cylinders.” As the pandemic started to expand and concern increased, we saw a rush to pull orders in, as many of our customers supply into numerous medical applications. This resulted in our seeing a sharp uptick in orders from late February thru to the end of April.

Present:

Forecasts have noticeably weakened from where we were just a few weeks ago, with forecasted orders from some sectors (mainly electronics and solar energy) down as much as 40 percent to even 60 percent. Our employees are staying healthy and we have implemented several measures to protect their health while also continuing to operate, albeit at reduced throughputs. As of this writing I can say we are surely expecting to see a downward trend in our business for the next several months. It has become very difficult to forecast beyond a few weeks.

Where we need to go:

First and foremost, our goal is to keep our employees safe, healthy, and employed. We are controlling expenses as best we can and are limiting the start of new capital projects for a few months. We continue to fill previously posted openings for new hires at our Glens Falls plant; this has proven a much easier task since the current slowdown started in March. Aside from a need for business to stabilize, it would be very helpful if we could start to measure our employees’ previous exposure to the virus by way of having access to reliable local testing. I am extremely concerned about our overall regional economy moving forward. We need to get our local people back to work as soon as is safely possible.

Submitted by: *Frank Barber*

CEO

Ames Goldsmith





Manufacturing

Finch Paper

- ◆ We think about the situation report from three perspectives: public health; sales in the current macroeconomic conditions; and the local supply chain.

Public Health

- For the health of our community and for our local economy to operate, we need the ability to test the local population and institute contact tracing. Our area needs to secure all the resources (e.g., tests, contact tracing personnel, etc.) to be best-in-class at tracking and containing the virus. Containing the virus is imperative to reducing pain and suffering in our community, as well as ensuring the continuity of our local economy after reopening. Best-in-class testing and contact tracing will allow the local public, businesses and supply chains to operate at the greatest degree of normalcy possible.

Macroeconomic Conditions

- Finch competes on an unfair playing field. New York State costs and regulations are excessive when compared to other areas of the U.S. and certainly internationally. Despite that, Finch has thrived for over 150 years (creating over \$347 million in local economic activity and supporting over 600 direct and 2,200 indirect jobs) due to the commitment of our workforce and the dedicated workers in the local forest economy.
 - At the same time, our own New York State government has procured paper from other countries, including in Asia, thus rewarding less environmentally-friendly production, with lower wages for their workers. This foreign production can sell paper at lower pricing because it is not subject to New York State costs and regulations, as well as advantages due to unfair trade practices that are well documented. New York State should not impose costs via regulation and at the same time be unwilling to pay for that compliance. Furthermore, rewarding this foreign production is in conflict with the goals of our State and Federal environmental and labor laws.
 - While almost unfathomable, this has continued during the COVID-19 pandemic with New York State RFPs being awarded to foreign countries – for example, in the past few weeks, Finch lost a State bid, which ultimately went to a Canadian producer for a slightly lower price. Not only was the pricing not materially better, no last look was given to Finch, which operates 50 miles north of the capital where the paper was procured.



Finch Paper

- We need to promote buying local (especially paper) as opposed to outside the region. The more local forest products that are used (especially paper from local mills), the more stability in the area's forest supply chain, which adds to the circular economy effect; the forestry/logging businesses spend the majority of their earnings locally (including rural locales)
 - As noted above, we need to encourage the State to do an immediate buy local paper initiative to help bridge the slow national and global demand (keep their local businesses strong as opposed to supporting out-of-state or foreign countries)
- Encourage the DEC to put State timber sales (Region 5 where available) for sale on the market
 - State Forest timber harvests particularly in support of pulp markets would help as private landowners are scaling back out of fear and pricing
 - These sales would not only help support local mills and residual markets but also keep loggers working and help protect that infrastructure of the supply chain
- Encourage the State to continue to recognize the forest products sector, including primary and secondary manufacturers and those involved in their supply chains as critical infrastructure/essential businesses
 - As these businesses have navigated the past 8 weeks without incident, no undue additional constraints should be placed these businesses
- Encourage State/Federal agencies to not place any commerce activity restrictions on the United States/Canadian border
 - The local forestry supply chain will need the Canadian/Quebec markets for tree species that cannot be marketed locally



Manufacturing

Finch Paper

Local Supply Chain

- The implementation of COVID-19 business restrictions happened at approximately the same time as the forestry supply chain dramatically slows in the region for Spring season restrictions (“Mud Season”)
- The forestry supply chain, including mills, loggers and foresters, were deemed essential by the State and can continue to operate as usual even with business restrictions in place
- Those who did operate through Spring reported drastic loss of markets to sell their timber, with pulp and paper being the most reliable (albeit reduced demand)
- As forestry/logging businesses are beginning their normal seasonal activities to call employees back to work and start operations, they are reporting the following conditions:
 - Paper mill demand remains steady with one regional mill limiting deliveries
 - Local markets for sawlogs for lumber are weak/non-existent, challenging their ability to market higher value timber from their operations and constraining startup/continuance of operations
 - Export markets for logs to Canada (critical for some tree species) are non-existent challenging their ability to market higher value timber from their operations and constraining startup/continuance of operations
- Forest landowners are scaling back, making timber available for harvest out of fear and pricing (due to lack of markets for higher value timber as noted above)

Submitted by: **Deba Mukherjee**

CEO

Finch Paper





Flomatic Valves, Glens Falls, N.Y.

- ◆ Flomatic employs more than 50 employees who are considered essential. Most of our production workers are working in a two-shift operation with support office personnel. Most of our administrative employees are continuing to work from their homes by tele/web commuting, some 60-plus days into the Coronavirus pandemic. We conduct many webinars with our customers and field sales representatives, which is working well.

Our overall sales for the first four months are up more than we expected over last year. We do get the same feedback from a lot of our customers, especially down south, while on the West Coast they are behind due to many restrictions that have been in place for many weeks.

The Flomatic production team has done a great job enduring the extra precautions that they have to go through each day, such as taking temperatures, using face masks, and sanitizing everything, including machinery and equipment. We are paying them extra shift premiums, and for the changes to their work environment.

Long-term, the situation is not sustainable as we are missing the interactive office and shop floor meetings among employees that are very important for a small company.

All of our research-and-design testing and lab work has been on hold since mid-March.

Overall, I think the Governor and New York State have done a great job navigating these uncharted waters. We also think it is advisable to listen to the medical experts assessing the situation and direct all efforts based on a statically approach that will protect all residents of New York State.

We adhere to all of the health-related recommendations that we are getting, as our top assets are our employees. We take care of our employees first, and only after we do that well are we able to take care of our customers

Submitted by: *Bo Andersson*
President/CEO
Flomatic Corporation
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Manufacturing

Lehigh Cement Company

- ◆ The purpose of this letter is to briefly update EDC, ARCC, and community leaders regarding the challenges Lehigh Cement Company, LLC is realizing due to the Coronavirus pandemic, and the impact it will likely have upon our operations and employees in the months ahead.

Ironically, prior to the tragic onset of COVID-19, all indications were that this was shaping up to be a strong construction season. In fact, our Glens Falls plant had realized its strongest start in years and we were optimistic for rising cement sales in 2020. This was also consistent with what our valued customers, vendors, and material suppliers were seeing across the region.

However, as the virus began to take hold mid-March, and state DOT agencies and professional firms systematically shut down, cement sales rapidly deteriorated. Not long after, governmental mandates halted most large-scale commercial and state construction projects that were either in-planning, or in-progress, effectively slamming the door on our business.

As a result, on April 12 Lehigh was forced to temporarily shut down most of the cement making operations at our Glens Falls plant, as well as our quarry operations in the Town of Moreau. On April 20, it became necessary to furlough 54 of our 90 workers, a first in my 30 years of employment at this location.

Currently, our finish mills continue to operate intermittently, grinding stockpiled clinker into finished cement. However it is uncertain how or when our sales will resume to the extent that all employees can return to work. In fact, in the months ahead, it is likely that additional furloughs will be necessary as we adjust to an expected continued loss in cement demand for the remainder of 2020.

We fully expect businesses and governments will struggle to obtain funding and manage budget shortfalls, resulting in deferrals or cancelations of capital expansions and improvement projects. This, combined with the significant and sudden restrictions imposed upon construction in NY and other neighboring states, will result in a reduction of our cement sales volumes by well over half of what we had originally forecasted in 2020.



Lehigh Cement Company

Unfortunately, the timing of this crisis could not have been worse for our Glens Falls plant, as we already faced intense pricing pressures from lower-cost competitors to the north and south. Add a massive surplus of available supply to the market when construction resumes, and the threats to the long-term sustainability of our over 125-year-old Glens Falls plant are significant.

As Lehigh's business model is highly dependent upon the construction industry as a whole, our needs are clear:

- 1) safely re-open area businesses and agencies relative to building and construction so cement demand returns and employees can return to work;
- 2) resume and expand state infrastructure improvement projects to increase demand for construction materials;
- 3) protect U.S. cement manufacturers from low-cost imports;
- 4) support our regional small businesses, for it is these enterprises that sustain and drive local economic growth.

Submitted by: *David Dreyer*

Plant Manager
Lehigh Cement Company, LLC
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Manufacturing

Stephenson Lumber

- ◆ Stephenson Lumber has business in the Adirondacks, which in itself presents challenges due to seasonality. We operate three retail lumber and building supply yards, one each in Speculator, Indian Lake and Chestertown. Riverside Truss is a roof/floor production plant in Riparius and The Original Lincoln Log Homes is a production plant and model home.

All of our locations are located in sparsely populated seasonal vacation areas and as such our business relies on second homeowners and seasonal business during the spring/summer/fall. Due to the seasonality of our operations, our profits are generated May thru October to allow us to keep our employees on an annual basis.

In a normal year during April, we would begin to hire for the coming season. However, coming out of the winter months and into the COVID-19 pandemic not only are we not hiring but we have fewer employees and have with reduced business operating hours in order to follow the New York State Pause program and keep our employees and customers safe. We are concerned about the next 6 months and how we need to alter our operations.

The model home for Lincoln Log Sales operation has been closed to the public thereby eliminating new prospects for home sales. The Regional Log Home Show in Lake George scheduled for May 1 to 3 was cancelled and hopefully will be rescheduled. We do understand that this needed to be cancelled. We are confident this will have an effect on future sales opportunities for our company. We rely heavily on the prospects we meet through this show each year.

With the challenges of operating the Truss Division, we have shut down this operation and attempting to determine the long-term status of this operation. The current unemployment benefits available to employees have presented a challenge to operating our manufacturing division.



Stephenson Lumber

We have great empathy for our staff that may need to leave work to care for an ailing family member and relieved that the employee has the ability to do so with the Family Leave Act. However, that could force us to close a division due to staffing issues.

Our plan going forward for the time being is to continue our retail locations with shortened hours and reduced staff until the state lifts restrictions and then, if and when we can hire staff, we can get back to normal business hours. We may or may not be able to reopen Riverside Truss, in this part of our business we feel the employees may not wish to return until unemployment benefits cease, and if that is the case it may be too late.

Submitted by: *Larry Stephenson*

Stephenson Lumber, Riverside Truss, The Original Lincoln Logs





Professional Services

◆ The professional services sector in Warren County (legal, accounting, engineering, architecture, communications) is facing significant challenges. An informal survey shows some firms have successfully avoided furloughs thus far. Others have had to furlough employees and reduce salaries and benefits. Professional service providers who serve federal, state and local governments clients report they have received no or very few assignments since early March and few new opportunities have been advertised. Firms that serve predominantly private clients in other sectors, such as health care and higher education, report that some projects have been slowed, scaled back or deferred. Many Warren County professional services providers serve a client base of predominantly small businesses. They are worried about whether their clients will be able to find ways to survive.

Uncertainty surrounding the Adirondack regional hospitality sector is causing significant concern. Tourism-related businesses are important customers of professional service firms. Many small tourism-related businesses are disinclined to hire employees and make investments in marketing or other projects this year. As a result, the assistance that local professionals might otherwise be called on to provide is not needed. The fate of the tourism season also influences the amount of sales tax revenue that local municipalities receive. Local professionals who serve local municipal governments are concerned about the financial condition of their clients and the impact of a significant loss of sales tax revenue may have on requirements for future services.

For those local professionals who provide services to businesses and organizations outside of the immediate area and outside of New York State, the national economic situation remains a major concern.

A common concern expressed by professionals is confusing and contradictory guidance they and their clients have received from federal and state agencies, the difficulties for clients without banking relationships to obtain PPP loans, and continuing problems with obtaining unemployment benefits. Professional services firms that have received Paycheck Protection Program funding are also concerned that, when the funds run out, there may not be a rebound in client business activity sufficient to avoid layoffs.

Submitted by: *Mark Behan*

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Creighton Manning

◆ Creighton Manning is a professional engineering and land surveying company with approximately 75 full-time employees who serve the greater Capital District and North Country. With respect to the current public health emergency, we have been able to respond to the COVID-19 challenges while addressing health and well-being as the top concerns for our employees. Our frontline construction inspectors have been able to keep working and have not missed a day of work in the field, and we have also been able to maintain 99 percent of our office workforce by implementing remote work from home in order to continue to support our valued clients. Our already existing medical and mental health benefits were well designed to help employees through this crisis and we further expanded our offerings to include additional services, benefits and technology that were tailored to this specific crisis.

Moving forward, we intend to maintain a culture of care and support as we transition our office workforce back into the office with the constant evolving Federal, State and Local regulated guidance. Our office space is well suited to social distancing and those with preexisting health conditions will be accommodated through remote work for an extended period. Our primary concerns for the workforce is that material suppliers remain operational to not cause delays to construction projects which would entice contractors to shut down projects and that we can continue to secure appropriate “personal protective equipment.”

Through proactive planning and constant communication and guidance from New York State leaders, we have been able to maintain a strong, healthy workforce which has enabled our employees and their families to remain financially secure. We appreciate the assistance of the Warren County EDC and offer our assistance if you are in need.

Submitted by: *John M. Tozzi, PE*
Managing Partner
Creighton Manning
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Professional Services

Glens Falls National Bank/Arrow Financial Corp.

- ◆ As an essential business, community banks have navigated the delivery of critical financial services alongside the need for health and safety since the arrival of COVID-19 to our region. That has meant juggling, at times, unprecedented phone calls, web traffic and loan applications with coinciding restrictions on access to our physical spaces and a large portion of our workforce being remote.

It hasn't been easy, but the needs from our communities during these challenging times have reinforced the community banking mission.

Below is an explanation of five areas of focus for community banks that have emerged in the last two months: communication, digital banking alternatives, providing customer support during difficult times, being a conduit for government stimulus programs, and advocating for safe banking and fraud prevention.

- **Communication:** Sharing information frequently and transparently with staff and customers has been a running theme that supports all other efforts. From daily emails to staff, messaging from leadership to customers, and regular and helpful communication via social media and our websites, it's been very important to deliver timely messages for all our audiences.
- **Digital Banking Alternatives:** While our brick-and-mortar branches remain open by appointment and drive-up, this has also been a time of advocacy for and adoption of digital banking alternatives to new segments of our customer base. Depositing checks, monitoring activity, transferring money, viewing statements – these routine transactions can all be done from the comfort, safety and security of their home. Community banks are very much a people business, so helping customers who are new to digital embrace these resources, while still being available for problem resolution over the phone or, if appropriate, in person, is a big shift. Banks of all sizes will be watching to see what behavior shifts back and what remains on digital as restrictions lift.
- **Hardship Support:** Another significant aspect of COVID-19 for banks has been support for customers experiencing financial hardship. The mandated closure of non-essential businesses in New York State and resulting rise in unemployment has meant that a lot of people are struggling to pay bills. At our community bank, and others throughout the region and country, the teams that traditionally field assistance inquiries have grown to keep up with need. We have reinforced these experts with support from other areas of the banks and also relied on relationship managers and our Customer Care Center to route these requests from the frontline. Loan deferment and repayment options for all our customers has been important and likely will remain so through and beyond recovery.



Glens Falls National Bank/Arrow Financial Corp.

- **Stimulus Support:** The Small Business Administration's Paycheck Protection Program has been the dominant story of COVID response. Customer demand for this program has been unprecedented and challenging for banking with many working around the clock to meet the demand. On the consumer side, the issuance of stimulus checks has prompted a surge of traffic to banking websites to check balances, as well as calls regarding the arrival of funds.
- **Fraud Awareness:** Unfortunately, times of crisis create opportunities for fraudsters. Banks like ours have been messaging to customers about ways they can protect themselves. Additionally, bank teams must be vigilant in cashing checks and monitoring transfer activity to recognize fraud when the customer might not. Customer security has always been a very important part of the banking industry and we remain active in providing our customers with the most up to date security measures available.

Looking Ahead

Banks are already operating under the essential service designation in New York State, so the challenges we face as the economy begins to restart include when and how to lift restrictions on our facilities and bring employees back to the office. With social distancing likely lasting for a while, we will continue to adapt how we interact both internally and externally. This will be a fluid and evolving aspect of our COVID-19 response, guided by public officials and assessed regionally. We continue to review our BCP plan and take guidance from New York State to identify the right measures to reopen our offices safely when the time comes.

As the second round of PPP funding winds down, community banks will be also preparing for the forgiveness applications for small business borrowers. Additionally, the industry will be watching to see how the pace of restarting the economy, as well as the impact of relief programs, positions borrowers for resumption of loan payments.

For Glens Falls National Bank and the Arrow Family of Companies in particular, the key to navigating the uncertainty of COVID-19 has been continuously returning to our core values and trusting in our team. Throughout our almost 170-year history, both in periods of planned growth and unexpected adversity, our company has remained true to its community banking roots.

Submitted by: *Marc Yrsha*

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Professional Services

◆ *StoredTech*

- ◆ StoredTech is a large managed service provider technology firm in Upstate New York. We provide essential technology services across a broad range of clients (Healthcare, Manufacturing, Services, Government). The current COVID-19 pandemic has created several new issues that are impacting our business.

Our sector has been rapidly expanding with StoredTech having double- and triple-digit year-over-year growth. This year alone we started off the first quarter with an amazing 44 percent growth. Had this current outbreak not happened we were on track for another record-breaking year.

Currently we are sitting with 50 percent drop in technology projects in our customer base. While the recurring revenue from ongoing services is maintaining our staff and most of their work loads, we have seen a complete halt to new projects including infrastructure and systems sales. At present of the 50 percent of those projects still in progress, 50 percent of those have been put on hold due to New York State's restrictions on what is deemed an essential business. These rules are stopping us from completing work that clients have partially paid now and for which StoredTech recognizes its profit from only when those projects are complete.

Also, StoredTech has been lucky to have the support the Michael Bittel and his team at the Adirondack Regional Chamber of Commerce. They have worked to provide instruction, support and assistance in getting access to a PPP loan as well as the EIDL loans thru the Small Business Administration. Without these loans, the organization would have had to lay off multiple staff members in the affected business units. At present we are at full employment. This has taken a toll on the company's finances but we believe as a good corporate citizen it is important to take care of our employees.

We must be clear in understanding that while to our best planning the PPP loan will be forgiven, the EIDL will not be. If we are put in a situation where we must draw upon it, the profitability of the firm for the next 12 to 24 months will be dramatically lower to ensure payback of the loans. This will impact growth and additional hiring that will impact the economy locally.



StoredTech

StoredTech has been in a better shape than many other industries. We were able to pivot remotely based on the nature of our business, we were able to support over 3,500 local businesses' employees transition to a remote worker model, and when people return to work we will be there to bring them back. That said, if the continued lack of new business is not there to fuel the organization, we cannot rule out a reduction in workforce by summers end. Our forecast in the worst model show us running out of money by September. This would mean a massive cut in labor force to keep the organization alive.

Our hope is that New York State leadership understands that we need to return to work, businesses need to open, and we need to put this dark time behind us as quickly as possible. The time it takes to rebuild a sales pipeline is months not days or weeks. The sooner this can happen the quicker StoredTech will be able to focus on its own recovery.

Submitted by: *Mark Shaw*

COO, StoredTech
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Professional Services

Cool Insuring Agency

- ◆ *Please find below a “State of the Agency” report from Cool Insuring Agency.*

Some seven weeks ago, when New York State initially issued their orders on business closures, insurance agencies were deemed non-essential. Direct appeals to the Governor’s offices by Cool Insuring along with lobbying from our trade association quickly convinced state leadership to declare our services as essential.

Next came our operational action plan to transition to work from home. During the week of March 16, we arranged for 75 of our 100 employees to set up workstations at their homes. This was an ASAP/rush endeavor, our risk management folks will deal with the ergonomics of workers compensation issues working from one’s kitchen table or nightstand at a later date. Our sales staff and outside service representatives are also working remotely, and we are no longer traveling to customer sites for meetings.

Ninety percent of the programs we service involve business insurance plans. While typical policy servicing tasks including claim handling were considerably slower, since the shutdown began policies still require renewals. A large majority of our time has been spent working out premium payment plans, adjusting exposure basis (payroll and sales) downward. As our clients reforecast their budgets, we are generally seeing about a 30 percent contraction in business payroll and sales. Now two months into this I believe that 30 percent may be too light.

Our agency has a large health care practice. Glens Falls Hospital, Hudson Headwaters Health Network and the New York Association of Home and Services for the Aging (NYASHA) are clients of ours. The NYASHA program involves 75 nursing homes and approximately 15,000 beds. Needless to say, our healthcare service team has been busy the past couple of months.

Our business is geographically and demographically spread out throughout New York State. We clearly see a demarcation of COVID infections downstate, Westchester County and South including Long Island and Metro New York.



Cool Insuring Agency

I would impress upon state leadership to permit local counties and regions to determine their specific business reopening plans. The upstate New York economy is fragile, struggling to break even in the best of times. I am fearful that many businesses will not survive and many employees and livelihoods will be affected. I understand the health risk, life has many risks. Our large metros have COVID risk ten times greater than our local community. A smart, organized and thoughtful reopening plan can and should be implemented by May 15th.

When we reopen at Cool, we plan wellness tests of our employees upon entering our facilities. Temperature checks and a brief medical questionnaire completed, cubicle dividers are being installed, and mask wearing will be mandated. There will be no lunch room or water cooler congregating and, as previously mentioned, our outside service team will not be visiting client facilities and locations, while we also plan to have gallons of hand sanitizer available. All offices will be deep cleaned weekly, in addition to daily wipe down.

We believe these are smart, proactive measures that provide appropriate safety precautions to our employees while simultaneously allowing us to deliver essential services to our customers. Similar plans can be crafted by other local businesses.

Submitted by: *John C. Bieniek, CIC*

Vice President, Cool Insuring Agency, Inc.
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Professional Services

◆ *North Country Janitorial*

◆ North Country Janitorial’s experience during the COVID-19 pandemic has mirrored that of our diverse customer base. We have seen a substantial drop off in business associated with our retail, hospitality, and traditional “office” clients. Fortunately, those reductions have been largely offset by increased cleaning, disinfection, and laundry services requested by our healthcare and medical manufacturing partners as they strive to provide uninterrupted service and product delivery to their respective clients. We realize however, that these “additional” services and the revenue associated with them are only temporary and cannot be counted on for long term forecasting purposes. Ultimately, NCJ’s financial health is tied to the active participation of our hospitality, retail, and office-based clients in the regional economy.

We have been fortunate to enjoy the benefit of a generally healthy workforce, with no direct COVID-19 positive absences thus far. That said, the “enhanced” unemployment benefits available presently do sometimes make hiring a bit more challenging than it needs to be as they provide a compelling financial incentive “not to work.”

A thoughtful and timely plan for re-opening the local economy that is rooted in science and not the political trade winds of the day seems imperative at this point.

Submitted by: *Chris Barden*

Chief Operating Officer
North Country Janitorial, Inc.
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Media

The Post-Star

- ◆ The impact on COVID-19 on the operations of The Post-Star was swift and unprecedented. From the period starting in mid-March until now, we have seen advertising revenues decrease more than 50 percent, Post-Star employees furloughed or have their salaries cut, and 90 percent of our staff sent home to work remotely. All this has been done at the same time that our overall readership hit record levels with visitors and page views to our website poststar.com grow more than 50 percent.

The newspaper industry has been in a state of transition for the last decade or more from a print-centric model to a digital/print focus, and the challenges have been well-chronicled. Our staff and coverage area has been reduced the last several years, but local news is still our focus. The community may not always agree with our journalism or opinion pieces, but we are still the dominant news source for the Warren County region.

When the New York PAUSE guidance was issued in March, we knew the impact would be significant, but it didn't take long to realize how severe it was. Many of our local advertisers across all sectors called to cancel their advertisements, because they were mandated by the state to close or go to a take-out only model for restaurants. In addition, our significant revenue stream of newspaper inserts was severely impacted as several national big box retailers had us pull their ads even though the inserts were already printed. These retailers didn't know if the stores would be open or if the items for sale would be available due to supply chain issues.

The impact of an immediate decrease in our major revenue stream led our corporation, Lee Enterprises, to institute a mandatory two week furlough for all staff for the current fiscal quarter and executives to take an immediate 20 percent salary decrease for the quarter. Unfortunately, the advertising revenue reductions significantly outpaced many of the expense savings initiatives implemented.

In response to the economic crisis, Lee Enterprises created a \$250,000 marketing grant program that will allow local advertisers to request grants to offset the cost of advertising to promote their businesses and allow their advertising dollars to go further when announcing their reopening. As of today, over 50 local businesses have applied for these grant funds and almost the entire \$250,000 has been requested. A great deal of cautious optimism exists among these advertisers that the local economy will reopen in some form soon, and we want to help with this reopening. The success of this program proves to me once again that our role in the community is deep in both providing advertising solutions as well as being the premier news source for the region.



The Post-Star

The Post-Star has weathered many economic challenges in our 116-year history, but this may be one of the worst. The challenges of figuring how long it will be until we are able to fill our office with employees again to when restaurants and other establishments are allowed to fill their spaces with paying customers appear to be daunting at this time.

We all are living in a frightening time with so many unknowns. As long as proper protocols and social distancing are followed, we can safely reopen for business soon and bring people back to work. It will be a long time to recover to where we were as recently as February, but we need to take the first step.

Submitted by: *Brian Corcoran*

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