Dear Members,

I know you share this sentiment – it feels like a lifetime ago since I sent my first email update, but in fact it was only 6 days ago at this point. We’re walking this road alongside you (metaphorically) as each day brings new information, requests and resources. To those who are sharing ideas and resources and answering questions...thank you...and please keep them coming! Thanks to all who took our survey. There is still time (owners/managers only please). I will forewarn you that today is long, and packed with info. I highlighted topic areas to make easier to read. Okay, here are today’s updates...

From the Governor
As I write this, Governor DeWine just finished addressing the business community. He has made 3 requests of all businesses – no matter your size & type:

1. Please do a temperature check of every employee, every day prior to them coming into work.
2. Please ensure an aggressive cleaning regimen for your surfaces and ensure the ample availability of soap and water and sanitizer for your employees and customers.
3. If an employee is sick, send them home. Period.

I spoke to Richland Public Health and they know that it may be difficult to obtain thermometers in this time. They are saying do the best you can, with what you have, to protect employees. Send them home when possible.

From Richland Public Health
The team at Richland Public Health sends this important information regarding how businesses handle employees who want to return to work. “Our public health nurses have been fielding many questions regarding employers requesting testing before employees can return to work. Employers can send employees home sick, but it is not a requirement for employees to be tested for COVID-19 before returning back to work.” If you listened to the Governor today, you heard the clear language on the shortage of tests, which are being reserved for only the sickest. Please ensure that your HR teams are not requiring a test for every employee – that is only putting greater strain on the health care system.

Here is a great checklist about handling employees during these challenging times from the Ohio Department of Health. Please share.

Please Remember Mental Health During this Time
To say that what is going on is mentally taxing...that’s an understatement, we all feel it. We must be careful to remember our mental health during this time, especially as we are physically separated. The team at the Richland County Mental Health & Recovery Services Board sends along some important resources for you and your employees.

1. A one-page sheet of Richland County Resources
2. COVID-19 Mental Health Considerations
3. Talking to kids about the Coronavirus
4. How to Manage Anxiety & Stress

SBA Disaster Lending
We’ve been getting lots of questions about the SBA Disaster Lending program. I have several updates on this today. In case you haven’t heard it, the State has filed the package with the SBA. We just heard Ohio has been approved, so you may begin to apply!

Barrett Thomas has compiled some great information below for people. This slide deck is the most complete and most official document describing the SBA disaster loans called Economic Injury Disaster
Loan (EIDL) that will soon be available to Ohio businesses. This document covers what businesses and non-profits are eligible, valid uses of funds, how to apply, what the application entails and how to apply. This should answer most questions.

Please also refer to this important sheet of additional info that Barrett has compiled to help you!

**Unemployment Resources**
From the team at OhioMeansJobs - First, it’s extremely important to note that people need to file for unemployment either online or via phone. There are no in-person applications. To speed up applications, the State has provided a number for mass layoffs. Please see this memo for more info.

We understand there are long waits however, the only way to register is to use the website or phone number at 1-877-644-6562. The web site is: [http://unemployment.Ohio.gov](http://unemployment.Ohio.gov) or for Hearing Impaired TTY Service dial toll-free: 1-888-642-8203

Individuals can access this contact information 24 hours/7 days a week.

If people have registered for Unemployment Insurance in the past and have forgotten their PIN number, the number to reset their PIN is 1-866-962-4064, otherwise, they will have to wait on a letter with their new PIN assignment to complete their application.

**SharedWork Ohio**
SharedWork Ohio is an alternative to layoffs for employers. It allows workers to remain employed and employers to retain their staff during times of reduced business activity. Under a SharedWork Ohio plan, employers reduce hours to avert a layoff. The participating employee works the reduced hours, and the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services provides an unemployment insurance benefit proportionate to their reduced hours.

Interested employers should provide the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services with a list of participating employees and specify their normal weekly hours of work, not to exceed 40 hours and not including overtime. Part-time employees may be eligible, but all employees in an affected unit must have their hours reduced by the same reduction percentage. For more information, please visit [JFS.Ohio.gov/SharedWorkOhio](http://JFS.Ohio.gov/SharedWorkOhio).

**A Plea for Personal Protective Equipment**
If you have listened to the State updates, you have heard that [Personal Protective Equipment](http://personalprotectiveequipment) (PPE) is in very short supply. Our local EMA Director, Rick Evans, is sending out a plea to businesses that may have this material to donate to them for first responders on the front lines of this crisis. That would include things like surgical masks, N95 masks, gloves, gowns, and more. Please call EMA at 419-774-5686 to arrange for pick up or drop off. This is an urgent need to protect our responders. Please help if able!

**Update on Our Office Operations**
As of this morning, the Chamber team has moved to 100% remote work. But we are still 100% here to serve you. Call our office at 419-522-3211 and you can get connected through to us. To save you from listening to the whole menu each time, here is a cheat sheet of extensions:
- Patrick Clinage (Executive Assistant & Sector Coordinator) ext. 101
- Jodie Perry (President & CEO) ext. 102
- Nikki Lewis (Foundation Manager) ext. 103
- Angie Fanello (Marketing & Communications Coordinator) ext. 104
Final Thoughts

“This is the real thing. This is not a drill.” – Dr. Amy Acton, Director, Ohio Department of Health

I’ll be honest with you, those words continue to bounce around my brain. The Governor and Dr. Acton have become increasingly frank in their daily updates. I’m not ashamed to tell you that I’ve cried many times over the past few days. We’re having many tough conversations, and it weighs heavily on my heart. But I believe them. It is imperative that we listen and when we have a choice - stay home. I know that is an impossible choice for some people. I know that many of you are on the front lines – in medical, in supply chain, in public safety, in essential services, and we are so appreciative of your sacrifice.

Since I closed the other day with a Lord of the Rings quote, let me share another from The Two Towers.

“It’s like in the great stories, Mr. Frodo, the ones that really mattered. Full of darkness and danger they were, and sometimes you didn’t want to know the end, because how could the end be happy? How could the world go back to the way it was when so much bad had happened?

But in the end, it’s only a passing thing, this shadow. Even darkness must pass. A new day will come, and when the sun shines it will shine out the clearer. Those were the stories that stayed with you, that meant something, even if you were too small to understand why.

But I think, Mr. Frodo, I do understand. I know now. Folk in those stories had lots of chances of turning back. Only they didn’t, because they were holding on to something… That there’s some good in this world, Mr. Frodo. And it’s worth fighting for.”

We are fighting together, and when it’s done, we will rebuild together. Believe. Onward!

Jodie A. Perry, CCE, IOM, CCEO-AP
President & CEO
Richland Area Chamber & Economic Development