Dear Members,

What a lovely day...sunshine, blue sky. Days like these give me hope – can you tell that Spring is my favorite season? As usual, here are a few updates that I thought would be important for you.

**Further Guidance on Loans**
If you know a commercial lender, I would normally suggest giving them a hug today - except that breaks our social distancing protocols these days. How about a virtual high five and “hang in there?” The Treasury Department late last night released further details on the Paycheck Protection Program. The 31-page document is available here if you want to read all the detail. Additionally, they released an updated application for this program.

Processing began today, and I’m hearing hundreds of millions of dollars of loans were filed. But, if you’re afraid of missing out, I have heard several times, from several sources that they believe the federal government will add more money into the program if it needs to (it would take an act of Congress). The new guidance does give some good nuance into how the program will be regulated (and keep in mind, the regulations are not all finalized).

The Town Hall with the US Chamber did have some great advice on this and other lending programs. They recorded it. It’s not available yet, but as soon as it is, I will send it out to you. (If you want to sign up for next week’s Town Hall early, you can do so here.)

What we are hearing is that because of aspects of the law and regulations on the banks, most lenders are prioritizing existing customers to start. Additional banks will be added over the weekend. The best place to start this is with a conversation with your banker and/or your accountant. The Paycheck Protection Program will not be right for every small business. Again, don’t forget this good overview comparing the two programs.

The US Chamber has added another overview document of the different options (on EIDL loans). Here they all are (they are really well done and simple to follow):

- Paycheck Protection Program
- SBA EIDL Loans
- Employee Retention Tax Credit

**Unemployment System**
I know that many businesses have had to layoff employees. We know the system is overwhelmed, but they are working as hard as they can around the clock to process things and get help to people. Please see this update from ODJFS about expanded hours, and additional updates that would be helpful for people to know (regarding notices they may be receiving). If you can share with your employees or others you know who are in this situation. Thanks to Sharlene Neumann and Teresa Alt for being great partners with us and sharing timely info!

**Census 2020**
I hope by now you have all filled out your Census questionnaire – but statistically only 47% of you have! Check out this cool response tracker that they have published (the data geek in me loves this). Please, please, please since we have extra time at home, take a few minutes to visit 2020census.gov to file your response! Also – the Census just released their 2019 population estimates, I’m happy to report that for
the 2nd year in a row Richland County is showing a modest gain (year over year)! Let’s keep it going – it really matters! #RichlandCounts

Small Business Conversation Series
One of the best roles that we can play as the Chamber is that of “connector”. Our staff has spent time talking about how do we continue to play that role in this time of social distancing? We’re pleased to launch a new weekly series called the “Small Business Conversation Series”. Our team has set up a weekly Zoom call on Mondays at 1pm to help small business owners connect with each other, learn from each other, and hear the latest updates on what is happening. Please join us for the first one, this Monday, April 6th at 1pm.

Join Zoom Meeting:
https://zoom.us/j/264713780?pwd=ZGhRQ2g2YU1yUUZKK0RLcmsg0eWRZz09
Meeting ID: 264 713 780
Password: 385257

Chamber Digital Academy – Coping with Stress of COVID-19
Anyone else feeling stressed lately? We’ve called our friend Dr. Blake Wagner with New Directions Counseling Center to put together the next Chamber Digital Academy on coping with stress. If you’ve met Blake, you know how amazing he is, so please join us! It’s free to attend, but you do need to register on our website! It’s happening next Thursday, April 9th at Noon.

Ready, Set, Team!
Some of us are running completely remote teams and figuring out on the fly how to manage that. I’ve been keeping an eye on great articles that talk more about this, and here is a quick read on what you should think about as a manager. For those of you figuring out Zoom for the first time, Tracy Graziani shared this great page as a resource during our call yesterday.

Support Local
If you’re planning to grab takeout this weekend – don’t forget about our list of local restaurants offering food during this time – in partnership with Destination Mansfield and Downtown Mansfield.

#InThisTogetherOhio
Today I’m pleased to share another great donation of PPE that was generated by Studio 19 Salon & Spa at their “Day of PPE donations”. Roots Salon also contributed PPE to this drive. Bravo and thank you so much for supporting our frontline emergency medical workers during this time. Thanks, Melissa Cary!

If you have a nomination for a future highlight, please let me know!

Final Thoughts
Amidst all the Coronavirus news today, it was announced that the great singer/songwriter Bill Withers had passed away. It feels fitting to close today with a few lines from his great hit, “Lean on Me”.

Sometimes in our lives we all have pain
We all have sorrow
But if we are wise
We know that there's always tomorrow

Lean on me, when you're not strong
And I'll be your friend
I'll help you carry on
For it won't be long
'Til I'm gonna need
Somebody to lean on

Maybe now, more than ever before, we can see how interconnected we all are. We’re #InThisTogetherOhio. We’re going to get through this, Richland County! Stay home this weekend. Enjoy some quiet time with your family. Binge watch something crazy. Walk the dog. Do what you need to do to protect each other. #RichlandCountySTRONG

We know that there’s always tomorrow.

Onward!
Jodie

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

PS – We have been widening our email list. If this is the first email you’ve received – Welcome! Here is a link to our past emails and other great resources to help your business!

PPS - Remember, I’m not a banker, lawyer, accountant or other highly talented person. I’m simply trying to share good resources when we find them. Please always consult original sources for details especially when it comes to lending & finance! Thanks!