Dear Members,

Is anyone else having a hard time believing that this weekend is Memorial Day weekend? I feel like I’m in a time warp! Read on for updates...

**PPP Forgiveness Application Introduced**
Over the weekend the US Treasury Department added the application for forgiveness as part of PPP to [their website here](https://www.treasury.gov). It’s 11 pages long and sticks largely to some of the things we have known in the past – 75% must be spent on payroll, 25% for eligible non-payroll expenses (mortgage interest, rent payments, utility payments. They seem to have added some additional exceptions for when employees do not return (page 8). Also, they have issued several more [Interim Final Rules](https://www.sba.gov) on the program (about loan increases; electric cooperatives; and entities with foreign affiliates).

They have indicated that we should be seeing some additional guidance from the SBA on this process for forgiveness sometime this week. The US Chamber is working on a guide to help us through the forgiveness process. When I receive it, I will pass it along to you.

That being said, we had our Business Advocacy meeting on Monday and heard from our contact at the US Chamber who indicated that there is definitely lobbying happening for some additional changes to PPP. Some of that can come through regulatory changes at Treasury/SBA, some of that is being discussed in Congress. Stay tuned for more.

Lastly, in this area, there is still money remaining in the current round. If your business has not tapped into this but would like more information, please reach out to your local banker or give me a call and I would be happy to connect you. I wrote extensively on it in previous emails.

**Changes at the State Level**
Today the Governor announced that they are making some tweaks to the previous health orders. The new order is not available online yet, we will share it when we get it. From listening to the press conference, the change will reflect that staying at home is now ‘recommended’ but not ‘required’. It sounds as though it will have additional recommendations for people who are considered ‘at-risk’. Additionally, they reported that they are lifting the guidelines they had established regarding travel. If you leave the state, you do not have to self-quarantine upon return, unless of course you are showing restrictions. Additionally, the Governor reported they are talking about fairs and bowling alleys with hope to announce something soon. So what is still in place with the new order? Mass gathering will still be limited to 10 or less (though they indicated they are looking at that number), and businesses still need to follow the protocols that have been set out for them. Again, this is just based on my scribbles from the press conference, I’ll share the official items when I get them.

The Governor announced that the BWC is sending every employer 50 face masks for your use. Those are being paid for out of the Bureau’s established budget and will start to be mailed sometime next week. If your business does not need the masks, please consider donating them to places that will -you can contact me for ideas.

The State also released Protocols & Best Practices for [Pools & Aquatic Centers](https); for [Golf Courses](https); for [Tennis Courts](https).
And of course, by now you’ve already read elsewhere, but yesterday they did announce that they have established mechanisms for enforcement for restaurants & bars not following State guidelines. That seems to be in response to some violations in larger cities - the good news is that local reports are all positive from our community – thank you for leading the way!

Relaunch Resources
The Chamber community is very generous. Routinely the programs and/or benefits that we bring you have been inspired by other Chambers across the country. I ran across a great resource put together by the Little Rock Chamber in Arkansas. They did this project with several of their PR & Ad agencies, and it’s a great guide to relaunching your business. It’s not so much about the health requirements (though keep in mind what is in there is for Arkansas, not necessarily Ohio), but it’s about messaging, ways to advertise, and how you can successfully communicate with your customers. It’s 16 pages, but easy enough to break down and I think it has some fantastic ideas. I give thanks to them for sharing it with the greater Chamber community!

Liability Safe Harbor
As we return to work, we as employers are all striving to do our best to comply with the regulations that have been set out to protect our customers, vendors and employees. But we know that this disease is very contagious and despite best efforts, it cannot be completely controlled. The US Chamber is advocating for a temporary liability safe harbor for businesses at the Federal level. The Ohio Chamber is advocating for additional protection at the State level. We’re tracking this issue on both levels and will keep you informed.

Chamber Resources
I just wanted to let you know that as we enter this new phase of relaunch, the Chamber team has been hard at work on several ways that we can continue to support your businesses during this time. I should have some news to announce soon. We’re looking at everything from additional marketing resources, funding support, help for hiring employees, and new ways of doing events. Our commitment to you remains the same, we are in this with you. We will flex and adapt with you. We will guide and lead the way through this.

Quick Hits
- The Little Buckeye Museum is running a survey to help them get ready for when they can reopen. Take it here.
- Remember when we were part of the team with the Richland County Foundation to send 15 people to the SXSW Festival, which lead to the Mansfield Rising Plan? Well, this week I got an email that SXSW is offering some online sessions (since this year’s event had to cancel unfortunately). It won’t be quite the same as racing 30,000 other people for the seat in your favorite session, but it can give you a taste of the sessions…and it’s free! It’s something I’ve bookmarked and I thought I would share with you. (By the way, I heard Rohit Bhargava in 2019 and he is interesting, mind-bending, and will challenge your assumptions all at the same time with his trends discussions).
- As a leader in your organization, undoubtedly you have encountered many moments of anxiety throughout this crisis. How do you lead through that? The Harvard Business Review has published a 6-part series on “Managing in an Anxious World”. I’ve read some but not all (yet), but it’s very practical, and worth reading. This is an uneasy time for all of us and no one has all the answers. Leadership is valued now more than ever, but leaders are human, too. We must take care of ourselves to take care of our people, our community, and our companies.
How about a 2020 Census Response update? I’m sad to report that as a State, we are still trailing our frenemies up north in Michigan...and the gap is growing. Richland County is up to 66.5%; Mansfield – 59%; Shelby – 67.3%; Ontario – 74.3%; Lexington – 73%; Bellville – 74.1%. As employers, it would be great if you could encourage your employees to participate. We really need to get everyone counted. It will help us with schools, health care, transportation & infrastructure, social services, economic development and so much more! Help us with our #RichlandCounts initiative.

Dinner & A Show
I want to give a huge shout out to Lee Tasseff & the Destination Mansfield team for getting all these amazing Dinner & A Show events together over the last 5 weeks. They swung into action and took care of the details, and invited the Chamber & Downtown Mansfield to partner with them. I’ve joined along at home each week and have been introduced to some amazingly talented artists, and eaten some delicious food!

We’re all excited for restaurants to be reopening, but there is a bonus session scheduled this Saturday. Grab some delicious takeout from our friends at 1285 Winery and then tune in at 7pm to watch our very own Clint Knight sing and entertain us. Workforce Development Director by day, troubadour by night, what more could you ask for?

#InThisTogetherOhio
Smokin’ Bros has launched an effort called “Thank You Meals” to provide thank you meals for our first responders and health care workers. If you’d like to learn more about how you can participate, click here!

If you have a nomination for a future email, please just drop me a line!

Final Thoughts
I look forward to the day I can write to you and tell you that this crisis is behind us. But while we are in the Restart phase (and we’re all happy about that!), we know that we have a ways to go on our journey together.

So how are you doing? I mean you as a person. Are you hanging in there, doing okay, struggling, worried, or feeling other emotions? We all are, sometimes having the full range of emotions in just a brief amount of time. Some of us are also struggling even more with the challenging work-life balance that we all seek. I’m working from home about half the time at this point, but finding that I’m only working more hours doing this. I’m moving less, and sometimes just feeling blah. I know I’m not alone.

Somedays it is tempting to just give in to pessimism and doubt. But even when I do that for a short time, I always find myself coming back to leading from a positive view. I have always found that positivity (balanced and realistic) attracts more innovation, ingenuity, and success. That’s also a sign of resilience. Resilient leaders focus on how to move forward, how to adapt, and they tend to bounce back faster.
How are you leading during this time? Are you having crucial conversations with those that you are leading? Are you inspiring trust with thoughtful transparency? Are you looking ahead to how you can adapt?

We can do that together as a community as well – we need to be resilient! I’ll close with a quote I’ve seen many times before, but think it’s apt for now as we sail through turbulent seas:

“The pessimist complains about the wind. The optimist expects it to change. The leader adjusts the sails.”
– John Maxwell

We’re together on this journey. We’re in your corner. Keep believing that we are #RichlandCountySTRONG.

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!