Dear Members,

I don’t know about you, but the weather this week feels relentless. The good news is that the outlook for the upcoming week looks much better! Here are more updates:

**PPP Forgiveness Guide Released & Funding Reminders**
On Tuesday, I shared the [PPP Forgiveness application](#) that has been developed by the Treasury Department. Yesterday, I received a great tool from the US Chamber that walks you through the application process and calculations – [find it here](#).

But what about Congress? Both the Senate and House appear poised to discuss changes to this program including further flexibility for businesses. At this point nothing has been passed and until that has happened, what the Treasury Department has published stands.

We have advocated on your behalf for further tweaks to the program for our local business community. I have spoken to Senator Brown, Senator Portman, Congressman Balderson and Congressman Gibbs’ offices about what we’re hearing from the business community. But it is always a good idea for them to hear directly from you. I have linked their feedback forms above.

I have also begun hearing that the EIDL Loans are now being processed. Many had received the advances, but the actual loan paperwork is now being received by businesses. I want to encourage you to be reaching out to your ‘trusted team’ of advisors – attorneys, accountants, bankers, etc. – as you sign up for any of these programs to ensure you know all the details of the paperwork you’re signing. That was shared with me from a member earlier this week and I thought it was prudent advice!

**Updates from the State**
Much of today’s press conference centered on the activities of the Minority Health Strike Force and what they have done so far, including introducing [new tools on the data](#) dashboard and many other activities, there will be more to come from this group in June. It’s important work as we know that the virus is impacting some communities in a disproportionate way.

The Lt. Governor did announce some new openings also today, and they seem to have added some new protocols on their [sector specific protocols](#) page. I’ve linked below:
- Batting Cages open May 26th – [Protocols & Best Practices](#) (same as baseball/softball)
- Mini Golf open May 26th – [Protocols & Best Practices](#) (same as golf)
- Bowling Alleys open May 26th – they noted protocols will be posted tomorrow
- Catering/Banquet Facilities – can open June 1st – they need to operate under the current [restaurant guidelines](#) – limited to 300 people – people cannot congregate (No, I’m not sure how that works either). I will watch to see what additional guidance comes out on this.
- Effective 5/26, skills training can resume for all sports, including contact sports like football, basketball and lacrosse so long as safety protocols are followed. This includes, but is not limited to, weight training, agility skills, and other types of conditioning. Tournaments, games & competitions for contact sports are still prohibited for now. – [Protocols & Best Practices](#)
- General non-contact sports - [Protocols & Best Practices](#)
The other day I mentioned that the State was rescinding some of the Stay at Home order – here is that new order. It rescinds the ‘stay at home’ part of the order as well as the travel restrictions for traveling out of state. People in at-risk categories are encouraged to take extra precautions in this health advisory.

Don’t forget the Fire Code
I know that you as business owners are working to maximize the space you have to work with. We did receive a reminder today that you must stay within the current fire code with any changes – permanent or temporary – that you may be making. From one of the local departments here are a few reminders:
- Means of egress: No aisle way or exit can be blocked. There must be a clear path to exit and ability to move in the building without great restriction. Normal means of egress per the fire code must be maintained.
- Any barrier cannot block sprinkler systems, exit lights, emergency lights, smoke or heat detection or fire extinguishers.
- No items can be hung from an acoustical (drop) type ceiling.
- Any barriers cannot be within two feet of the ceiling.
- Any temporary wall must have approval from the building department (Richland County or City of Mansfield).
- Any curtain must have proof that it is a fire rated material.
Reach out to the fire department where you are located if you have a specific question if something is or is not allowed.

More Reopening Tools
The US Chamber has added this customizable workplace flyer that you can post. You can add information in a variety of areas and add your own contact information. It’s a great resource! Don’t forget their whole business reopening resource section.

This is an interesting article about how to communicate with customers about your reopening.

We’ve also updated our list of local businesses that are supplying PPE & other related supplies.

Attention Manufacturers
We have added a new tool designed to help you to obtain Certificates of Origin for your exports – fast, easy, and without even leaving your office. We have teamed with the American World Trade Chamber of Commerce to provide this service online. Here is an overview flyer, and here is a registration form. If you have questions, please feel free to reach out to Ashley Meyer, our Member Services Coordinator.

#InThisTogetherOhio
Maybe you’ve heard about our Young Entrepreneurs Academy program? It’s run through our own Chamber Foundation by Nikki Lewis. We take middle & high school students and help them launch their own real, live businesses over the course of a school year. On Tuesday, we graduated our largest class yet – 13 students forming a variety of businesses. These stellar young entrepreneurs give you hope for the future.
If you have a chance, visit the Facebook page and check out some of the funding pitches!
Congratulations YEA! Class of 2020! Nikki is recruiting for next year, so if you know and enterprising student, check it out!

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

**Final Thoughts**

Though it really does not feel like it, the calendar tells me this weekend is Memorial Day. On Monday, we will honor the sacrifice of thousands of brave Americans who have fought and died for our country. Thank you to all who have served, we honor your brave service.

I hope that this weekend, you will have a chance to take a break. It feels like we have been on a very relentless pace since the beginning of March. I don’t know about you but I feel utterly exhausted. I’m not complaining, because the chance to serve you all in this role is one of my biggest honors…but still, I’m tired. I know you are, too.

In order to continue to serve and lead others, we must be sure to fill our own wells. What brings you joy? What brings you peace? What brings you balance? Who can you reach out to that will encourage and uplift you? These are the things I wish for you this weekend. Maybe it is grabbing a book and sitting in the sun. Maybe it is taking a long run or going out on your boat. Maybe it is going fishing or camping. Maybe it is meeting friends for dinner. Life must go on through this crisis.

I also encourage you to think about how you can pay it forward this weekend. Despite the difficulties of the last two months, I suspect we have all had blessings bestowed as well. How can you do that for someone else? Make someone’s day! Thinking about other people always helps to fill my well back up.

In honor of the holiday, I will close with a quote from President Dwight D. Eisenhower:

"One American put it this way: ‘Every tomorrow has two handles. We can take hold of it with the handle of anxiety or the handle of faith’.

Let us grab the handle of faith. Let us care for ourselves. Let us bestow kindness and grace upon each other. Let us honor our brave servicemen & women.

We remain forever #RichlandCountySTRONG!
Onward!
Jodie

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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!