



Battlefords Chamber of Commerce

Jct. of Highways 16 & 40 East

P.O. Box 1000

North Battleford, Saskatchewan, Canada S9A 3E6

Advocacy Update

March 17th, 2020

To: Chamber Members

Re: News & Notes for Business

The Battlefords Chamber of Commerce participated in a conference call with the chamber network yesterday afternoon regarding updates on the COVID -19 pandemic. All chambers had an opportunity to provide an update on their specific marketplace, and the provincial chamber provided a province wide view of insights into actions and impacts of the pandemic.

The Chamber network knows very acutely the impact the virus is having and will continue to have on our economy and local businesses. In particular, small businesses with front line workers will be largely affected due to self isolation practices, recommendations from public health professionals, or the need to provide in-home child or family care. Currently the governments have taken actions to and made programs available to businesses and their employees.

- Waving the one-week waiting period to help employees that are self-isolating have immediate access to funds;
- Introducing special measures under its Work-Sharing_program (an adjustment program designed to help employers and employees avoid layoffs where there is a temporary reduction in the normal level of business activity that is beyond the control of the employer);
- Putting in place a Business Credit Availability Program to increase liquidity for Canadian businesses experiencing cash flow challenges as a result of COVID – 19. This program will be delivered through financial Crown corporations such as Export Development Canada, Business Development Bank of Canada, Farm Credit Canada, the Canadian Commercial Corporation, etc. The government will make more details available in the coming days.

The Chamber network is continuing to advocate to government to develop and adopt policies and tools that help businesses and their employees.

Notes from Saskatchewan,

- The number of businesses reporting reductions of sales over the weekend is significant
- Events are being cancelled on-mass, as noted by public health or decisions of event hosts
- Many have set up the capacity for staff to work from home. Something to consider , if possible
- Job sharing is a big topic of conversation, as a way to secure employees and employer flexibility, ability to secure monies for employees. Something to consider fully before laying anyone off.
- As of yesterday afternoon 83% of the businesses who completed the Business Impact Survey indicated they have been impacted by the pandemic

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- Many are predicting 20 – 50% loss in reduction of revenue in the coming months

Survey results in whole, will be available later in the week.

Locally, we are seeing that several closures and changes that may impact or assist you.

1. Restaurants are going to take out and drive through options. As well, several locally owned restaurants are providing free delivery
2. Grocery stores – Discovery Co-operative and Wal-mart, have made arrangements for Senior Shopping hours early in the morning
3. Community members are stepping up to assist people who require errands, groceries purchased, etc.
4. Most of your key business associates and partners have likely reached out to share their best practices or operational adjustments during this situation. (banks, etc.)

Closures:

- The Western Development Museums across Saskatchewan
- SIGA – Gold Eagle Casino, closed for 2 weeks
- The Smith's Make Up and Photography

It is important to support local businesses in this time of uncertainty. Be sure to buy a meal, or a gift card. Support your employees, their families, your friends and neighbours. We are all in this together.

We will continue to provide updates to business as this pandemic unfolds with information from key sources and the Chamber network across Canada.

If there is anything the Chamber office can assist you with, please be sure to reach out. We can provide information and find connections for you. Be sure to watch the Monday Minute coming to you each week (on Monday's), and be sure to stay tuned to the Battlefords Chamber of Commerce for more news and notes for business. Be safe and stay healthy!

Important Links:

Canadian Chamber of Commerce – Pandemic Preparedness Guide for Business

<http://chamber.ca/resources/pandemic-preparedness/>

Saskatchewan Government – COVID – 19 website and information

<http://saskatchewan.ca/coronavirus>

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