

News Update

March 24, 2020

Federal disaster loans available for small businesses

Federal disaster loans are now available for Nebraska small businesses after the U.S. Small Business Association (SBA) approved Nebraska's request for assistance last Friday. It allows affected businesses and nonprofits to begin applying for low-interest, long-term loans to help them pay bills and other expenses during the business disruptions that COVID-19 is creating. Restaurants, bars, retailers, salons and other small businesses have had to restrict operations or close entirely due to the limit on public gatherings.

The annual interest rate is 3.75% for businesses and 2.75% for nonprofits. No payments are due on the loans for one year. Each application is being reviewed on a case-by-case basis. It can take 21 to 30 days to receive funds, but it's expected that Nebraskans applying to the SBA will soon be eligible for short-term bridge loans of up to \$25,000.

Read more at the [Omaha World Herald](#).

10 ways to support local businesses without breaking social distance

1. Buy a gift card
2. Get delivery
3. Shop local online
4. Tip generously
5. Keep paying your service providers
6. Skip a refund on unused tickets
7. Schedule a service for later

How to apply for a loan:

- Loan applications can be made at sba.gov/disaster
- Call SBA's Customer Service Center at 800-659-2955
- email disastercustomerservice@sba.gov

Nebraska Department of Economic Development [field staff](#) are available to provide guidance.

8. Share a business's social media posts
9. Contact government leaders for help
10. Send a thank you note

Read more [here](#).

Join us . . .

Coronavirus & Unemployment

Tuesday, March 24

3:30 p.m. CDT / 2:30 p.m. MDT

With Nebraska Labor Commissioner
John Albin

[Watch on Facebook Live](#)

State and Regional News

Legislature advances emergency funding bill

The Nebraska Legislature is temporarily reconvening to authorize emergency funding to battle COVID-19 in Nebraska. Over \$83 million from the rainy day fund will be used for personal protective equipment and other supplies, additional staffing expenditures for veterans hospitals and Department of Health and Human Service care facilities, and expanding coronavirus lab testing. The bill advanced through the first round unanimously with no debate.

From containing to treating coronavirus

Just a month ago, Nebraska Medicine's Biocontainment Unit treated some of the first coronavirus patients in America. When it became clear that coronavirus would continue to spread, they began conserving masks, and stocking up on ventilators, hand sanitizer and other equipment needed.

The hospital has contingency plans to implement, although officials hope not to need them. They are doing their best to prepare for a large influx of patients.

Read more from the [Nebraska Legislature](#).

Read more at the [New York Times](#).

Local businesses stay optimistic

The effort to limit the spread of COVID-19 has limited the local business community. Angela Scanlan, owner of Cappuccino and Company in Scottsbluff, sees some positives in the current struggles. The local community has come together to support each other. Many restaurants are offering delivery and curbside pickup, allowing consumers to continue to support their local businesses. Twin Cities Development is providing a list of available resources to assist businesses that are struggling.

Read more at the [Scottsbluff Star-Herald](#).

Federal Reserve supports banks buying bonds

In order to hold down spiking interest rates in the state and municipal bond markets, the Federal Reserve will support banks' purchase of the bonds by loaning money to banks.

The goal is to stabilize the \$3.8 trillion municipal bond market and ensure states and cities can borrow at low cost.

Read more at the [Omaha World Herald](#).

Businesses practice social distancing

[Union Pacific](#) closed its office to the public last week to accommodate social distancing goals. Over 2,000 employees are working remotely, leaving less than 500 workers on site at the company's

Bellevue's [Beardmore Chevrolet and Beardmore Subaru](#) remain open seven days, with 120 employees working in three buildings. The morning sales meeting is handled through emails and one-on-one meetings, and handshakes are not allowed. Employees are also urged to not lay a bare hand on any vehicle or office door and to wipe down steering wheels and key fobs.

downtown headquarters. Those in the office are primarily holding virtual conferences, with in-person meetings of no more than 10 people. Signs posted in the building remind everyone to stay at least six feet away from others at all times.

At southeast Nebraska's [Endicott Clay Products](#), the majority of employees work in production. While sales, marketing and finance staff can now work from home, manufacturing employees must be on site. To fight the spread of disease, the company is staggering break times, holding training programs in smaller groups and stopping delivery drivers from coming into the offices. Endicott has contingency plans but is hoping to not to implement them.

Read more at the [Omaha World Herald](#).

Nebraska Chamber members lend a hand

[Tyson Foods](#) is donating 16 million meals to Feeding America food banks, community pantries near Tyson operations and other hunger relief agencies during the COVID-19 outbreak. Read more [here](#).

[Great Plains Communications](#) is offering free internet services at no charge to non-customers and free speed upgrades to customers working remotely. Read more [here](#).

When Lincoln Public Schools sent out a call for 13,000+ reusable bags, [Ameritas](#), with the help of Bob Stephens and Associates, collected over 1,200 bags for the schools. Read more [here](#).

[Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Nebraska](#) delivered 10 cases of antibacterial refills to Nebraska Medicine, helping protect the providers and patients on the front lines. Read more [here](#).

Send your company stories for us to share. Let's celebrate the helpers. Contact [Holley Salmi](#).

National News

Sasse seeks help for rural hospitals

U.S. Sen. Ben Sasse is asking for three regulations to be temporarily waived in order to help rural hospitals fight COVID-19. These include: eliminating the 25-bed limitation for Critical Access Hospitals; removing the regulations governing skilled nursing facility

Income tax filing deadline extended

Due to COVID-19, the federal government allowed an extra 90 days to prepare taxes. Everyone has until July 15 to file taxes. However, U.S. Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin is encouraging everyone to file sooner so they can receive tax refunds

admission criteria that require a three-day hospital stay; and removing sanctions under the Emergency Medical Treatment Act and Active Labor Act for transfers or redirections of patients away from hospital emergency rooms to alternate care sites.

Read more at [NTV](#).

sooner. There is also an option to file a six-month extension if you're worried you won't make the updated deadline. Nebraska's tax return filing deadline has also been extended to July 15 for those unable to file due to COVID-19.

Read more at [US News](#).