



Champaign County's Elected Officials:

Undoubtedly the COVID-19 pandemic has presented you, our elected leaders, with unprecedented, difficult decisions. In combating one crisis, another was created. The COVID-19 pandemic forced our residents to their homes to help maintain public health. Some businesses were deemed essential and remained open yet navigated supply chain challenges. Many businesses were forced to close their doors, and this led to furloughs, layoffs and revenue loss. As we begin reopening, it is the unfortunate reality that some businesses who shut their doors to help protect our community will never reopen their doors again. They sacrificed their livelihoods for the greater good.

It is vital that business owners have a seat at the table in shaping our next steps—particularly given that there is such a wide gap of what is allowable between Phase 4 and Phase 5. Many of the decisions that have been made during the pandemic have appeared to come without consultation of businesses and the business community. While some measures have been available to help temporarily cushion COVID-19's mark such as the Paycheck Protection Program, the decisions made still leave many businesses with a sense of uncertainty for the future as cases rise and aid runs out. Some businesses have started to question if moving from Illinois is the only way their business will survive.

It is important that you hear from the experts—the business owners themselves. They are the experts in what COVID-19 has done to their business and what they need to be successful in the months to come. We are asking that you take the time to read each of these letters and bring businesses to the table. The letters attached are a sampling from your constituents who are calling on you to listen and create solutions. The business owners wrote their personal, authentic stories of impact. It is important to know that not every business needs the same things right now; however, we are confident that you will see common themes across each letter.

For our community to emerge from this pandemic together, it is important that businesses are able to thrive. It is not just about the business owner. It is about who they employ. We are happy to facilitate any conversations with the business community you may need in looking forward. Should you have any questions, please reach out to Madeline Herrman, Director of Public Policy at madelineh@champaigncounty.org or 217-359-1791.

Sincerely,

Laura Weis
President & CEO
Champaign County Chamber of Commerce

TOP INVESTORS

GOLD

Busey

SILVER

Carle
University of Illinois
at Urbana-Champaign

BRONZE

A & R Mechanical Contractors
Amdocs
BankChampaign, N.A.
Christie Clinic
First Mid-Illinois Bank & Trust
Health Alliance
Hickory Point Bank & Trust
Midland States Bank
OSF HealthCare Heart of
Mary Medical Center

IN-KIND CONTRIBUTORS

CHAIRMAN'S CIRCLE

Illini Radio Group - MIX 94.5, WIXY 100.3, Rewind 92.5,
WYXY Classic 99.1, True Oldies 97.9, Extra 92.1, Hits 99.7

Stevie Jay Broadcasting – Q96-96.1 FM, US105.9,
Christian FM 95.3 & ESPN 93.5

PRESIDENT'S CIRCLE

NewsTalk 1400 WDWS, Lite Rock 97.5 WHMS,
Classic Hits 107.9 WKIO

150 PERCENT CLUB

Awards, Ltd.
Blossom Basket Florist
Dish Passionate Cuisine
Hyatt Place
LongHorn Steakhouse
TrophyTime
W.K. Cooper II Asset Management
Corporation

FLORA GEMS

S I N C E 1 8 5 6

YOUR #1 DIAMOND DESTINATION

302 W. Kirby Ave. Champaign, IL 61820
(217) 305-7381 Fax (217) 305-7382

Champaign County Elected Officials:

My name is Valerie Swain, Co-Owner of Flora Gems Champaign. In 2015, I opened the doors at my jewelry store in Champaign. I worked hard every day to build a respected and powerful fine jewelry store. We were new to the community, and the journey has been amazing.

We have made a swift rise to success and managed to have 5 full time staff employed, plus myself. I watched my dream build day after day. We were having an especially successful 2020 before I hear the word "Non-essential". Being a small business in Illinois is especially hard. During a 10 week, forced shut down, it became increasingly harder. On 3/21/2020, I was forced to furlough my entire team, as we were facing something we have never seen. Not only was I concerned for my family, I cried for their families. My team stressed daily for 10 weeks about the future of our business, the future of the retail industry and the economy.

On May 1st, we returned to work for curbside. One major oversight of curbside, is the relationships required and the safety of our team. Delivering something of high value on a curbside, doesn't feel safe. My NON Essential business feeds many families, all over the world. During May, I made my first venture out to find some "essentials". I was shocked to see how many people were shopping for non-essentials, while my business was across town, shut down.

Finally on Friday, May 29th, after 10 weeks of great fear and anxiety, I opened my doors. Now being forced to spend thousands of dollars to install a buzzer system so my staff can feel safe with people walking in wearing masks. I was open for two sweet days. Two days of customers, wearing masks, social distancing, and buying jewelry! It felt like things were finally recovering. Saturday, the world started to fall apart. Covid-19 wrecked our quarter, and the death of George Floyd was proving to cause major uprising in our country. Sunday, at 5:43 p.m., my alarms sounded, and 24 people smashed into my business to find every shred of value in the safe. Nothing could be found. I was left with thousands of dollars in repairs. I am facing 2 deductibles, so insurance doesn't "cover it"

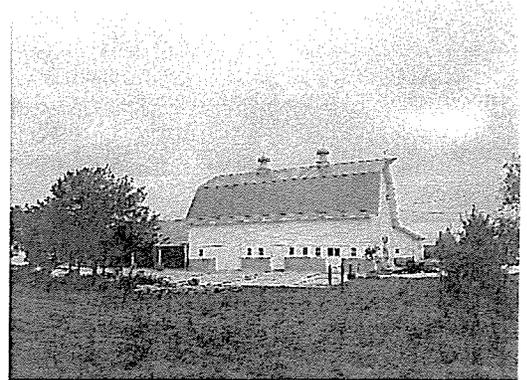
As a small business owner, it is unacceptable that other "essential" businesses were able to operate at full steam, while I sat back and watched. We feel forgotten and left behind. There were flaws in the government programs that forced funds to be used in too small a window. We have the smallest pockets and the greatest economic hardship. There are major flaws that the public cannot buy "non-essentials" at small business, but they can certainly stop by a major retailer. Our staff was laid off, their pay reduced, and bonuses removed, our business momentum destroyed, our physical building vandalized. However, our dreams cannot be crushed. I have said many times during this "I have not come this far, to only come this far."

I am hopeful, moving forward, that we can somehow figure out a way to avoid further furlough, and rebuild our year. I am hopeful, that the economy isn't forced into a major tailspin. We feel proud of what we have built, and very concerned for how quickly we were deemed "non-essential". Our business is essential.



May 17, 2020

Our business is an event venue which primarily focuses on weddings. Referred to as "barn weddings". It is a barn that is spread out onto the outside and encompasses a few acres. Weddings are normally outside with reception inside the barn. The past few years we have been fully booked. Meaning there is a wedding every weekend starting in May and going to the middle of December. Average guest count is 170. We limit it to only one wedding per weekend. The families come from all over. Most are within a 150mi radius, but there are some that travel great distances. Most are the traditional religious and family-oriented weddings where they want to be surrounded by their family and friends.



We knew going into February that this could affect this business. When the governor made his order to shut down, we did it without hesitation, the wedding families were all in agreement that this is the right thing to do and we rescheduled their weddings to later dates. It was to flatten the curve. Then the shutdown progressed to finding a cure or having a vaccine. Which is an unknown time, a year hopefully, but this might go on for years. Now on a daily basis, I have brides and their families contacting me and asking when can we open back up. I have to reply with an "I don't know" and the frustration on all sides builds.

The economic aspect is simple. Our revenue is near -0-. We can't even give tours which means we can't make any new bookings to gain revenue. This is also the type of business that brings in outside people to our community. They stay at our hotel, they eat at our restaurants, they go shopping at our stores, etc. These other businesses now have a revenue from outside sales generated by weddings, to -0-.

This is also a very personal aspect to many families. Their wedding, surrounded by their family and friends, with most of them having their pastor present, this is their start to their new life and their new family.

The next issue is if we were to open tomorrow, what would we do to protect those whom visit? First, when this started and the governor made his order, we then added a month to his order just as additional protection. Currently we have moved all the wedding dates up until July. So if we said we would open tomorrow, we still wouldn't have a wedding until July. It would however mean we could make a start to some economic recovery by giving tours and making new bookings.

Once we did begin hosting weddings, it would be dependent on what stage of the pandemic we would be in to change how we would operate to protect the guests. But the current plan is to open guest spacing, sanitize surfaces, provide hand sanitizer stations, mandate staff to wear ppe, direct families on how to change cake and drink serving, encourage guests to wear ppe and that if they have symptoms to not come. On top of that, it is a barn, normally open to the outside air, there is no closed air systems. The weddings already take place outside and the spacing per guest is already large. Plus, we already only host one wedding per week.

I appreciate your assistance and support Tom. The wedding families I talk to daily, that want to have their wedding I'm certain would also thank you.

Cheers,
Chris Engelbrecht
Engelbrecht Farmstead
1432 East 200 North Rd
Paxton, IL 60957
chris@grillsandcookers.com
217-377-8680



2150 COUNTY ROAD 1000E
CHAMPAIGN IL 61822
217.643.2074

Hello, my name is Annie Murray, co-owner of LA Gourmet + Pear Tree Estate in Champaign County. My sister and I have poured our heart and souls into building this business over the past fifteen years. We have sacrificed so much and put everything on the line to make this a successful business. The words I am about to write on this page are just the story of one business, but to us this business is our whole life. Let me tell you a little about us – this one tiny fish in the pond of Champaign, IL. We employ 10 full time people and 40-60 part-time people. Over 75% of Pear Tree's clients are from outside of Champaign County. As a company, we worked incredibly hard to book 96 weddings and events this year. Our events have an average cost of \$25,000, which translates into 2.4 million dollars in taxable revenue that will be lost this year. Now hospitality margins are low – so that means a majority of money that comes into us goes out to pay food and beverage suppliers, window washers, landscapers and lawn services, staff, laundry services, bank payments, county loan payments and supplies. However, weddings at Pear Tree Estate don't stop with us. Those booked weddings at Pear Tree Estate go on to spend an estimated 2.68 million dollars on additional local vendors such as florists, bridal shops, hotels, bands, bakers, photographers and rehearsal dinners. The total impact of ONE tiny fish losing 9-12 months of business (which by the way is how far out weddings and events are cancelling due to the 5 phase Restore Illinois plan) is at a minimum a loss of over 5 million dollars taxable revenue to this area.

Direct Impact on PTE:

96 weddings x avg weddings cost \$25000 = 2.4 mil
10 full time employees.
40-60 part time employees.
PTE average cost includes food, drink, employees

Direct Impact on our local vendors- only minimal numbers included.

96 weddings x \$5000 flowers = \$480,000 florist
96 weddings x \$1500 bridal = \$144,000 dress shop
96 weddings x \$250 rentals x 9 = \$216,000 bridal party attire
96 weddings x 45 rooms x \$180 = \$775,000 hotel
96 weddings x \$1500 DJ = \$144,000 entertainers
96 weddings x \$650 cake = \$62,400 bakers
96 weddings X \$3000 photos = \$288,000 photographers
96 weddings x \$2500 video = \$240,000 videographers
96 weddings X \$3500 rehearsal dinner = \$336,000 restaurants
=\$2,684,400.00

Total Impact on Loss Revenue for Wedding Industry (for one venue, there are multiple in county): \$5,084,400

Our clients choose Champaign County to host weddings even though they may not reside here, choosing our neighbors as their vendors. The inequity between states reopening will kill us. It is catastrophic to businesses when they can go an hour away and carry on with their lives, host their weddings and see their loved ones.

Our business will not survive the current guidelines given for phase 4.

It is excessive and unrealistic to keep businesses closed with no plan to help them pay their bills. We need a better strategy than to follow Governor Pritzker's suggestions. Please work to restore our economy NOW, not in the fall, not next year. There will be nothing left of the event industry by "phase 5". PPP loans were a short- term band aid. However, the wedding and event cancellations continue to pour in. Events are cancelling well into spring 2021 due to the current phase requirements. **At the bare minimum, we ask that you fight for 50% occupancy moving forward.**

I choose like all of you, to spend my time at board meetings, involved in various organizations, helping in the community. I want this to be home for my family, a decent place for my kids' kids, I know that you all care about this state we call home and these people. Here is your chance to help the citizens of Champaign County feed their families, pay their mortgages and spend their money in Champaign County. I am asking you to be the voice for local business, think about what your stance and actions can do for the livelihood of so many people. Give your constituents the chance to work and provide for their families. Please help us before it's too late.

Sincerely,

Annie Murray



June 17, 2020

To: Champaign County Chamber of Commerce

RE: COVID-19 impact on ISS and future requirements

Dear Sir/Madam:

The arrival of the COVID-19 has been impacting ISS in different ways. The first encounter was at the beginning of February; a few weeks earlier we had sold and shipped two instruments to The P.R. of China and when we were making arrangements for their installation, travel was banned (the instruments have not been installed yet). The virus arrival at home was sudden and, although I was made aware of what happened by our collaborators in Europe, found me unprepared to handle the unforeseen consequences. As some of our clients are pharmaceutical companies requiring our services and assistance, we kept the facility open and, to this respect, we have been better off than most of the businesses. Right away we implemented some changes: (a.) we limited the number of employees present at any time while the other employees worked from home; (b.) established guidelines for maintaining social distance in the work place; (c.) made the use of masks in the workplace mandatory; (d.) enabled sanitation procedures of common areas. Fortunately, none of our employees reported a viral infection. At the same time, I felt powerless about protecting their health as tests were not available. And I cannot thank them enough for their bravery when, during the darkest days at the end of March and the beginning of April, they continued to show up and relentlessly cover their duties.

Congress took bold measures. First, with enabling the EFMLEA Act in mid March as part of the FFCRA Act, which was instrumental to assist employees that have to take care for their children when the day care facility is not accessible. Then, by passing the CARES Act at the end of March that encompassed the financial assistance to businesses. The PPP program was terrific; thank you to the lawmakers for passing it. Not so much for the EIDL program by SBA, which for ISS was a fiasco; although we applied on April 2nd we did not hear anything until May 27th and eventually we received a loan equal to less than 1/10 of the amount requested.

We need to look at the future. As a business we need to introduce some changes and adapt to the new reality; a few business aspects I would like to stress include:

- **Marketing.** As trade shows are cancelled for a while and on-site demos of the instrumentation are not feasible anymore, we are developing new marketing tools by using video-demos and improving the product presentation available of the web site. This activity requires investment.
- **Accessing long term loans.** From a business perspective, it is vital to be able to have the opportunity to be able to access to long term, low interest, loans; here I am talking about "loans" (not the PPP-type program), that would enable us to create the new infrastructure.
- **Protecting our work force.** Finally, I wish every employee could be tested weekly to detect any signs of potential viral infection using kits (rather than monitoring the temperature).

I thank all of the officials at the local, State and Federal level, for their active inputs and assistance during this time.

With my best wishes for everyone to stay safe and healthy.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "B. Barbieri".

Ben Barbieri
President

May 19, 2020

Tom,

Here is our short story.

Our business is the Paxton Public House, located at 130 South Market Street in Paxton, Illinois. The Public House has been serving the local citizenry for six years. We operate the business 12 hours a day beginning at 6 am serving a country style breakfast followed by a hardy home style lunch. We are well known in town as the local gathering spot for great food and cold drinks.

Since the government shutdown in early March, our business, like so many others, has been devastated. We have lost our dining room sales, beverage sales and video gaming money. The mortgage and insurance is still due, utilities must be paid and every effort is being made to take care of long tenured employees. We have tried to hold on by providing curb side food pick-up but unfortunately, we are to the point of losing it all.

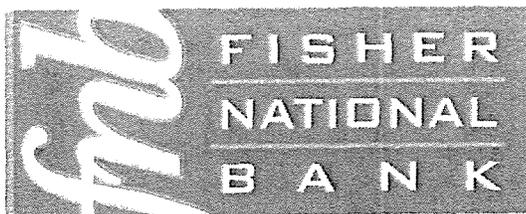
We have come up with a very workable strategy to reopen and adhere to mandated guidelines. We are working closely with the local health department. We have a plan inside our facility to provide space for social distancing. We have a disinfectant plan for table rotation and have a working plan with our terminal operators for safe gaming operations.

Again, our plea is simply to reopen before we have to close permanently.

John R. Stevens, Jr.
Owner
Paxton Public House
johnrs.pgn@gmail.com



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P.O. BOX 609
FISHER, IL 61843-0609
PH: (217) 897-1136
FAX: (217) 897-1380



1501 E OAK
P.O. BOX 710
MAHOMET, IL 61853
PH: (217) 586-1136
FAX: (217) 586-1138

fnb@fishernational.com

June 16, 2020

To: Elected officials and Champaign County Health dept. decision makers

From: Mike Estes-President-Fisher National Bank

We are one of the fortunate, essential businesses that have been allowed to continue serving our clients. It certainly has not been "business as usual" as we have closed our lobbies and required clients to conduct business through our drive thru service or by appointment only. We have been able to assist many of our small business clients with PPP loans. And while this was much needed and appreciated legislation, it was not intended to sustain these businesses indefinitely. Each day that passes makes it more difficult and less likely that some of these businesses will even survive.

The banking business is about managing risk. While I do not presume to equate financial risk with health risk, I feel the difference between these 2 very different types of risk are starting to merge. According to an article on the Kaiser Family foundation website, (<https://www.kff.org/coronavirus-covid-19/issue-brief/the-implications-of-covid-19-for-mental-health-and-substance-use/>) "research shows that job loss is associated with increased depression, anxiety, distress, and low self-esteem and may lead to higher rates of substance use disorder and suicide". If businesses are not allowed to resume their operation, it would stand to reason we will start seeing more and more health issues related to the stress created by individuals not being allowed to earn a living , provide for their family or pay their bills. These businesses are willing to accept the risk associated with this virus and open in a safe and responsible manner, taking every reasonable precaution, to prevent this virus from spreading. If they are not allowed to open sooner than later, you are virtually guaranteeing they will be forced to close or move their business, if possible, to another county or state that is willing to let them operate.

With all due respect to our Governor and our State legislative bodies, I feel you, the leaders of Champaign County, are far better equipped to make a judgement on the appropriate time to get back to a new normal. Champaign County is not Cook County and should not be held to the same standard.

On behalf of our bank and the numerous small businesses we are honored to have relationships with, I respectfully request that you allow the businesses of Champaign County the chance to survive, and not become victims of this virus as well.

Kindest regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Mike Estes', is written over a horizontal line.

Mike Estes-President
mestes@fishernational.com
Fisher National Bank
Fisher, IL

Madeline Herrman

From: Manzella's Italian Patio <manzellasitalianpatio@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, June 16, 2020 3:39 PM
To: Madeline Herrman
Subject: ReOpen Illinois

I realized I did not include the business address or phone number so here it is again!
Thank you!

ReOpen Illinois

My name is Mary Manzella Racz and I am the general manager of my family's long-standing Italian restaurant, Manzella's Italian Patio. We have been in business for 60 years and for the past 32 years I have been the face and voice for the business, a business that I know like the back of my hand and love as if it were my child. Since March 18th, the day we were forced to shut our doors to diners, we have dropped a significant amount in sales from the loss of business from this closure. We have a great following and appreciate those who are regularly patronizing for carry out, but unfortunately that is not enough to keep our doors open should the shut down continue, or even if we are allowed to have a 25% dine-in capacity with phase 4, it still is not enough. We have already lost out on some of the biggest events of the spring season, Mom's weekend, Illinois marathon, commencement, etc. which those weekends set a cushion for us as we go into the slower months of the summer. We have done everything required to keep our carry out customers and staff healthy. What we really need now is to open our business full scale which will not only put all my workers back to their normal working schedule, but also save my business. We can not survive off of this anymore and it would be a great tragedy to this community and to the Manzella family to go out in a manner that was not of our doing. We are proud to serve our community since 1960 and hope and pray for more years of doing so.

Sincerely,

Mary Manzella Racz
Manzella's Italian Patio
115 S. First St.
Champaign, IL.
61820
217 352-7624



NAWC IMMIGRANT BUSINESS SURVEY

BACKGROUND

The New American Welcome Center at the University YMCA has interviewed 30 business owners (see p. 3) to learn about the impact of COVID-19. Interviewees are from 10 countries: China, DR Congo, Germany, Guatemala, Iraq, Korea, Mexico, Nepal, Palestine, Turkey. Interviews are conducted in the native languages of interviewees (Arabic, Chinese, French, Spanish) when possible.

BUSINESS TYPE

Most of the businesses we interviewed were restaurant/cafés or grocery stores (63%). Over a quarter (27%) are other business types (e.g. beauty supply, car dealership, driving school, hair salon, rental agency, tax service, tech, yarn store). Three businesses (10%) are unregistered.

- *Length of business operation:* Less than 5 years (43%), 5 to 10 years old (20%), greater than 10 years (20%), unknown (17%).
- *Business size:* Most are very small operations: 23% are solely owner-run and 37% have ≤5 employees (23% did not share employment data).

CURRENT OPERATIONS

Nearly three quarters (73%) of businesses interviewed are currently operating. Every 4 in 5 business owners (80%) reported that the COVID-19 pandemic has had a high impact on their revenue. The majority of business owners have had to layoff employees – of the operations that are not solely owner-run, 65% have laid off employees since the beginning of the health crisis. Over a quarter (27%) indicated that they need PPE. Primary concerns fell into 4 main categories: business survival (15), health & safety (10), return to normalcy (6), and uncertainty about UIUC operations (4).

FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

Nearly 85% of those interviewed indicated that they need financial assistance for basic operations (e.g. rent, payroll, inventory). However, less than half have applied for aid, citing factors like language barriers and a reluctance to take on loans due to existing loans and/or cultural factors.

- *PPP:* Ten businesses applied for PPP – 5 were approved and 5 are awaiting decisions. Businesses that applied for PPP went through the following entities: Chase, PNC, Busey, Paypal. The remainder were turned away when the first round of PPP funds ran out or did not apply.
- *Other Aid:* Two businesses were unsuccessful in applying for the IL Small Business Emergency Loan; one was denied for EIDL, another has an application pending with LISC.
- *NAWC Immigrant Relief Fund:* Twelve business owners have been approved for one-time emergency assistance (≤\$500 each).

Several restaurants requested assistance to offset the high impact of delivery commissions ranging from 22%-40% charged by third-party platforms (e.g. Grubhub, Ricepo, Chowbus, Hungry Panda).



P.O. Box 255 • 526 E Champaign Avenue • Rantoul, IL 61866-0255 • (217) 893-8201

June 12, 2020

Madeline Herman
Director of Public Policy
Champaign County Chamber of Commerce

You requested a letter explaining to our state leaders how our business has been impacted by COVID-19. As a credit union we were considered an essential business and have kept our full staff employed to serve the members/owners of this credit union. How we accomplish this has required some adaptations. Our lobby access has been restricted to appointment only. All teller transactions have been routed to our drive-up lanes, and there has been an increase in use of our electronic channels.

As a small business we have not had the option of dividing staff into separate teams or working from home to minimize the spread of infection. Our biggest fear has been that illness will force us to shut down, leaving our nearly 4,000 members unable to access their money.

Because of this we are strong supporters of using a science-based approach to public policy on how to cope with the pandemic. We are seeing a surge in new cases in those states where decisions were made on the basis of factors other than the guidelines provided by public health experts. It is imperative that Illinois continue its phased approach.

So far, the pattern of the 2018 Influenza Pandemic is being replicated in this crisis. There was an outbreak in the spring. The outbreak lessened in the summer and measures were relaxed. Then it rebounded with deadly results in the fall. Our more advanced technology can help mitigate the so-called second wave. Through testing and contact tracing we can isolate new cases and hopefully prevent the need to go back into a lockdown state. The role of the government right now should be to create the infrastructure necessary to do the testing, contact tracing, and provide hospital facilities for the next wave.

Thank you for providing me an opportunity to share my thoughts and concerns.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Michael Daugherty".

Michael Daugherty, CPA
President/Manager



808 Golf Course Road
Rantoul, IL 61866
217-893-9000

To Whom It May Concern,

As a small business owner it is very frustrating to be shut down by our government over Covid 19. The people making the decisions tell us it was based on science; we later learn all the science predictions were wrong and grossly over exaggerated. Clearly the decisions are made more on politics than science.

While the locally owned shoe store in downtown is told to close, the large box stores can be open. The golf course is forced to close, and once allowed to reopen, there are so many restrictions it can't possibly be open and cover even half of its costs. The golf courses 35 miles to the east in Indiana did not get shut down like Illinois.

It appears that common sense and the wisdom of the business owners is not considered and only the great government can solve this issue. The way it has been handled only assures that more residents and businesses will be leaving to never return to the State of Illinois.

The State of Illinois needs to leave it up to the business owners to open and run their businesses responsibly. If the State wants to be so controlling, common sense should have been used to treat south of I80 differently from north of I80. The State of Illinois needs to open all Illinois businesses immediately to enable all businesses to survive and best recoup from the damages already incurred from the government of the State of Illinois.

Frustrated Illinois Business owner,

Kevin Applebee
Willow Pond Golf Course
Flooring Surfaces, Inc.

June 13, 2020

I am writing to share how the pandemic has impacted my small business and what I'll need to be successful moving forward.

I'm a massage therapist and due to the close contact nature of massage I have been closed since March 16th. Since then, I have been unable to generate any revenue and am still incurring ongoing business expenses. I'm am working on reopening procedures, but face the following obstacles:

- The costs to purchase supplies and equipment necessary to reopen is a barrier as I've experienced 3 months of lost revenue so far
- The difficulty finding the supplies and equipment necessary to reopen
- Due to the increased time needed to disinfect between clients, when I do reopen it will be at limited capacity, but with the same expenses
- I have recently surveyed my clients and a large majority are hesitant to receive massage therapy at this time

To be successful moving forward, I'm asking that you consider:

- Grants for solopreneurs to assist with the purchase of supplies necessary to reopen
- Extending the Federal Pandemic Unemployment Compensation for solopreneurs and employers of businesses where close contact is required
- Pass legislation making unemployment claims related to COVID-19 non-chargeable to the employer

Thank You for your attention to this matter,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Karyn Claflin'. The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first letter 'K' being particularly large and stylized.

Karyn Claflin

Restoring Balance, Inc.
1508 Westfield Dr
Champaign, IL 61821
karyn@balancechampaign.com
(217)352-7944

Madeline Herrman

From: Gmail <heil.leah@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, June 15, 2020 5:46 AM
To: Madeline Herrman
Subject: Events at Refinery Closure

Due to Covid 19 our Event business closed its doors on March 19th, 2020. Contracts were cancelled due to our inability to host events. Refunds were made for the majority of events that were for the remainder of March, April, May, June and now July with the prospect of more cancellations coming in for the fall. The majority of our expenses have remained the same, utilities, rent, insurance, advertising contracts, phone, bank charges, all operating expenses. We are being forced to refund money with no prospect of any revenue coming in. How are we supposed to stay in business?

Brides are holding off booking events because the future is uncertain. We are a 10,000+ sq ft facility. We have the capability to space out tables for social distancing and to provide PPE's for employees and guests.

We are seeing an influx of brides looking to bordering states that have much more lenient re-opening policies. How long is this closure going to last before we are all out of business?

Leah Heil
CEO Events at Refinery
Lheil@eventsatrefinery.com
217-202-5407

Sent from my iPad

Madeline Herrman

From: Gmail <heil.leah@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, June 15, 2020 6:04 AM
To: Madeline Herrman
Subject: Refinery Gym

Refinery Gym closed its doors on March 19th due to the Covid-19 pandemic. While we understand that measures needed to be taken to protect the public several months ago, the extended closure threatens the viability of our business.

The majority of our operating expenses remain the same with no income coming in. PPE's, which we are purchasing have skyrocketed in price. When will this end? When can we re-open?

Cancellations of memberships keep coming in daily with no prospects of a meaningful re-opening. Please consider companies that are abiding by every restriction, training their staff with new protocols and purchasing all of the PPE's the keep staff and members safe.

Leah Heil
CEOREfinery
Lheil@refineyourself.com
217-202-5407

Sent from my iPad

STYLE & grace

SALON & DAY SPA

To whom it may concern,

My name is Tracy Brucks. I own Style and Grace Salon & Spa in Champaign Il. I am writing today to share with you the impact that COVID-19 has had on my business and my employees and communicate what my business needs to move forward to succeed.

My salon is considered full-service. This means I employ Massage therapists, Hair Stylists, Nail technicians, and Estheticians as well as several different types of support staff to fully serve our guests. Out of the 53 staff members I have hired, 31 of my staff are technicians and the remaining 22 are support staff. On March 19th, 2020 I closed my doors due to the rapid spreading of COVID-19 and remained closed for 70 days in an effort to keep my staff and clients healthy and safe. Two days later, Governor Pritzker mandated a state-wide closure.

My decision to close early allowed me to keep my management staff working for a period of time to reschedule the extraordinary number of clients spread across my 31 technicians and help me clean & maintain the salon building. Eventually, they had to be put on unemployment. When the order was extended for the second time, I only had the help of a single receptionist to move all our clients again, because she did not qualify for unemployment. Her support was very appreciated.

While we were closed, I spent most of my time trying to find answers for myself and my staff as to how we were going to open once the stay-at-home order was lifted, but there were significant delays in when I received any guidelines or information. Because of the lack of information, we originally expected to be open July 1st. When it was announced we could open on May 29th, we did not receive any guidelines or information until just five days before we were supposed to be open.

Just imagine having only *five days* to prepare for a reopening that required expensive PPE for all staff members, reorganization of our employee schedule to keep the salon capacity below the requirement, informing all of our clients of our new policies. How does anyone expect businesses to succeed with no guidance? It is clear to me that most of the businesses forced to closed did so because of the lack of communication from the government, the lack of funds to finance all of the expensive PPE equipment and the lack of foresight regarding the availability of that equipment, which caused PPE equipment to rise significantly in cost.

The burden on my staff was not just during the closure or even during the incredibly short time we were allowed to prepare for our opening, but also as we try to work through the rigid guidelines set to us. Because we all must wear masks for 8-12 hour shifts, staff are no longer able to take breaks in our breakroom and must do so outside in the Illinois summer heat. In order to meet demand and to make their pre-COVID living wage, staff members have to work several extra days because we cannot schedule as many clients for them during their normal work hours. Cleaning and sanitizing time, while a large part of our business prior to COVID-19, has been doubled, limiting the number of clients a technician can take in a single shift. Management staff cannot accomplish all of their business-related tasks because

STYLE *grace*

SALON & DAY SPA

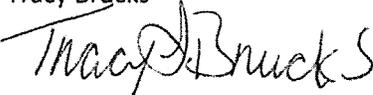
they are required to take staff and client temperatures to allow them access to the building. Front desk staff have had their workload doubled and coverage cut in half—social distancing requirements only allow two staff members at the desk at any time, when three is typical, phone call volume has increased, and calls to confirm appointments have lengthened greatly because they must go over screening questions and new check-in procedures.

Costs for the salon—PPE equipment, products, etc.—have only increased, while our capacity for business has decreased. We cannot serve as many clients; we have had to limit our services. This causes a great deal of stress on everyone who works at Style and Grace, and limits how we best serve our community.

We maintain a high level of sanitation procedures and PPE equipment including masks to limit the spread of COVID-19. CDC guidelines suggest that if a 6-foot distance cannot be maintained between people that masks are worn. Since everyone—staff and clients—who enter the building are all required to wear masks, social distancing guidelines in this case may not be as necessary as they would be if we did not require everyone to wear masks. Clients and staff are prescreened before coming into the salon, so limiting how many clients and staff are allow into the building on a single day is a significant financial burden on the business. If they are all prescreened and checked for a fever, there should not be a hard limit on the amount of people we are allowed to serve. Gloves, a massive expense for a staff of over 50 who see 200 clients *per day* (which amounts to over 1400 pairs of gloves per week) should not be *mandated* if proper handwashing and sanitizing techniques are followed. If these restrictions are to continue, monetary support or distribution of PPE products would help *without question*.

While we believe that restrictions should be loosened to lower operating costs and stress amongst the staff and management, we also acknowledge that this is a time of unprecedented change. If this is to continue, we need significantly better communication between the governmental bodies of the state of Illinois with small business owners such as myself. Guidelines should be clearly expressed with enough time to implement them without over-extension of the business. The lack of clear communication has placed both a mental and financial burden on my business and we have not felt the support of our local, state, or federal governments despite claims of aid. In order for Illinois' small business to succeed, we *must* have the support of the state during this time of crisis.

Tracy Brucks



Style and Grace Salon & Day Spa

3006 Crossing Ct, Champaign Il 61822,

217-355-0505

Tbrucks@StyleandGracecu.com

To Whom It May Concern,

Hello and thank you for allowing me to express my concern regarding the reopening of Illinois and Champaign County. My family owns Hudson Farm Weddings and Events on the south east side of Urbana IL. We originally had 30 weddings booked for 2020, but we are now down to 15. And with no clear language as to when we can reopen, I expect more reschedules and cancellations. With the current number of cancellations, reschedules, lost bar revenue and no new bookings, we are \$130k behind where we were projected to be at this time. That is over half our revenue. Please keeping in mind that is not profit, most of our revenue goes towards salaries, part time staff and paying down investment loans on the property. The PPP was a welcome bandaid but not a long term solution. Due to the halt in revenue our business cannot afford to refund our clients. We are now not only trying to make sure our business survives, but also cover basic living expenses. The longer these reopening phases are dragged out the more our clients look at us as the bad guy... Will the IL government repay me so I can repay my clients back for forcing them to cancel or reschedule? I highly doubt that. I've looked to see if there was an insurance policy that would cover us and our clients during a crisis or pandemic only to be told, "No, that type of policy would bankrupt the entire insurance industry overnight." We cannot keep going on like this. Can you imagine how disheartening it is to not only see our neighboring states open up but now our neighboring counties? In most cases it is back to business as usual with minor adjustments in social distancing. We (IL businesses) cannot survive a mandate of less than 10-50 people in our establishments. I can barely see how we could survive 50% occupancy. I urge the council and IL government to give the responsibility of reopening back to the people of IL. Give us the freedom to assess our own risk and to live with the responsibility of the decision we make from there. Allow businesses to reopen as they see fit in their community. Allow individuals to enter or not enter businesses, venues, parks, based on their own risk assessment. Urge anyone who might be at risk to stay home and/or see proper treatment. We have been compliant and are up to date with all of our taxes and licensing payments. If this continues I do see how we can justify paying the local or state taxes if we cannot open our doors to the community that will give us revenue to pay those taxes. I am not alone in this sentiment.

Reopen IL now!

Thank you,

Dan Hudson
General Manager
Hudson Farm Weddings and Events.

Madeline Herrman

From: Kendra Courson <kcourson1171@gmail.com>
Sent: Thursday, June 18, 2020 10:03 AM
To: Madeline Herrman
Subject: SAVE CHAMPAIGN COUNTY BUSINESSES!!!

Dear Madeline,

I write to ask you to consider saving Champaign County local businesses. COVID-19 has taken an extensive toll on so many businesses especially businesses within the event industry.

Event venues in the area have exhausted all efforts to find ways to keep employees paid, but in the end, in order to save their staff and their businesses, they have to be allowed to reopen very soon. Many event venues in Champaign Country are quite large and some include outdoor space so they would lend themselves well to the social distancing guidelines the State of Illinois has implemented. As an event director for over 20 years, I have witnessed the great care and detailed attention to best sanitary and food safety practices these venues have always incorporated. I know that venues like I Hotel and Pear Tree Estate will go above and beyond the minimum requirements to protect themselves, their staff and their guests if permitted to open by July.

Please know I have supported area businesses and restaurants in Champaign County during the past few months. As a Champaign County resident and tax payer I have felt it has been imperative to support the places that make our county one of the best in the state. My fear is that some of these premier event venues will permanently close if the county cannot allow them to open soon. And, without these places, I know this will drastically affect other businesses such as florists, disc jockeys, bands, food suppliers as well as local hotels and restaurants.

Please know that most of these businesses chose to purchase and/or build their venues in this county in order to serve their customers: mostly Champaign County residents. It is my strong hope that we can continue to have these businesses in our great county for many years to come. However, we need YOUR support in order to fulfill this goal.

Please consider reopening Champaign County businesses.

Thank you,
Kendra Courson
St. Joseph, IL

Madeline Herrman

From: Christy Camarca <christy@texturehome.net>
Sent: Wednesday, June 17, 2020 9:44 PM
To: Madeline Herrman
Subject: Please Help

My name is Christy Camarca and I own a home decor, home furnishings and gift shop in Champaign. We've been in business over five years. The forced closing of my business during the shelter in place order has affected my business in a significant way.

Compared to the same dates last year, our sales were down over 58% during April and 32% during May. I'd like to further qualify that by letting you know the first half of 2019 was down over 32% from 2018.

My greatest obstacle is rent. My landlords have allowed us to delay paying rent for April and May and to spread the balance over the next several months. As we are facing reduced business due to a damaged economy this arrangement is almost laughable.

A reduced rent would go a long way in allowing me to be able to keep my business open. Some kind of credit or tax reduction or something for my landlord who could pass the benefit to me in reduced rent would be very helpful.

Another thing I would ask for is financial incentives to encourage shopping locally.

Fortunately my business was able to open on May 29th. So many businesses remain closed or reduced. We need to move toward opening these businesses safely but as quickly as possible in Champaign County.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Christy

Christy Camarca, Owner/Designer of Texture Home
at Old Farm Shops, 1721 W Kirby Avenue, Champaign, IL 61821
Mon-Fri 10a-6p, Sat 10a-5p
[web](#) | [facebook](#) | 217.693.7070

June 18, 2020

To Whom It May Concern:

Please add The Original Pancake House at 1909 W Springfield Champaign, Illinois 61821
To the list of businesses that have been severely impacted by the shutdown. We employ and support
50 families and have lost over \$600,000 in sales. Businesses don't survive on 25 percent take out,
Businesses cannot pay their bills at 50 percent outside, businesses don't make a profit at 80 percent
Capacity, It's time to reopen

Sincerely

Eric Faulkner

Original Pancake House

217-352-8866

Madeline Herrman

From: christopher knight <swigapig@gmail.com>
Sent: Sunday, June 21, 2020 4:25 PM
To: Madeline Herrman
Cc: Blind Pig; Karen Thimke
Subject: Blind Pig Covid impact on the Blind Pig brewery.

Dear Madeline,

I attach below a couple of paragraphs about the effect the pandemic has had on our businesses.

"I own a bar, a brewpub and a brewery in downtown Champaign. I have been in business since 1990, and we are a core business in the City.

We were ordered to close our two retail outlets (the bar and the brewpub) on March 16. Although we were allowed to sell alcohol to take away, our income fell by about 90%.

I was successful in obtaining two SBA PPP loans for a total of about \$90,000. That sounds like a lot of money, but we spent that within a few weeks. Our income fell by about 90%, but our expenses did not fall by nearly as much.

I have applied for 5 other grant programs, and have been rejected each time. The odds are stacked so heavily against us that now I hardly think it is worth applying for any others. A good example is Governor Pritzker's Grant program for small business relief. We were one of over 12,000 applicants. It seems that the Governor only had sufficient funds for 700 businesses.

All my bartenders, who are hourly wage earners, signed on for unemployment benefit. We ran a Go Fund Me page for them and raised a few thousand dollars, which we distributed to them equally.

My 7 full time employees are now being paid out of my personal savings. I am not sure how long I will be able to carry on doing this.

Rent on our brewpub is now owing, and is 3 weeks late. I have been delaying payment as long as possible. We are managing to pay some of our smaller bills because we have been allowed to serve customers in our beer garden for the last 3 weeks, but our main bar on Walnut St only has limited outdoor seating and anyway we have not been able to open it because we do not have the staff. Fully 50% of our bartenders have declined to come back to work out of health concerns.

Our main packaging brewery has not been able to sell any kegged beer because no one is buying beer in kegs, since all restaurants and bars were closed for months. Even though some have started limited service this month, they are generally selling their existing inventory, and are not ordering any more beer.

It is hard to imagine a bleaker outlook."

May 19, 2020

Good evening Mr. Bennett,

I write you this evening as a very frustrated and very confused business owner in your district. I own the Longbranch Restaurant in Lerable.

I have no doubt the health department would not find any reason prohibiting me from opening if they came to inspect. I offer to work along with the health department and come together to get us open. Come in and inspect me. Sit down and listen to my plan with all the precautions we're going to take when we open. I don't know how they could have a problem with me after that. I have the cleanest kitchen in the county and I'm very proud of that fact and not many places serve more people in a week than we do. We work every shift to clean and keep things clean. Always have. Always will. The weekend before we were shutdown, we took the initiative and took out some tables, spread out the remaining tables, only took reservations, offered curbside pickup, removed our salad bar, used paper table coverings and paper menus discarded after each use, and continued to maintain our excellent sanitary standards. We would continue all and then some when we reopen.



We need the governor's help in getting our business open again. We vow to open safely. Please help us.

Nick Bohn
Longbranch Restaurant
nicb1313@hotmail.com
(815)383-0207

Indian Acres Swim Club

1 Arrow Rd, Champaign, IL 61821

Tel 217-352-9538

info@indianacresswimclub.org

www.indianacresswimclub.org



Hello,

Indian Acres Swim Club is a private swim club located behind Busey Bank on Prospect and Kirby Avenues at 1 Arrow Road in Champaign, IL. We opened in 1959. We have four pools and a three-acre private park. We offer seasonal memberships, day camp, swim team, water fitness, swim lessons, parties, and events. My husband and I have owned it since 2016 and we are currently in our 5th season. We are absolutely defeated and in a state of triage for our business.

With the recent update to pools opening for limited swimming and any other updates that will come out this summer about pools, sadly IA will not open for the 2020 season for the following reasons:

1. In an effort to be clean, safe, and ready to open, we have spent 75% of all fees and registrations paid into our invisible services up to this point. This is the hidden service you don't see but clearly feel in all programs once our doors open. This is our standard operating procedure for the last 60 years. We have drained 100% of our remaining balance in our bank account to give back the rest of the 25% in the form of refunds to everyone that chose us this year.
2. We are solely funded by all programs we provide (Day Camp, Memberships, Swim Team, Swim Lessons, Water Fitness, Parties and Events). When you see other places opening, they are funded by ongoing annual programming that is supporting the reopening of pools, and we do not have that same funding.
3. Just last week (June 1st) the state of Illinois revoked all pool licensure in the state of Illinois to then send out the new plan on June 5th. This whole experience has strung us on the end of a yo-yo for the last 3+ months. This was also the first time we have received information from the state without heavily seeking it out.
4. It is no longer fiscally responsible with the nearly daily-changing health information and restrictions. It jeopardizes all future seasons, as we are already in a precarious position of not being able to reopen.
5. Staff has been let go and have taken other positions for the summer.
6. We were able to secure a loan early on and this loan has to be repaid with the absence of funds coming in.

Overall, we are devastated with this entire situation. We truly believed we would be able to open and shared information as we would. The State gave us no information and quickly said no to our plan we presented in May that was more detailed than the plan just released for athletic and competitive swim. We are so sorry to disappoint our community during this situation and are now focusing all efforts on saving our Club. We are committed to coming back stronger than ever for our community. We are also fighting for IA every step of the way, as we have since March, and as we will for years to come.

We implore you to understand: We've had NO information from the IDPH until they denied our plan. We had no framework to understand why we were denied. Then we lost licensure. Now it is reinstated. Currently, information and restrictions are forthcoming. All of this is too late for IA to perform this year as it forced us to make decisions with 0 available information. We know we can't make everyone happy. We hate that we can only give 25% back. But it is all that we have left. We will entirely subsist off of the remaining PPP loan (which can only be used for utilities and rent) and donations. We have a full year to get through, as we know the decisions we have been forced to make have turned people away from us or entirely dampened early-season buying. We've had to take all of this into consideration during this tumultuous and changing time when we have no more

information than you during this pandemic. It isn't fair to our members or to us. This is an absolute impossible situation. We are left to handle and manage what we can. The risk is too high for us to open. There is no more money to open and also refund. We've chosen to take care of the people as best we can and offer everything we have left to our registrants. We are a business. At minimum we would have to break even. At this time, our business model doesn't support breaking even in this climate.

We employ 86 employees each year, most are youth from ages 15-20. Majority of our team are holding their first job with us. We provide 250 seats of childcare in our community. Now when people are back at work, our seats aren't available. Not even in a limited capacity. We are vital part of our community's ecosystem that has been utterly shut down due to local over restriction and overreach from our Governor.

We demand more representation with our politicians for small business' rights. We ask for more communication with our local health departments and the ability to uniquely handle each plan as individually as the businesses that submitted them. We ask for a fighting chance for our business to survive.

Regards,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Lauren Morenz".

Lauren Morenz

Owner-Operator

Madeline Herrman

From: Lauren Murray <murray.laurenanne@gmail.com>
Sent: Thursday, June 18, 2020 11:48 AM
To: Madeline Herrman
Subject: Letter to Reopen Illinois

Dear community leaders,

I understand that you have been dealt the difficult task of managing the COVID-19 regulations as handed down by Governor Pritzker. Three months ago, the entire nation was believed to be under siege by the deadly Coronavirus, COVID-19. The lack of known information regarding the virus caused panic and fear and the Federal government chose to shut down our country to "flatten the curve," which was an historic decision, but one that was necessary at the time and was worth the precautions until the situation was under control. We shuttered our businesses, we sheltered in our homes, we waited out the storm. We. Flattened. The. Curve.

The deceitful presentation of numbers to continue to instill fear in the people of Illinois is alarming, focus should be on the successful efforts of the people to flatten the curve, the low occupancy of hospitals and the successful recovery rate of those affected by COVID-19. It is not disrespectful to the families of those who have lost loved ones to COVID-19 to focus on the 98% recovery rate, of course that is devastating, but the counter effects of the Governor's unlawful orders are vastly worse. It is disrespectful to the at-risk populations that attention is misplaced on the 98% healthy population instead of those with pre-existing conditions and at-risk age groups. Focusing time and resources on shutting down small businesses, instead of facilitating healthier and safer practices for our senior living facilities and at-risk populations. To the detriment of these facilities, the efforts of our state has thrown up its' hands and shut the doors on everyone instead of making the state safer.

Governor Pritzker's All In campaign was sensible, for about a day. We are not all in this together. Government employees and lawmakers are still getting paychecks, while businesses are being unlawfully shut down and financially ruined forever. The education of our state's students is being sacrificed when actual science does not support children being at risk or posing a risk of transference. Schools should be focused on improving education and are instead tasked with alternating days, building cubicles for kids and managing classroom behavior that is already a strenuous task with the issues of America. Our kids will require years to make up what was lost at the end of last year and what will continue to be lost in the year to come as they try to recoup. Other counties and cities within Illinois are no longer following Governor Pritzker's arbitrary decisions and are opening for the good of their residents and the state.

The county and state are focused on fear and shouting the "Positive tests! Positive tests!" A small portion of the residents of Champaign County have been tested as of yesterday, I assume that low number is ...because people are not sick, not symptomatic, not adding to the war cry of "Positive tests! Positive tests!" unnecessarily. Yes it would have helped in March to test everyone and see exactly where the sick residents were located and quarantined them right away, but testing more people every day now and getting more positive tests, is not a shock, that's what happens when people get tested. The entire county of Champaign has low double digits of people hospitalized due to COVID-19, better yet possibly hospitalized and test positive for COVID-19, there is such a lack of accuracy. The rate of those tested actually being positive is going down, NOT up. The only curve that is not being "flattened" are the cases of recovery. No one is shouting 89.7% of the positive patients are recovered already and the other 9% that are still active are at home quarantining but don't require hospital care. The Champaign County death rate is .003815%. It is time to do better for the people of Champaign county. Thank them for doing their part. Give them the hope for a better tomorrow. Serve them as intended and maintain the values of promoting the wellbeing of Champaign County residents, instead of crushing them slowly with bankruptcy and loss.

We have lost loved ones, but couldn't mourn together because of the unlawful regulations, we have missed life celebrations that we will never get to experience again, we have spent precious time away from our elderly grandparents, family and friends because of these orders that are no longer valid. We will never get that time back and we were willing to accept that because it was for "the greater good," but the recent decisions by CUPHD and IDPH and the Governor's office are for no one's greater good. Allowing, condoning and participating in peaceful protests, while families mourn alone, while children are abused in their homes, while communities are being denied their right to congregate in churches, those decisions make a mockery of anything that was trying to be accomplished by the CUPHD and the city leaders. People should absolutely have the right to protest, the right to open their businesses, the right to go out and vote

and the right to live. Allowing shopping centers and stores to have hundreds of people without regulation but prohibiting celebrations of graduations, weddings and funerals does not make sense. Americans have rights that are now being infringed upon, not for the wellbeing of the people. It is time to use common sense to manage COVID-19.

I am begging you to make decisions in line with the values of Champaign County. There will continue to be fear and uncertainty, that is called life, but it is time to safely carry on and make decisions that provide equal rights to all of the people you serve. The risks of COVID-19 are better understood now. Citizens have the opportunity to stay at home, wear masks, carry hand sanitizer if they see fit. From the very beginning, science has said that the most critical component is to wash your hands with soap and water for 20 seconds before touching your eyes, mouth and nose. I believe in the people of Champaign County and the United States, that we can carry on with washing hands, disinfecting surfaces and staying at home when sick. Some elderly and very young people may not be able to control what goes into their mouth, on their hands or into their eyes, but the community as a whole is quite capable of making the decisions that will ultimately lead to their own health.

The phases implemented by Governor Pritzker are nonsensical. Creating different zones but then lumping Chicago into the same reopening day and phases as Champaign and counties with few deaths does not make any sense at all, and the other phases following suit with his unscientific approach. There is no science to back up his reasoning or lack of, he is doubling down on bad decisions instead of moving forward for the improvement of the state's condition. The data and Governor Pritzker's own benchmarks show that we should have moved on to phase four weeks ago.

Please be a leader in the community, in our state and in the nation for making choices for equal rights for all of us. I understand the sentiment better safe than sorry, but that is not relevant here. The states around us, even the counties around us, are putting their people first and opening. The irony in this situation is that the most stringent rules are being made for the food industry, of course the handling of food is important. To us in the food industry, it is the most important thing, 24 hours a day, every day of the year. When we discuss the future with our clients, there are almost no changes, because sanitation is the key to everything we do, promoting wellness and happiness is the key to everything we do.

We did not open a business because we wanted to risk our lives or the lives of those around us. We are smart, we are competent, we are diligent, we deserve to reopen and use all of that to make Champaign a better place to live.

We can't change what happened yesterday, but we can change tomorrow for the better for everyone. Reopen Champaign County. I have appreciated all you have done to save lives, we need you now to save the livelihoods and economy of Champaign County. The Governor is not serving us and he is not serving you.

Thank you in advance for your time and consideration. Please have mercy on us, we are watching our lives crumble before us.

Sincerely,

Lauren Murray Miller

217.841.4760

laurenlagourmetcatering@gmail.com

Co-owner LA Gourmet Catering

Co-owner Pear Tree Estate

Co-owner MSPM, LLC

flowers by kristine.

To Whom It May Concern:

As a wedding and event florist, my business has been significantly impacted by the COVID-19 closures. For many years, my income has come solely from my floral business and I have had essentially no income from the business for three months at the time of this letter.

I immediately got a low-wage job at a grocery store when it became clear that there would be no weddings for at least a couple months. I knew that I needed some kind of income to stay afloat. I work almost full time at the grocery store (they avoid giving full time hours to avoid paying benefits) My income from the grocery store is about \$1100/per month.

In addition, I have attempted to offer floral designs and floral bundles for sale for curbside pickup or \$5 delivery. Some weeks I have managed to sell all the product but many weeks I have not and have either barely broke even or actually lost money this way.

I have the design studio rent of \$700/month and a \$320/month payment for my cargo van that I use for deliveries. This is on top of my home rent and utilities, my car payment, student loan payments (student loans alone equal \$550/month), phone bill, food and other living expenses.

All this to say that I cannot continue to keep my design studio and my cargo van if the restrictions on event size continue for much longer. I have drained the money I had saved to only be able to pay for all my bills at this point. The \$1200 economic stimulus check, while much appreciated, only covered less than half of one month's bills.

If I have nowhere to design and no way to deliver the flowers I don't know what I am going to do.

I have worked so hard for eight years to grow this business from nothing and it would be absolutely devastating to lose it.

Normally I would have a fairly steady flow of new clients putting down their retainer deposits but with the current climate of uncertainty there have been almost no new clients reaching out at all. I don't blame them because no one knows what the future looks like in terms of what size of events we will be legally allowed to have and when.

I know as lawmakers your job is very difficult right now because of this completely unprecedented situation we are all in and the overall priority of everyone's health and well-being.

Wedding and Event Floral Design

flowers by kristine

Small wedding industry businesses and hopeful 2020 clients need to know when we can expect a return to full size events. If it is deemed safe to allow weddings of 200+ people in September or October that would be a saving grace to all of us who own small wedding businesses. But our 2020 clients would need to know that information by the end of July in order to feel comfortable keeping their fall dates and not reschedule due to uncertainty. With a timeline of not allowing full size events until 2021, I am sure many of us will close permanently, and I earnestly hope that is not the case for myself and my business.

Thank you for your time.

Kristine Evanson
(708) 508-5601
Kevanson@flowersbykristine.com

Wedding and Event Floral Design

June 17,2020

Attn: Champaign County Chamber of Commerce

To Whom It May Concern,

I am writing today, as a real estate broker, an independent contractor, self-employed amidst the COVID-19 pandemic we are all suffering from as a result of the lock-down on our economy for months now. I am beyond concerned for the well-being of how my business, along with countless other self-employed and other business owners are being severely impacted by continuing orders by OUR government, to remain shut-down and/or seriously restricted operational orders.

This CAN NOT, continue. It goes without saying, we know, the COVID-19 virus is present and dangerous to all. However, we were first asked to shelter-in-place for a matter of weeks, which has turned into months. Our area of the county and country, continues to demonstrate that we are not as seriously affected as other areas. We know the risks. We know we have to wear masks and practice social distancing. But we can NOT continue to not make a living unless the government also wants to stop bills, loans, etc., from coming in.

This is not the first serious health risk that has presented itself to the United States of America. And it won't be the last. I have friends and relatives that are also being severely impacted by the continuing orders, some of which have been completely shut down since the first order was made in March.

It is not up to the Governor, to make decisions for our livelihoods for an indefinite period of time. Taking all the risks into consideration and having the knowledge of what will keep us safe to practice normal business practices, should now be OUR decision, not the government.

IT IS TIME, to stand up as people of Illinois, people of Champaign County and have a voice to say, "enough is enough". Businesses or closing right and left and it is

going to get drastically worse, and soon, if the people are not listened to. We are NOT a hot spot in the country. Opening the entire state may not make sense, but what does NOT make sense is not allowing the areas that are very low in cases, to re-open. I am at a total loss that our Governor feels he can impose extreme restrictions on an entire state when our county and surrounding counties continue to report relatively low number of cases.

Is the pandemic serious? Yes. Is it risky? Yes. Are we under control? YES! However, we don't need to be told to stay home any longer. We've been given the information to make decisions that can be implemented and practiced no matter what the circumstances. The pandemic is a reality. The loss of life is a reality, and incredibly sad that many will not survive, but MORE will survive. We can't keep hiding in our houses because a threat is present. Historically, how many threats have been present and we haven't shut down our economy? The Governor is a billionaire along with countless other very wealthy people within our government, making decisions for people living paycheck to paycheck. The stimulus offered while appreciated to a degree, is insulting that the government even believes for a second that it really helped people beyond a few days or weeks.

PLEASE, listen to the people who ARE the government. We elected our government officials to represent our voices and our voices need to be heard, NOW.

Respectfully,

Brenda Keith
Real Estate Broker
2009 Fox Dr.
Champaign, IL 61820
217.841.4804
Self-Employed

June 18, 2020

To whom it may concern,

Picture this; you've just started the business you've always dreamed of and worked so incredibly hard to do so. You've spent countless hours researching zoning ordinances, building a website, learning all the ins and outs of running a business. Then, after months of crossing all the T's and dotting all the I's, you finally get approved and it all becomes such an exciting reality. From scheduling tours, to booking events that will celebrate life's many joyous occasions; this was it, this was the beginning to a new chapter in our story.

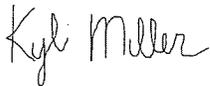
As the owners of Miller Farms Barn, my husband Arik and I have built this business from the ground up. We wanted to build an empire that we could call our own and make a life for ourselves. So we started our journey toward opening a barn wedding venue in November of 2018. We quickly realized that it was going to be a long, hard road ahead of us as neither of us really had much experience in the business world. After months of putting in the blood, sweat, and tears to make our dreams a reality, we were finally approved to open for business in February of 2019. We were ecstatic that we could finally start booking events and get our name out there to the public. In our first year of business we were lucky to have hosted 10 events.

Fast forward to 2020; our goal was to double the number of events we hosted and help celebrate with 20 more milestones. Unfortunately, these plans took a turn that we never expected and has tremendously affected our ability to operate as a small business. As a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, what would have been a successful second year of business, has now turned into a nightmare we cannot seem to wake up from. This business is more than just our livelihood, it's so much more. It's every one of our couple's hopes and dreams of having one of the best days of their lives ruined. It's the excitement

and joy of celebrating with loved ones being stripped from those we love. It's financially, emotionally, and physically draining. When we started this business we never thought that we would have to give shattering news that events would have to be cancelled or postponed because of restrictions on capacity. It has truly caused nothing but stress, heartbreak, and endless disappointment for everyone involved. That's not the business we went into, and for that we're joining efforts with other local small businesses and pleading for help. Help to get our economy, businesses, and communities back on track for success. It is with sincere hope that we can all come together to develop a more thoughtful and realistic plan for operating our business as a wedding venue. A plan that doesn't prohibit gatherings of more than 50 people, because in all reality, that is a very unrealistic ask for a wedding venue business. We're asking that for the sake of our business and others in our industry that weddings and other events be allowed to host gatherings with minimal limitations on guests. We are hopeful that we can all problem solve a better alternative in order for our industry to still conduct business rather than risk losing it all due to the current restrictions.

With all that being said, if no common ground is made, the fate of our business and many others could be terminal. We cannot continue to be successful with the current guidelines that have been set to restore Illinois if further action is not taken sooner than later. For further discussion you can contact my husband Arik at 217-841-7369 or myself at 217-898-4802. We want to thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,



Kyli Miller

Owner/Event Coordinator

Miller Farms Barn

Madeline Herrman

From: KIM THOMAS <kthmas5@aol.com>
Sent: Tuesday, June 16, 2020 4:58 PM
To: Madeline Herrman
Subject: Letter to open businesses

To whom it may concern:

My name is Kim Thomas and I am a 20 year owner of a small salon here in our small town of Fisher IL. that resides about 1700 people.

I have been a Cosmetologist for over 27 years and in that time I have worked hard to build my business,my trust,and my dedication in serving my community through my Salon. I have made people feel and look good on a daily basis weather it be for everyday,work,a special occasion,a sad occasion or for something that's just fun. I have kept my overhead low as to keep my prices low to be able to make a living and allow ALL people that chance to get their hair done affordably.

I give back to the community in different ways,I have given monetary donations or gift card donation to The Fisher High School Athletics, The Fisher High School post proms,The Fisher Little League,Cub Scouts,Girl Scouts,The Bunnie Classic, etc. and for this I am Proud.

On March 21st 2020 I was considered a "non essential" business and was made to close. Something in my life I NEVER thought I would see!

Although I feel blessed that I had savings to help me get through the almost 3 months I was off,it was still a scary time for me and every small business around.

I am a 1 employee business so the PPP didn't help me much and the small sba loan I received was helpful but the stress of being told to sign up for unemployment to then be told we had to wait for a new PUA system as to handle the overload of people applying was a nightmare at best.

1 week before I was able to go back to work I did FINALLY receive a deposit from the PUA.

I am now back to work, working trying to get as many people in that I can. It seemed busy but now has tapered off as I feel people are still scared to come out or just plainly can't afford to get their or their families hair done because they to have been considered non essential and aren't working and have no idea what the future holds.

So although I'm open, others still are not,keeping them from spending because they can't at this time.

This cycle will not stop until ALL businesses can open like other states have.
We are ALL hurting mentally,and financially.

I will have to say no to those that have relied on me for so many years to donate to them at this time until my business gets back to normal hurting them as well. Please take in to consideration our small businesses and owners of them that have given back to others a chance to do so again. Let us be open,Let us serve,let us work! Please Illinois-this State and our businesses NEED to open!

Sincerely,

Kim Thomas

Owner/operator:Kim's Hair Design

Sent from my iPhone

Madeline Herrman

From: Patti Murray <pattikeithmurray@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, June 15, 2020 11:03 AM
To: Madeline Herrman
Subject: Please Help Re-Open Champaign County

Good Afternoon:

We have waited patiently to help flatten the curve in Illinois. Our small businesses are at risk of staying closed. We cannot afford to stay on pause indefinitely. PPP loans have not come close to covering our basic overhead.

A timetable needs to be in place immediately to help our clients plan for their future celebrations. Our vendors need to know when their business can resume. There is more than a little concern that we can re-open or our vendors if this continues.

Please help us open our wonderful county back up!

Thank you for your time,

Patti Keith Murray

Madeline Herrman

From: MaryKay Roney <mkmroney@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, June 17, 2020 11:00 AM
To: Madeline Herrman
Subject: Impact Story COVID-19

Dear Madeline,

I am the owner of Mary Kay's Holistic Beauty. I am a single esthetician in Savoy, and I have had my business in the Senator's Inn for 12+ years. I have supported my family exclusively, on my own, as a single mother with my business.

Covid-19 impact:

I was shut down for 10 weeks. I will be 61 this September. So instead of earning money and saving for retirement like I have been, I used my savings and even borrowed money from my 89 year old mother. I had my college daughter move home (a senior at Bradley University) to do her studies on line as well as another daughter who is going to Parkland Community College. So I was trying to provide for a family of 3 adults with no income coming in--just savings and borrowed money. I applied to unemployment and finally did get it the first week of June!

Psychologically this was hard too. I've always been a very hard worker and it was taken from me in a snap. I was depressed.

Moving forward, because the Corona scare was so much, I do not have the number of people I use to have because they were/still are so scared of virus portrayed by the media--some may never leave their house again. Besides not making as much money as I use to, I now have added expenses: no contact thermometer, air filter, sanitation supplies, etc.

It's easy to quote "lives or livelihood" when you haven't lost your livelihood. Thank you for whatever you can do to help us.

Respectfully,

Mary Kay Roney
Owner
Mary Kay's Holistic Beauty
www.mkhbeauty.com

Dear fellow legislators,

As a wedding vendor, my income has been decreased to zero due to the mandated state closures. I have worked tirelessly with couples to help reschedule and or cancel their weddings. Not only is there no income coming in, I am also, out of generosity, refunding my contracted couples their deposits, therefor sacrificing even more potential income. My wedding business provides supplemental income for my family. This decline in supplemental income has definitely caused stress and depression for my wife and I.

Taking the next step to quickly open the state or specific counties would benefit my family both mentally and financially. I would feel the same would go for all of those couples who are having to cancel their weddings and take on all of the expenses that cannot be refunded.

Any help with speeding up the process of opening up our state or county would be greatly appreciated forever.

Sincerely,
Clint McGraw
Party On Productions
Champaign County, Illinois

Madeline Herrman

From: chris murray <murrayseed1@gmail.com>
Sent: Thursday, June 18, 2020 10:27 AM
To: Madeline Herrman
Subject: reopen champaign

Champaign county is a unique place to have a business. If Champaign county doesn't have students back on campus this fall our town turns into Danville or Rantoul. I have rental properties that will not have occupants if we don't have students back in our community. Champaign Urbana has been blanketed by some of Illinois economic problems due to the constant influx of business that the university brings into town. If you drive down Neil street or prospect avenue in the last 10 years you are always backed up in traffic. This is not a bad thing I welcome people coming and spending money in our town. That is not the case with the current guidelines that have trampled our community. People want to go out but are strongly hindered because of current guidelines.

I think we all know covid is a bad thing that has affected a lot of people in New York and Chicago and some other hot spots. Not all areas are the same I have talked to thousands of people about this topic and I have met one person that knows someone that has had covid and they live in Dallas. Why are we crushing local business that have built business in our communities for a disease that with some good management and social smart social distance practices could be opening up to the public. The Phase 4 guidelines are to slow we are not a hot spot our hospitals aren't overrun. There should be faster time intervals in between phases, 14 days is long enough we should be in line with surrounding states.

Please open up so we can have the Champaign Urbana we love not the ghost town that I see in the horizon if we don't open

Sincerely
Chris Murray

Sent from [Mail](#) for Windows 10

Madeline Herrman

From: Alice Murray <alice@alicemurray.com>
Sent: Thursday, June 18, 2020 11:29 AM
To: Madeline Herrman
Subject: Re-open downstate IL businesses!

Importance: High

To all Illinois legislators, political leaders, government leaders — *(anyone who can impact change and who listens)*

Thank you for having the best interest of Illinois people in your heart and mind as you make life-changing decisions on their/our behalf! While Chicago is in Illinois, it should not be the only consideration of Illinois Covid policy.

Downstate Illinois, like us in Champaign County, with only 10 Covid-related deaths as of yesterday, is suffering horrific economic hardship. I am a land owner in Champaign County and beseech you to let the good people of Champaign County re-open their businesses! We are very smart and compassionate people and can be trusted to protect our customers with best practices to fight coronavirus spread.

You have every reason to give relief to downstate Illinois, especially Champaign County! I beg and plead you to do the right thing — soon!

Sincerely,

ALICE MURRAY
214.616.3203

Madeline Herrman

From: John Bambenek <jcb@bambenekconsulting.com>
Sent: Monday, June 15, 2020 3:46 PM
To: Madeline Herrman
Subject: Small Business Letter

John Bambenek
Bambenek Consulting, LTD
313 N Mattis Ave, Suite 113A
Champaign, IL 61821
217-493-0760

June 15, 2020

To Whom It May Concern-

I'm writing this letter to describe the impact the Covid-related measures have had on my business and will continue to have on my business in the future. While I'm an "essential business" that has kept operating during this time, I still sell cybersecurity services to other businesses who are even more directly impacted by these measures. This year I had planned to grow extensively and hire more staff to keep up with demand. I've put those plans on hold as I cannot forecast what my revenue will be or not be going forward.

Many businesses I am selling to or are current clients are most significantly impacted by the uncertainty so they are deferring as many expenditures as possible. I've seen this in sales that have been deferred and opportunities that were once warm have been permanently closed. Like myself, many businesses simply cannot forecast into the future what the current economic status will be and have opted to take an extremely conservative approach. I want to point out that I deal with companies that are small all the way up to Fortune 50 firms and the experience has been the same. The measures we have taken to fight Covid-19 are unprecedented and the duration those measures will be in place is unclear. It is also unclear to what extent these measures will come back in the fall or later in the year.

Customers that require a physical presence (retail, restaurants, hospitality) are clearly not in a good way. However, industries that are not considered high-risk (technology firms perfectly able to operate purely remotely) are still impacted. I know in my case, beyond the increased difficulty in acquiring and maintaining customers, I have also deferred and limited expenses most of which would be growing my firm. I started this year looking at doubling my staff (at least) and right now I'm hoarding cash to weather a storm of uncertain duration. This is to say nothing that many things are more expensive now due to Covid-19 related impacts.

The biggest problem in forecasting is the shifting ground on which government is making decisions. Originally, the goal was to flatten the curve. Now, measures seem to be in place permanently until society is vaccinated from Covid-19. There is a degree of arbitrariness to decisions. No gathering of over 10 people is allowed (under Phase 3 guidelines) but protests are allowed. I cannot run my business when the conditions on which I must do so are on shifting and unclear ground. Neither can my customers or partners. Neighboring states having different guidelines also complicate matters. Even different counties seem to be operating on different rules. As much as it is states decisions are based on "science", there is little transparency on that science, what the objectives are, and how measures being implemented or changes are driven by that science.

Lastly, it seems the impacts of the pandemic that are being tracked are quite narrow. While it is important to track hospitalizations, ICU capacity, and infection counts, there are a great deal more impacts that can and should be tracked to provide more balanced and robust information to decision-makers and the public. Several of my partners, for

instance, cannot rehire staff because their workers are making more on unemployment than what their wages would provide. These means some services are either unavailable or more expensive than they would be otherwise based on incentives the government itself created.

In closing, more predictability, greater transparency in data and decisions, and more broad data tracking are essential so that I can adequately forecast the future to make decisions on how to grow my business.

Sincerely,
John Bambenek

Madeline Herrman

From: Tom Swigart <t.swigart@mchsi.com>
Sent: Wednesday, June 17, 2020 4:52 PM
To: Madeline Herrman
Subject: Reopen Illinois

Sent from my iPhone

Dear Madeline,

I write to ask you to consider saving our local businesses in Champaign County. COVID-19 has taken a considerable toll on so many businesses including our own business: Monicals Pizza in Tolono, . Since COVID 19 first closed our dining room in March, our take out/delivery service combined with the great loyalty of our customers has helped us keep our business running and our employees employed. That said, we have not been able to serve large groups in our dining room including rehearsal dinners, birthday and anniversary celebrations along with our normal dine in customers. Not having our dining room open has drastically affected our business, our income, and our lively hood not to mention the livelihood of our servers, kitchen staff and building service workers who clean the restaurant.

We have watched area businesses from outside Champaign County slowly and safely reopen and have much success. Just a few miles from our restaurant, we have witnessed and personally supported other restaurants who have been able to reopen. We desire to be treated the same way as other restaurants in counties that have safely reopened so we can continue to serve the good people of Champaign County.

Please know that we chose to purchase this restaurant in this county 25 years ago in order to serve our customers: mostly Champaign County residents. It is our goal and our strong hope that we can continue to have this business until we retire. However, we need YOUR support in order to fulfill our goal.

Please consider reopening Champaign County businesses this month.

Thank you,
Tom and Beth Swigart
Owners
Tolono Monicals Pizza

Madeline Herrman

From: Murray, Jack <jack.murray@plantpioneer.com>
Sent: Thursday, June 18, 2020 2:00 PM
To: Madeline Herrman
Subject: Please help open champaign county

I'm writing to ask for your help in reopening Champaign county to save its businesses from going under. We have a seed and agronomy business that has not been closed because farming is considered an essential business, but we have customers that are so paranoid they will not come on our business because of the states guidelines. There have been so much false information about what is safe and our health department seems content to never reopen the county. We need to get to 50% on August 1st. Farmers are under enough pressure with this farming season and the suicide rate among farmers has risen dramatically. Please help us keep our rural businesses healthy as well as their clients. We are not Chicago and should not be lumped in with them. Thank you for your help. Jack Murray 217-202-8408
snowmurray@aol.com

Sent from my iPhone

Madeline Herrman

From: Greg Bugbee <greg@bugbeesdjplus.com>
Sent: Monday, June 15, 2020 9:02 AM
To: Madeline Herrman
Subject: Bugbee's DJ Plus (Champaign based business)

Madeline,

On behalf of Bugbee's DJ, we ask that you send our request to re open local business.

This shot down has cost us 7 months of revenue lost, we have spent painstaking hours and still are, re-scheduling very discouraged couples weddings.

We are not only losing this years business, but next year's as well will couples reserving future dates, and we reduced our advertising to cut costs.

This shut down if it continues could close us for good. We have reduced as much costs as we can, and have had to borrow money to keep things going. We were happy to follow guidelines for a short time in the interest of public health, but it is now time to re open.

This is not only hurting us, but will be bad for Champaign in general as we business owners that draw people to our events, and we provide work spend local dollars which are at present not being spent. My wife and I alone usually spend hundreds of dollars monthly in local Champaign, and that has not been happening since March.

People are ready to get back to life, and will find a way if the county remains shut down.

We have had 5 weddings move to other counties, and invite us to serve them if this is not lifted in Champaign. We are glad to serve them if that is the measure they have to take because Champaign County continues to keep us closed.

Bugbee's DJ has been in business for 35 years. 21 of them in the Champaign market. The last 8 years in a row we have been named best of Champaign. With Indiana border only 10 miles from where I live, and they have re opened, I have begun investigating moving our operation, and myself to Indiana.

I've been very disappointed with how small business has been handled in this situation. For us it must open soon or we close for good in Illinois.

Thank you

Greg Bugbee

Sent from Yahoo Mail on Android

6/15/2020

Champaign County Chamber of Commerce,

Thank you for serving the County. I am a landowner in Champaign County and my family has lived in the County for 150 years. I am asking you to represent your constituents that care about the future of the community. Please vote to open up Champaign County so that the small businesses may compete on a level playing field with businesses in neighboring counties. Tax payers need to be given the chance to make a living, people who are concerned about their health may continue to shelter in place. Competent people can transact business in a safe manner, please trust the business owners will be safe and give them the opportunity to operate.

Regards,

Tom Murray

Phone 256-460-2183

Email tmurray@sunshinemills.com

6/15/2020

Champaign County Chamber of Commerce,

Thank you for serving the County. I am a landowner in Champaign County and my family has lived in the County for 150 years. I am asking you to represent your constituents that care about the future of the community. Please vote to open up Champaign County so that the small businesses may compete on a level playing field with businesses in neighboring counties.

Thank you,
Jane E. Murray
jane@taylorisdallas.com
214-914-1280

6/15/2020

Champaign County Chamber of Commerce,

Thank you for serving the County. I am a landowner in Champaign County and my family has lived in the County for 150 years. I am asking you to represent your constituents that care about the future of the community. Please vote to open up Champaign County so that the small businesses may compete on a level playing field with businesses in neighboring counties. Tax payers need to be given the chance to make a living, people who are concerned about their health may continue to shelter in place. Competent people can transact business in a safe manner, please trust the business owners will be safe and give them the opportunity to operate.

Regards,
Mary Taylor
Phone 214.215.1099
Email Mary@AccessbyMMT.Com

Madeline Herrman

From: Kevin Buskirk <kbuz132@hotmail.com>
Sent: Monday, June 15, 2020 9:56 PM
To: Madeline Herrman
Subject: business

this is Kevin Buskirk owner of Country Squire Cleaners in Champaign the store opened in 1967 but if businesses don't start back up I really don't know how much longer we can stay open. It's a shame that after over 50 years in business we may have to close because of the actions of the government.

Kevin Buskirk

Madeline Herrman

From: Robin Christian <robindreamscape@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, June 17, 2020 3:54 PM
To: Madeline Herrman
Subject: re: Your Voice is Needed

Hi.

I appreciate the Chamber taking an interest in our thoughts on this subject.

As Champaign County's oldest advertising and visual firm (1989), we have certainly been hurt by COVID-19.

Just as 2009, when businesses cut their marketing budget, we have all clients on hold on all video productions.

It is a shame to see our studio and 360° greenscreen room closed, with no end in sight.

I am surprised that no companies have asked us to make videos about Safety during this crisis.

Thanks again for listening, and we pray that things will open up and never close again.

Best,

Robin Christian
www.Dreamscapedesign.com
403 S Water st, Champaign
217-359-8494

Dream of tomorrow and all the things we will do

Madeline Herrman

From: Batchelor Landscaping <batchelorlandscaping@gmail.com>
Sent: Thursday, June 18, 2020 6:28 PM
To: Madeline Herrman
Subject: Letter From Businesses

To the Champaign County Chamber of Commerce and Illinois Legislators,

Thank you for taking the time to read and hear our concerns. We desperately need your help to turn our community around. In the United States of America, we have gone through many pandemics, wars, and tragedies and there will no doubt be many more. We cannot afford to and should not allow this to be the bar for where we remove basic constitutional rights and destroy the economy we've all worked to build. We completely understand why we needed to slow the spread in the beginning and we were on board to "flatten the curve." However, after a few weeks it became apparent that we were not only going to do that, but we were going to draw this out until a vaccine was available. We have a flu vaccine that is readily available and yet it does not prevent 100% of deaths. Sometimes, the effectiveness of the flu vaccine has been as low as 9% in previous years. WHO estimates that it kills between 290,000 to 650,000 people per year with a vaccine. Who knows how bad it would be without one. And yet, we've never shut the world down like this before.

We are waiting for a miracle cure that may never happen. There are many scientists who have been trying to make an effective coronavirus vaccine for years and have been unsuccessful. Earlier this week, England's deputy chief medical officer Jonathan Van-Tam said the words nobody wanted to hear: "We can't be sure we will get a vaccine."
<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2020/may/22/why-we-might-not-get-a-coronavirus-vaccine>

If we do not open now, we are sacrificing the very businesses, employees, and self-employed families who make Illinois a viable economy. This is not ok!! Our business has lost several large accounts and planned projects for this year due to closed businesses and personal financial instability with residential customers. We have been able to work throughout the pandemic, but with only 50% staffing. We have found that many of our customers are feeling very unsure of the future and spend their money much more sparingly than before. Some businesses are doing extremely well during this time, but I think that is the exception. We are all feeling the financial impact and I think it will only get worse if we do not change course soon.

I understand that people are concerned for the safety and well-being of every person in our county, state, and country. Many people are afraid of death and disease for themselves and loved ones. I do not want anyone to get sick or die. I do not want anyone to lose their homes or businesses. I do not want anyone to go hungry or starve to death. I do not want children to be neglected or domestic abuse to flourish. I do not want people to go without medical care, treatments, and therapy. I do not want suicide, addictions, and mental health problems to rise. This is much bigger than defeating a virus.

I believe that as adults, we should be free to access the health risks and make choices for ourselves and our families. We do not need the government to make those decisions for us. We can navigate employment, business, shopping, appointments, and more with as much precaution as needed to keep ourselves safe. If I was immunocompromised, I would self-quarantine during this time, as well as during the entire flu season. I would have my groceries delivered and not go out in public at all. I support encouraging people to quarantine if they are concerned about their own health or a loved one's health. But I am not immunocompromised, rather I am completely healthy. Healthy people should be allowed to continue to work and operate their businesses! The CDC has now updated their mortality rate and found that the overall rate is probably closer to .2-.4%. The data shows that the rate for those 0-49 years old is .05%. More research is now showing that a staggering percentage of deaths are occurring in nursing homes and long-term care facilities. The CDC has also said, "Though it's "possible" that COVID-19 spreads in other ways besides person-to-person contact, including from touching surfaces or objects and then touching the mouth, nose or eyes or between

animals and people, these are not thought to be the main routes of transmission." We are not seeing the amount of cases or death that Chicago has seen. We need to take all of this into consideration before applying such large scale requirements to an entire state. People are going to get sick and some will die, but now that we know more about this virus it is not logical to continue shuttering our local economy. There is much more at stake here and I think we need to take a serious look at how this is being handled. Please set the political agendas aside, look deeper into the facts, look beyond the media bias, ask difficult questions, and open your heart to all of the people who are suffering in many other ways during this time. It doesn't have to be this way. We love Illinois and we love the people who live here. We need a change NOW. Please help us and stand with us!

Thank you,
Anthony and Amy Batchelor

--

Anthony and Amy Batchelor
Batchelor Landscaping
Office: 217-480-5450 | 217-480-5451
batchelorlandscaping@gmail.com
www.batchelorlandscaping.com