

Good afternoon,

The last month has been tumultuous to say the least. We have been working with a number of restaurant owners and managers to navigate the current state of affairs. With that, I wanted to share a few updates.

### **Business Relief Grants Available**

The Chamber team worked with Routt County to secure additional CARES Act funds for a business relief grant program with \$661,000 in total for for-profit businesses. [Applications](#) for up to \$15,000 per business are now open and I encourage you all to apply. We kept the application very simple so it should not take long. Restaurants and bars will get additional points in the scoring matrix. The deadline is quick in an effort to get these funds out to businesses ASAP along with use requirements of the CARES Act dollars. [More information.](#)

### **Employee Assistance**

Regarding employee assistance, there are local and state resources available and we will continue to push for more as well. Please [visit this page](#) on our site where we have summarized resources for individuals. Note two additional rent support programs at the state level under housing assistance. Also note the link in the Routt County Assistance Options section that will walk individuals through resources.

### **5-Star Program**

CDPHE is considering a [statewide certification program](#), referred to as the 5-Star program, that would allow businesses to open/operate if they meet certain COVID-19 safety guidelines. Approved businesses would be able to operate a level below their spot on the dial. Details are still in discussion and CDPHE is seeking input on such a program through **TODAY, Dec. 4.**

Please [complete the Five Star CDPHE survey](#) and express your support by EOB TODAY.

### **State Legislation Updates via CRA**

Special Session Senate Bill 001 will provide \$37 million for direct relief to small businesses located in a county or other local government that is subject to, and in compliance with, severe capacity restrictions. This aid is meant specifically for restaurants, bars, movie theaters, and gyms. Depending on 2019 receipts, restaurants could be eligible for funds ranging from \$3,500-\$7,000. The state would also waive all fees associated with retail food and liquor license renewals for one year. [This bill passed the legislature and is awaiting the Governor's signature.](#) If allocated to Routt County, restaurateurs would be able to apply for these grant funds starting early January. Money will be distributed by February 12, 2021.

The bill would also provide state funding to the state LED and CDPHE in lieu of those agencies charging annual licensing fees to retail food establishments. **If you have received an invoice from your local health department for your 2021 retail food license, do not pay it. If you already have paid it, you will be refunded.** CDPHE and the local health departments are working on the process of informing restaurants and refunding those who have paid. CRA has contacted LED about your liquor licenses, but has yet to hear how this should be handled. For now, they recommend that you proceed like business as usual and pay your renewal.

### **State Sales Tax Relief**

[Special Session House Bill 1004 Qualified Retailer Retain Sales Tax For Assistance](#) would allow specific businesses (including restaurants) to keep a portion of the state sales tax they collect.

If this bill is signed into law, qualified businesses will be allowed to keep up to \$2,000 a month of the state sales tax they collect for the months of November and December of 2020 and January and February of 2021. This allowance is capped at 5 locations per tax ID. [This bill passed the legislature and is awaiting the Governor's signature.](#)

### **Additional Industry Support**

The Chamber Board and many others in the community are working to further support the restaurant industry. Through numerous meetings, we culled a list of creative concepts. From there, we worked with restaurant representatives to prioritize. For the business support, the top priorities are restaurant gift cards purchases and additional funding support to offset expenses such as rent/ mortgage, propane and to-go ware. For employee support, the top priorities have been identified as rent/mortgage assistance, grocery assistance, and mental health. Reminder on the above linked resources for individual support and we will keep you posted on further resources that are made available. We will focus on these priorities and share them with others looking to help.

### **Local Banks**

In a recent meeting, a local bank president wanted to be sure we encouraged restaurant owners to reach out to their local bank ASAP for support through furloughs/layoffs, business closures, etc. Please reach out if you need a contact at a local bank to shift to for more personalized support.

### **Mountain Area Public Consumption**

A few restaurant representatives as well as City and Chamber staff have been working on a proposal to City Council to allow public consumption in certain areas including the base area and Wildhorse. Council will review this proposal along with an emergency ordinance on Tuesday, Dec. 8. The hope is Council will approve and the ordinance will go into effect within days following. As a reminder, the downtown public consumption ordinance was extended through April 30, 2021.

### **Online Listings**

The Chamber team has gathered a list of all open restaurants offering curbside service, takeout, and delivery. We will continually update this list to provide the most accurate and up to date information. Please send your updates to [Sarah Konopka](#).

Apologies for the lengthy email. As always, please reach out to myself, Nick or Mark if we can be of further assistance.

Kara