



Commerce Connection

Business Is Good

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April 2020

COVID-19 Resources for Businesses



COVID-19 Resources for Businesses

The Vermont Chamber regularly updates its [COVID-19 Resources Page](#) with any business closures or social distancing and gathering restrictions as they are issued by Vermont and federal authorities. The

Resources Page is updated each weekday with new assistance available to businesses, and it's updated over each weekend with major changes, such as the ordered closure of close-contact businesses.

At the [Vermont Department of Health COVID-19 website](#) businesses can find alerts, information and Vermont's response to COVID-19.

Department of Labor Hosts Virtual Town Halls

In response to the impact of COVID-19, the Vermont Department of Labor (VDoL) is hosting two virtual town halls this week to offer resources and guidance to employers and self-employed workers.



Tuesday, April 7: *Resources for the Self-Employed*

- Time: 2:00pm – 3:00pm
- Overview: Resources available for self-employed or independent contractors and process they should take to apply for unemployment insurance benefits.
- Speakers: Michael Harrington (Interim Commissioner), Joan Goldstein (Commissioner, Department of Economic Development) and Cameron Wood (Director, Unemployment Insurance)
- Online Link: bit.ly/VTLaborTownHall_April7

Thursday, April 9: *Employer Services and Rapid Response*

- Time: 2:00pm-3:00pm
- Overview: Description of step-by-step process for employers that feel they may need to lay off employees, such as steps to take, who to notify and work with, as well as what to do when and if they are looking to hire.
- Speakers: Cameron Wood (Director, Unemployment Insurance), Cindy Robillard (Business Services Manager), and Dirk Anderson (General Counsel)
- Online Link: bit.ly/VTLaborTownHall_April9

Previous events can be viewed on the [Department's YouTube Channel](#).



Vermont Chamber in Action

We continue to dedicate 100% of staff time to assist businesses with navigating the economic impact of the crisis. The work includes regularly updating our [COVID-19 Resources Page](#), updating our blog, [How Vermont Businesses Are Helping our Communities](#), providing legislative updates

that impact businesses, hosting a virtual Tourism Town Hall with Congressman Peter Welch, and disseminating a survey on COVID-19 impact on the manufacturing industry, as well as the business [impact survey](#) from the Agency of Commerce and Community Development.

We helped lead the #dont86us social media campaign that rallied Vermont restaurants and businesses with a call to action asking Gov. Scott for relief from the February and March Meals and Rooms tax payment, which was successful. The Vermont Chamber also sent a [letter](#) to Governor Scott urging tax relief for

restaurants. Our statement on the Governor's recent lodging guidance has been picked up by [news outlets](#).

We have been out front with local reporters on various topics related to COVID-19 and business including our [campaign urging immediate action to support Vermont's restaurants](#), the [Chamber's work to mitigate the impact](#) of COVID-19 on Vermont businesses, and [Vermont manufacturer's retooling to make personal protective gear and supplies](#).

Vermont Chamber Hosts Tourism Town Hall with Congressman Welch



Congressman Peter Welch heard from over 150 tourism businesses during a remote Vermont Chamber Tourism Town Hall on how COVID-19 is affecting Vermont's tourism sector. The Town Hall was an opportunity for tourism businesses to further Congressman Welch's understanding of COVID-19's impact on the sector, share ideas, and help shape what future assistance might look like. Rep. Welch thoughtfully responded to questions submitted by registrants and committed to taking the issues and ideas back to Congress.

The industry asked Congressman Welch to help them with grant funding rather than loans to help them re-open and re-hire once the Stay Home, Stay Safe order is lifted. Funding tourism promotion during the recovery, addressing the disincentive to return to work in the new unemployment insurance law, and speeding up the access to SBA loans were other issues discussed.

Listen to a full [recording of the Town Hall](#) or contact [Amy Spear](#) with concerns.



Lodging Industry Receives Additional Guidance on Bookings

Governor Scott issued additional guidance on the acceptable continuation of lodging operations which clarified that lodging may only be provided to individuals supporting the state's COVID-19

response, those maintaining critical infrastructure, vulnerable populations including homeless individuals, and as quarantine facilities as arranged by the State. All online reservations have been ordered temporarily suspended. Reservations for currently permitted guests should be conducted by phone. The Vermont Chamber issued a [statement](#) in response to the Administration's guidance. Lodging properties that do not comply may be subject to fines or penalties as [outlined by the Attorney General](#).

State officials are having a particularly difficult time accounting for guests staying at short-term rentals (STRs), as no comprehensive registry exists for STRs in Vermont. The Vermont Chamber has long called for such a registry to facilitate consistency between STRs and traditional lodging establishments.

If you have questions about executive order impacts on your lodging establishment, please contact [Amy Spear](#).

Vermont Chamber COVID-19 Manufacturing Survey for Personal Protective Equipment



The Vermont State Emergency Operations Center has put a call out to Vermont manufacturers that can transition their operations to aid in the production of personal protective equipment (PPE) for the COVID-19 response, or donate such supplies. There is an urgent need for non-medical masks to free up compliant medical masks for health care workers on the front lines.

Your input will help us, in partnership with our state and federal partners, combat the pandemic as we collectively navigate a new economic landscape.

Thank you for your time in completing this quick survey.

[Take the Survey](#)



How Vermont Businesses Are Helping Communities

Despite the significant economic hardship that thousands of statewide businesses and their employees and families are facing due to COVID-19, many Vermont businesses have demonstrated flexibility, innovation, and care for their communities. [Distilleries are retooling production](#) to make hand sanitizer for health care workers and others in need.

Generator is prototyping, testing, and planning for the [production of personal protection equipment](#) (PPE) including face shields, N95 masks, and ventilators in response to requests from UVM Medical Center.

Additional ways in which Vermont businesses are serving their communities can be found on the Vermont Chamber page [How Vermont Businesses Are Helping Our Communities](#).

The Governor has called for Vermont businesses and Vermonters to volunteer if they are able. There is an [online form](#) to identify skills and availability.

THANK YOU



Thank you to Vermont's health care workers, public health officials, grocery and food supply workers, educators, custodial workers, and so many others, working hard to serve our state.



Hire A Vet Medallion Award Program

The U.S. Department of Labor's 2020 HIRE Vets Medallion Award Program is the only federal-level veteran's employment award that recognizes employers for their investments in recruiting, employing, and retaining our nation's veterans. The award is based on a number of criteria, including veteran hiring and retention, leadership programming, dedicated human resources, and tuition assistance programs. Award recipients receive a certificate and digital images of the medallion to use as part their promotional efforts.

The application period is open through **April 30th**. For more information, visit HireVets.gov or email [Mark Audy](mailto:Mark.Audy).

2020 Census

As mandated by the U.S. Constitution, every ten years the U.S. Census Bureau must conduct a confidential count of all people residing in the United States. As with each census, the results of the [2020 Census](#) will be used to determine for each state the number of seats in the U.S. House of Representatives, the legislative districts, and the amount of federal taxpayer dollars returned to states through federal grants and programs.

In November, Governor Scott formed the [Vermont 2020 Complete Count Committee](#) charged with ensuring a complete and accurate count of Vermont's population in the upcoming 2020 Census.





Member Spotlight

This month's Member Spotlight is [Advanced Machine & Tool Company](#), a Milton-based manufacturer that has been in business for over 30 years. AMT is committed to manufacturing top-quality products designed to meet the needs of aerospace, commercial, and defense industries. The company provides excellent craftsmanship to clients across the U.S. and around the globe from their state-of-the-art 12,000 square foot facility.

Welcome New Chamber Members

This month we welcome:

[Tuttle Printing & Engraving](#)

Chamber members are listed on the [Vermont Chamber Directory](#) online, which gets 55,000 unique views a year.

#LetsGrowVT

[Birnn Chocolates of Vermont Recognized as Top Confectioner in U.S.](#)

[Superior Technical Ceramics Receives Prestigious Excellence Award](#)

[Sugarbush Resort Announces Wall of Fame Class of 2020](#)

[Stratton Announces \\$10 Million in Capital Improvements](#)

[GW Plastics Launches 4th Expansion of GW Silicones](#)

This section features news about growing Vermont companies.
Email news@vtchamber.com with your good news.

In Other News

[State Officials Release COVID-19 Modeling Data](#)

[Manufactures Switch Gears to Make Protective Gear](#)

[Amy Spear: New Guidance for Lodging Industry](#)

[First Light Ramps Up Production of Disinfecting UV Lamps](#)

Save the Date

[Manufacturing Summit - Sept. 3](#)

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