

ANSWERS TO REMAINING QUESTIONS FROM COMMUNITY COFFEE – APRIL 30, 2020

1. With unemployment recipients receiving an extra \$600 per week through the end of July, what is the plan to ensure housekeepers, waitstaff, dishwashers, and others will actually come back to work before then?

Ken Brengle: I don't know of a way to ensure that the employees will come back to work before their benefits run out. I think each individual employer will need to check with the EDD regarding how the benefits work once the employer has work for them. I don't know if the COVID-19 regulations require them to be looking for employment while they are receiving unemployment benefits; under regular unemployment benefits you have to be seeking employment.

[Click here for the 2020 EDD Employer's Guide.](#)

2. This is a great meeting, will it be Interpreted to Spanish for our Latino Community? Have a great day.

Tom Boo: It's an important point. We spoke at Unified Command after this event about possibly alternating this Community Coffee with the Community Meetings/Discussions we have been doing weekly on Thursday evenings, and those are happening in back to back English and Spanish versions. I believe Chief Frievalt and I are open to participating in these events in an ongoing fashion and to ensuring the Spanish-speaking community has equal access.

3. We should also look at other countries / states / cities and see what has worked and not worked and learn from them.

Tom Boo: Absolutely! We are very interested in this, as well as historic efforts to deal with pandemics. There is value both in media reports and academic publications about the experience in other places.

4. I'm worried that as certain businesses are "allowed" to begin operating, that they will no longer qualify for monetary assistance. And while in a city this may not be as much of an issue, I believe that if our visitation numbers are significantly lower this summer, then even if businesses are allowed to operate that they still may not financially succeed. Is there any way to let our state government understand the unique issue this may pose in specifically tourist driven communities (obviously we are not the only ones that may have this issue)?

Tom Boo: Another good point. We don't have a direct line of communication to Sacramento decision makers outside of Public Health but worth discussing how to convey the issue. Note that there is a website associated with the Governor's office through which all Californians are supposed to be able to communicate ideas and concerns. It's new, I've heard it mentioned twice in the last 5 days by Reese Williams in the Governor's office, who seems to play a lead role in figuring out these Phases of increasing activity.

5. Dr. Boo, are you concerned that if Mono County opens first among counties for near-cations, that we could be inundated with droves of Californians? Are we truly prepared from a health standpoint?

Tom Boo: Yes, I've very concerned. I think Chief Frievalt conveyed my concerns about the special challenges of being a tourist-dependent economy in an epidemic. I definitely wouldn't want to see us be the first or only recreation/vacation destination! Yet we have to have visitors in order to recover as a community. I don't see easy answers here but we're talking about it all the time, wondering whether there are ways to strike a balance. Please note also that it is entirely possible that more businesses will be

allowed to re-open BEFORE any restrictions on “non-essential” travel are lifted. That concept seems clear in the White House plan, although I’m not certain where Sacramento’s thinking is on that point.

6. Was there discussion yesterday or at any time regarding our county and community opening for our local population first? Examples being allowing Mono County residents to perhaps book camp sites, stay at hotels, make tee times to golf, etc. A sort of soft re-opening for locals before we start promoting tourism.

Tom Boo: Yes, that is under discussion locally and has been brought up on statewide conference calls, but please keep in mind that it is not clear at this time whether the State will make all the decisions or whether local jurisdictions will be allowed to make some. Some local business owners have communicated however that there is no point in re-opening until tourists are here in some numbers.

7. Do we know if the USFS is going to open Devils Postpile?

Tom Boo: Devils Postpile is National Park Service (NPS), not USFS (complicated by the fact that the national monument is surrounded by USFS land and the road is under USFS authority). My understanding is that NPS believes it would be safer to leave the national monument sort of closed for the season. What I mean by sort of closed is no shuttle bus or visitor center, but people welcome to visit by foot.

8. Is there a plan for all of the weddings that have been planned and already paid for? Or should we just reschedule all of them to 2021?

Tom Boo: Sorry, unclear. Expect the State to set gathering size restrictions in the different phases. Doubt this will be under local control. If it were, my inclination would be to permit gatherings of up to 50 persons provided that venue permits appropriate distancing. Tough stuff!

9. When looking towards groups, I'd like to ask that we look at person per square foot rather than total # of people at a group event. Some of the opportunities for this summer will be in programing rather than "events."

Tom Boo: That’s a valid point from public health perspective. As I wrote just above, not sure that we’re going to have much say in that issue but if I do I will keep that in mind.