

## OF NOTE



### A lot of paychecks saved

Utah leads the nation in the amount of participation in the Paycheck Protection Program as a percentage of eligible payroll, according to a report last week from Bloomberg. The report said that 97 percent of small businesses that have applied and are eligible for the forgivable loans in the state have received or have been approved for the funds. The data shows that 45,990 loans accounting for \$5.5 billion in funds have been processed and given to Utah businesses.

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## Virus mixed bag: Construction, real estate see varied effects

**Brice Wallace**

*The Enterprise*

How badly has COVID-19 hurt Utah's construction, real estate and retail trades? It depends on whom you ask.

At a recent webinar on the topic, speakers gave mixed answers. For example, housing prices are up only slightly over a year earlier but home sales are down by one-fourth and new construction shrunk 45 percent. Retailers, restaurants, entertainment venues and the hospitality industry have been hit hard. Meanwhile, the construction industry is maintaining its early-year momentum, while the virus has set the stage for possible long-term changes in industrial and office settings.

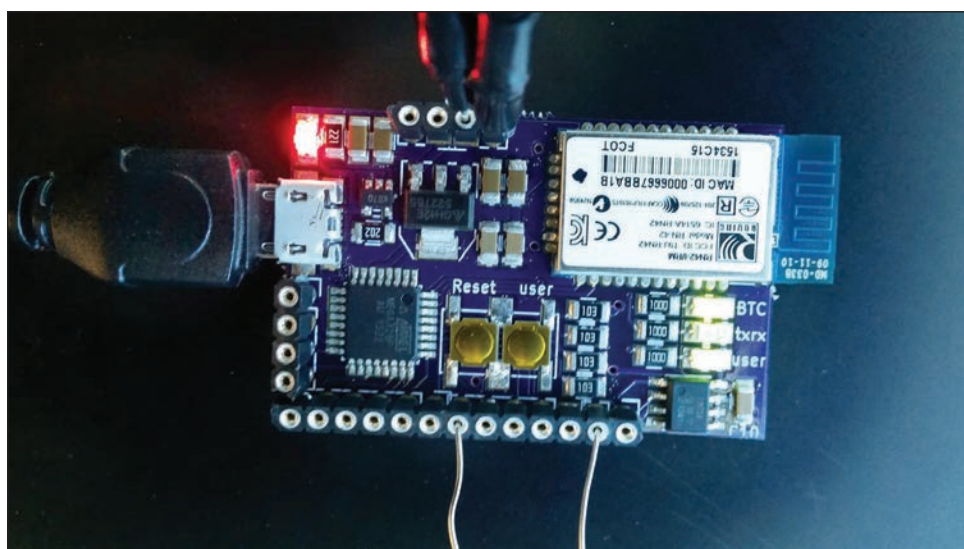
About 300,000 jobs, about one-fourth

of Utah's total, are tied to the construction, real estate and retail trade industries, according to Natalie Gochmour, director of the University of Utah's Kem C. Gardner Policy Institute.

Before the virus hit, Utah's new-housing market had the potential to make 2020 a record year, according to Dejan Eskic, research associate at the Gardner Institute. The first quarter had record levels of permitting for new units.

But while prices did not change much in April compared to a year earlier, up 6.3 percent, and rent was up only 0.8 percent, the number of existing homes that sold was down 24 percent and new construction had slipped 45 percent.

**see WEBINAR page 17**



University of Utah engineer Massood Tabib-Azar is developing a coronavirus sensor about the size of a quarter that works with a cellphone and can detect COVID-19 in 60 seconds.

## UofU engineer invents portable, 60-second test for coronavirus

"Testing, testing, testing." It's a mantra that health officials have been constantly promoting because screening people for COVID-19 is the best way to contain its spread. In the U.S., however, that crucial necessity has been hampered due to a lack of supplies.

But University of Utah electrical and computer engineering professor Massood Tabib-Azar has received a \$200,000 National Science Foundation Rapid Response Research (RAPID) grant to develop a portable, reusable coronavirus sensor that people can always carry with them. The sensor, about the size of a quarter, works with a cell-

phone and can detect COVID-19 in just 60 seconds.

"It can be made to be a standalone device, but it can also be connected to a cellphone," said Tabib-Azar. "Once you have it connected, either wirelessly or directly, you can use the cellphone software and processor to give a warning if you have the virus."

Health officials say the U.S. needs to conduct at least 5 million COVID-19 tests per day to effectively understand and contain the spread of the virus. But at most, 319,000

**see C-19 TEST page 19**

## COVID-19 Updates

### Cancellations and postponements

The following are events that have been included in *The Enterprise* Calendar listings and subsequently have been postponed or canceled, or have been removed from the organizers' website calendars. This is not a complete list of postponements or cancellations. Check with organizers to determine if their events will take place.

### CANCELLATIONS

#### May 19, 8 a.m.-4 p.m.

"Effective Presentations," part of the Salt Lake Community College Frontline Leader Workshop Series at SLCC's Westpointe Campus in Salt Lake City.

#### May 19, 8 a.m.-3:30 p.m.

Third Annual Wasatch Back Economic Summit, a Park City Bureau/Chamber event at Zermatt Resort in Midway.

#### May 19, 11 a.m.-1 p.m.

Business Women's Forum at Hilton Garden Inn Salt Lake City Downtown.

#### May 19, 11:30 a.m.-1 p.m.

Business Alliance Networking Luncheon, a Davis Chamber of Commerce event at Boondocks Fun Center in Kaysville.

#### May 20, 8-10 a.m.

M.A.C.H. Speed Networking, a Murray Area Chamber of Commerce event at the Residence Inn by Marriott in Murray.

#### May 21, 8 a.m.-4 p.m.

"Employment Law Update — Utah," an Employers Council event. Location is Sheraton Salt Lake City, 150 W. 500 S., Salt Lake City. Cost is \$329. Details are at employerscouncil.org.

#### May 26, 11:30 a.m.-1 p.m.

Women in Business Luncheon, an Ogden-Weber Chamber of Commerce event at The Monarch in Ogden.

#### May 26, 11:30 a.m.-1 p.m.

Women in Business Luncheon, an Ogden-Weber Chamber of Commerce event. Location is The Monarch, 455 25th St., Ogden. Cost is \$20 for WIB members and first-time guests, \$30 for nonmembers. Details are at ogdenweberchamber.com.

#### May 28, 8:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m.

"Emotional Intelligence, Optimism and Resilience," an Employers Council event at the Employers Council Utah office in Salt Lake City.

**see UPDATES page 19**



## COVID-19 AND UTAH - NEWS AFFECTING YOUR BUSINESS & YOUR EMPLOYEES

### USDA offers farm loans for farmers facing COVID-19 related challenges

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Farm Service Agency (FSA) has announced that FSA offers farm ownership and farm operating loans to agricultural producers who may not find success obtaining loans from their traditional financial institutions because of COVID-19. Farmers who cannot obtain commercial credit from a bank can apply for FSA direct or guaranteed loans.

"Farming and ranching is a capital-intensive business and FSA is committed to helping producers maintain their agricultural operations during this time of crisis," said Bruce Richeson, FSA state executive director in Utah. "FSA loans are designed to assist beginning and historically underserved farmers and ranchers, as well as those who have suffered financial setbacks from natural disasters or economic downturns. Producers may find that an FSA loan is the best option for them if they cannot qualify for a loan with their traditional financial institutions or other financial institutions because of COVID-19."

USDA offers a variety of loans to meet different production needs. Direct loans are made to applicants by FSA. Guaranteed loans are made by lending institutions who arrange for FSA to guarantee the loan. FSA can guarantee up to 95 percent of the loss of principal and interest on a loan. The FSA guarantee allows lenders to make agricultural credit available to producers who do not meet the lender's normal underwriting criteria.

The direct and guaranteed loan program offers two types of loans: farm ownership loans and farm operating loans. Farm ownership loan funds may be used to purchase or enlarge a farm or ranch; purchase easements or rights of way needed in the farm's operation; build or improve buildings such as a dwelling or barn; promote soil and water conservation and development; and pay closing costs. Farm operating loan funds may be used to purchase livestock, poultry, farm equipment, fertilizer and other materials necessary to operate a farm. Operating loan funds can also be used for family living expenses, refinancing debts under certain conditions, paying salaries for hired farm laborers, installing or improving water systems and other similar improvements.

Information on FSA's farm loan programs is at the local FSA office or at [farmers.gov](http://farmers.gov).

### 10,000 Utahns to be tested for virus under UofU's Utah HERO program

The David Eccles School of Business at the University of Utah and University of Utah Health have announced the start of Utah HERO (Health & Economic Recovery Outreach), a large undertaking that will begin with the testing of 10,000 Utahns across four counties. The data gathered will inform decision-makers in the state as they work to help keep residents safe and get people back to work.

As part of Utah HERO, households in Utah, Davis, Salt Lake and Summit counties will be randomly selected for participation in the study. Random sampling is a way to accurately determine how much COVID-19 has spread in Utah without testing every person in the state, organizers said.

Utah HERO team members will tag these households with a flyer or door hanger explaining the project. Field teams will then follow up with an in-person visit to gather information about those living in the residence and provide instruction on how to get tested. All those living in the residence who are 12 years and older will be asked to visit a testing site where they will receive two tests: PCR (swab test to detect presence of coronavirus) and serology (blood draw to detect antibodies). Antibodies to the coronavirus indicate probable past infection.

"A survey of this magnitude would normally take months to organize, but we've been able to move things forward in a couple of weeks thanks to all of our collaborators," said Stephen Alder, director of field operations for Utah HERO and professor in the UofU Department

of Family and Preventative Medicine. "The University of Utah is committed to serving the state during this difficult time and we hope this information will help our leaders make informed public health and business decisions."

High levels of voluntary participation will enhance the accuracy of the study and will improve the ability to interpret results of COVID-19 testing, Alder said. Testing is completely confidential and no information on immigration status will be collected.

The Governor's Office of Management and Budget contracted with the UofU to design and implement Utah HERO.

"This study is important because it is the first initiative to gain an understanding of statewide COVID-19 prevalence in Utah," said Dr. Angela Dunn, state epidemiologist for the Utah Department of Health. "This random sampling allows us to see a representative picture of the extent to which COVID-19 has spread in our community. This will enable us to make informed decisions about how to best move forward," she said.

### Illnesses among January Sundance attendees could have been COVID-19

COVID-19 may have been circulating in Utah as early as January, according to Dr. Angela Dunn, state epidemiologist, who addressed reports of illnesses among Sundance Film Festival attendees during a recent press conference. A number of the 120,000 people who attended the Jan. 23- Feb. 2 event showed symptoms similar to those reported for the novel coronavirus.

"It is definitely possible that COVID-19 was circulating at Sundance," said Dunn.

She said the health department at the time worked closely with Sundance planners and Summit County to set up screening and education for all Sundance visitors about symptoms. "At that point, we hadn't had any cases and so we were really just monitoring symptoms," she said.

### Rapid Response Team assists small businesses with stimulus resources

The Utah Economic Response Task Force has announced that its Rapid Response Team (RRT) had provided one-on-one assistance to more than 2,000 Utah small businesses in their efforts to benefit from federal COVID-19 stimulus programs.

With a goal to level the economic dip within the state by helping Utah companies navigate federal resources, the RRT was developed by the Utah Economic Task Force federal committee, which is comprised of Utah's congressional delegation, federal partners and key state business and government entities. The task force is chaired by Salt Lake Chamber president and CEO Derek B. Miller.

"The Economic Response Task Force understood early on that federal resources would be a key component of combating the coronavirus pandemic," said Miller. "Our federal resource committee overseeing the RRT has done a phenomenal job of working with Utah businesses to resolve concerns and remove roadblocks between our businesses and the capital they need to remain viable. We will continue to work with applicants and our federal partners to ensure adequate resources meet the needs of our employers and employees they support."

As of May 1, the U.S. Small Business Association reported that more than 40,000 Utah businesses have received SBA Paycheck Protection Plan (PPP) loans valued at approximately \$5.4 billion. PPP loans were designed by the Small Business Administration (SBA) to provide a direct incentive for small businesses to keep their workers on the payroll during the economic crisis caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. The SBA will forgive the loans if all employees are kept on the payroll for eight weeks and the money is used for payroll, rent, mortgage interest or utilities.

"The SBA Utah District is incredibly grateful to all of the Rapid Response Team members for their time, dedication, and willingness to support our office in providing critical resources to small businesses throughout the state," said District Director Marla Trollan. "Their work has helped thousands of small-business owners navigate the complex requirements and processes of our disaster relief programs. We are very appreciative of the World Trade Center for co-leading this effort. This partnership truly serves as a national model in how federal and local resources can quickly come together and collaborate during crisis situations," she said.

### Utah State Fair announces intent to open as scheduled in September

Organizers of the Utah State Fair have announced their intentions to open the 165th edition of the annual event as scheduled Sept. 10-20, with popular events such as the "Day of Wreckoning" demolition derby, the Bullfrog Spas Concert Series and Utah's Own PRCA Rodeo.

Exactly what attendance at events will look like is yet to be determined, according to the fair's management.

"The safety of our guests, employees, partners and artists is our highest priority," the fair board said in a release. "As with all other scheduled large events and major league sports venues in Utah, the Utah State Fairpark is closely monitoring the situation surrounding COVID-19. We will continue to work in tandem with public officials and health professionals and implement best practices."

The fair is inviting entries in all regular categories with entry forms and information at [www.utahstatefair.com](http://www.utahstatefair.com).

### GOED announces \$40M pandemic business rental assistance program

Utah small businesses that rent commercial property may receive pandemic relief from the Utah Legislature. Following the recent legislative special session and appropriation, the Utah Governor's Office of Economic Development (GOED) announced the COVID-19 Commercial Rental Assistance Program.

As part of S.B. 3006, the COVID-19 Commercial Rental Assistance Program includes \$40 million in commercial property rental assistance. GOED will administer the grants providing rental relief to Utah small businesses — including nonprofits, sole proprietors, independent contractors and those that are self-employed — that have lost revenue as a result of measures taken to minimize the public's exposure to COVID-19.

"The COVID-19 Commercial Rental Assistance Program will help many of Utah's commercial property lessees in need of financial help because of the coronavirus pandemic," said Val Hale, GOED's executive director. "We thank the legislature for allocating \$40 million in federal CARES Act funds to the program and hope the grants that are distributed will help Utah small businesses get back on their feet as quickly as possible."

Qualification criteria and application details are at [coronavirus.utah.gov](http://coronavirus.utah.gov). Officials said that the program will end when the funding is depleted, but that more than \$30 million was still available as of May 13.

### Delta suspends service to several markets with more than one airport

Delta Airlines, which has one of its major hubs at Salt Lake City International Airport, has suspended operations to 10 U.S. airports where there is more than one airport in the market. The company said it made the move in an effort to increase health and safety measures as the COVID-19 pandemic continues.

The airports where Delta will temporarily suspend ser-

# Utah Farm Bureau launches effort to help farmers, feed state's needy

**Brice Wallace**

*The Enterprise*

Utah's farmers and ranchers are hoping the public can address what the lieutenant governor calls "this incredible paradox."

Spencer Cox, himself a farmer, said the paradox involves Utah having "the same number of people eating the same number of meals every day, and yet the peo-

ple producing that food are losing money, and we have people going hungry because they have food insecurity."

With the twin goal of helping farmers and ranchers hit hard by the coronavirus and getting food to needy Utahns, the Utah Farm Bureau has launched "Farmers Feeding Utah," a fundraising campaign allowing the public to donate to help sustain those affected farmers and supply families and food

organizations with needed locally sourced food.

Interested individuals, organizations and private companies can donate funds via the campaign website, FarmersFeedingUtah.org. All donation funds will go to purchasing, processing and distributing food from Utah's farmers and ranchers to families in need.

The campaign is a partnership among the farm bureau, Utah

State University's Hunger Solutions Institute, other hunger relief organizations and the Utah Department of Agriculture & Food.

Ron Gibson, president of the Utah Farm Bureau Federation, said farmers and ranchers started seeing the impacts from the coronavirus about two months ago.

"Immediately, agricultural markets started to take a dive," he said at a news conference announcing the program at Bennett Farms, a 600-acre farm in Davis and south Weber counties. "Most of our agricultural markets are 30 to 50 percent down from where they were two or three months ago, and farmers and ranchers across the state and across our country are in a tough spot."

The pandemic disrupted food supply chains. Food was unable to find markets and some retail stores implemented purchasing limits.

Cox said it was an example of taking farmers for granted "for far too long."

"And it's led us to a place where we are relying on supply chains that we thought were robust and it turns out, in a matter of just weeks, we realize are not as strong as we thought they were," he said.

That coincided with the virus prompting layoffs and furloughs as businesses throughout Utah closed, leaving "an unprecedented number of people in need right now," according to Heidi LeB-

lanc, director of the Hunger Solutions Institute. Food assistance programs throughout the state have been running out of food supplies, she added.

"With record-breaking numbers of families needing help during this unprecedented time, connecting them with our state's agriculture families and the local food they produce just makes sense," said Logan Wilde, commissioner of the Utah Department of Agriculture and Food. "We think this is a great way to keep our valuable industry going and reduce the gaps in our food supply chain."

Gibson said the campaign is a way to "break through the barriers that we have in our supply chain and get the food that people desperately need through this program." The campaign also will also help the state "come through this with a stronger-than-ever agricultural community and society in the state of Utah," he said.

## Are you nervous about returning to work?

Americans may be reluctant to jump right back into the workplace as the economy comes back online. That's what Provo-based Qualtrics, a marketer of customer experience management products, found in a recent survey titled "Return to Work & Back to Business Study."

As government and business leaders look to reopen the economy, Qualtrics asked more than 2,000 Americans how confident they felt about returning to the workplace or visiting public establishments right now — and what it would take for them to feel comfortable doing so.

"While most organizations are looking at facts like hospitalization and testing rates as they reopen workplaces and businesses, it is equally important to understand perceptions — how people feel," said Mike Maughan, head of global insights at Qualtrics. "Our study found that most Americans still feel uncomfortable returning to public spaces. Organizations will need to know what actions they can take to help customers and employees feel confident during this next phase of the pandemic."

The study was conducted on Qualtrics CoreXM, a platform where organizations can manage and take action on experience data of their customers.

The survey found that two out of three people (66 percent) are not comfortable going back to the workplace right now. In fact, workers of all ages — from boomers to Gen Z — are equally wary about returning to shared workspaces, with more than 65 percent in every age group reporting that they were uncomfortable doing so. Most employees want assurance from public health officials like the Centers for Disease Control (63 percent) or the World Health Organization (45 percent) to feel comfortable returning to the workplace.

A quarter of America's employees (25 percent) expect to return to the workplace sometime in May, while 28 percent believe

they'll be going back in June. Nearly half (48 percent) don't expect to return to work until August or later.

Once they go back to work, workers will feel more comfortable if measures are taken to protect themselves and their co-workers. Nearly two-thirds (64 percent) want to be able to wear a mask at work while 61 percent want to maintain social distancing. Half say they want more flexible sick-leave policies, 49 percent want to be able to limit the number of people they're exposed to in workplace meetings and want their temperatures checked before entering the building.

And work isn't the only place people will want to exercise caution. Sixty-eight percent of respondents say they would feel uncomfortable playing a team sport,

60 percent say they wouldn't want to attend a religious service and 51 percent say they would still feel uncomfortable going to a retail store.

Of those who regularly attend live concerts, 26 percent say they are unlikely to return in the foreseeable future and 24 percent of those who attend sporting events say the same.

Though restaurants have begun to partially reopen as states do the same, 68 percent of people say they would feel uncomfortable eating at a restaurant right now and 16 percent say they're unlikely to dine in at all in the foreseeable future.

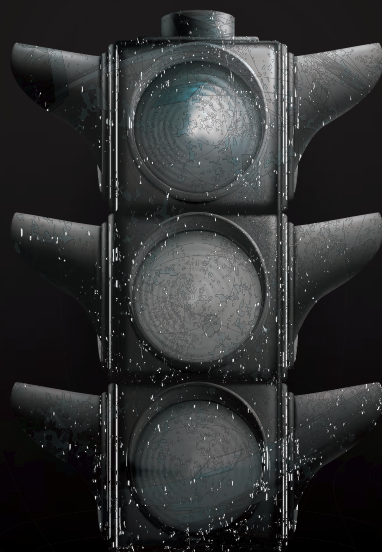
When it comes to transit, 77 percent of people feel uncomfortable taking public transit right now and 75 percent feel uncomfortable flying on an airplane.

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# Utah improving its women-owned businesses national ranking

**Brice Wallace**  
*The Enterprise*

Utah continues to improve its rankings for women entrepreneurship, despite growth figures the past few years falling short of national rates in several categories.

A research and policy brief produced by the Utah Women & Leadership Project at Utah Valley University, an update of a 2016 study, indicates that Utah last year was the home to

89,092 women-owned businesses, up 14.5 percent from 77,800 in 2015. For comparison, the nation growth rate during that time was 37 percent, to nearly 13 million.

Other statistics compiled by American Express about women-owned businesses indicate that such Utah companies had 78,199 employees last year, up 33 percent from 58,900 in 2015, ahead of the national pace of 19 percent growth. Revenues generated grew 9 percent in Utah, to \$15.7 million, while nationally the growth was 27 percent, to \$1.9

trillion. The number of new women-owned businesses established daily grew nationally from 887 to 1,817, while in Utah it slipped from six to five.

In 2016, Utah was eighth-ranked among states for the economic clout of women-owned businesses, but last year had moved up to sixth. It was fifth-ranked for revenue growth, 10th in employment growth and 12th in growth by number of firms.

“Utah continues to rank well when it comes to women’s entrepreneurship, despite the barriers that exist nationally as well as those that are unique to Utah women in general,” the report states. “Even in the face of multiple hurdles, women are establishing businesses that not only generate revenue and employ other Utahns, but also contribute to their quality of life and the prosperity of local and statewide economies.”

Utah women face several barriers to entrepreneurship, accord-

ing to the study. They include a lack of fair access to capital — in 2017, only two of 110 venture capital deals involved women-owned firms and they received less than 2 percent of the \$1.1 billion invested by venture capital firms in Utah. Other barriers are a lack of access to mentors, a lack of access to affordable child care, and a lack of awareness of business training and resources.

“While women entrepreneurs in Utah benefit from its economic strength, there is a stark disparity between male and female entrepreneurs,” according to the report. Women are seldom the primary operator in spouse-owned enterprises and women-owned businesses are underrepresented in the most-lucrative fields.

The report recommends creating connections between women-owned businesses and resources available to them; adopting a “bigger is better” attitude by encouraging women to expand their

business profiles, to think bigger, pursue out-of-the-box ideas, and consider nontraditional business opportunities such as international exporting or government contracting; committing to diversify supply chains; changing the perception that entrepreneurship is a masculine activity, a perception it said is deeply rooted in the media; and collecting and using data to get a clearer snapshot of the entire ecosystem in which women-owned businesses operate.

“Currently, no consistent, statewide data are tracked by the state of Utah on women business ownership,” it says.

“As an important segment of productive business owners,” the report says, “women certainly are getting things done and, by so doing, are impacting others and blazing a trail to an improved future for Utah.”

The report is available at [https://www.uvu.edu/uwlp/docs/uwlp\\_brief2020.no.22.pdf](https://www.uvu.edu/uwlp/docs/uwlp_brief2020.no.22.pdf).

## Harfert new R&R BBQ president

R&R BBQ, a fast-growing restaurant chain with eight locations along the Wasatch Front, has named Neil Harfert as president. He replaces the brother team of Rod and Roger Livingston at the head of the company. The Livingstons are retiring to pursue other interests, the company said in a release.

“Neil is a proven and respected leader who has delivered strong operating results through a long career in the food and beverage industry, with powerhouse brands like Qdoba, Modern Market Eatery and MOD Pizza,” said Greg Warnock, a member of the R&R BBQ board of directors and managing partner of Mercato Partners’ Savory Fund which owns the chain. “I am confident that Neil will continue to lead our executive team and 350-plus team members to achieve great success and carry on the incredible brand the Livingstons created over five years ago.”

Harfert brings over 26 years of experience in the operation of restaurant chains. Prior to joining R&R BBQ, Harfert served as

vice president of field operations for MOD Pizza where he helped lead the chain through explosive growth from 25 restaurants in five states to more than 255 units in 18 states over a five-year period. His experience also includes heading up operations for restaurant chains like Modmarket Farm Fresh Eateries, Qdoba Mexican Eats and others.

“Having served in leadership capacities for over 26 years in the restaurant industry, I am excited for this opportunity to work with such a beloved brand that is poised for great success,” said Harfert. “The Livingstons created the best championship BBQ concept I have seen in America. That is why I decided to move my family from Seattle to Salt Lake City, to make sure more people have the opportunity to enjoy the amazing food that R&R BBQ smokes each day as we grow throughout the Western United States.”

Founders Rod and Roger Livingston converted their passion as a championship BBQ competition team to a chain of Utah restaurants.

## Buy Box Experts of Lindon acquires Egility

Lindon-based Amazon marketing agency Buy Box Experts has acquired fellow Amazon marketplace company Egility of Pleasant Grove. Both companies are involved in helping brands increase their visibility and sales through e-commerce giant Amazon.

Joseph Hansen, CEO of Buy Box Experts, will lead the newly combined company as in the same position. The company will continue to be headquartered in Lindon.

Prior to Buy Box Experts, Hansen founded and sold five

companies operating in the same arena. In 2015, Hansen and Buy Box Experts partner James Thomson co-founded the Prosper Show, which grew into the largest U.S.-based educational conference for Amazon sellers. They sold the company to Emerald Expositions at the end of 2017.

“With the acquisition of Egility, our leadership team has become more diverse and gained additional experience and best-in-class expertise,” said Hansen. “We are now equipped to easily scale

with sellers of all sizes, providing them with the strategic and tactical services brands need to thrive on the Amazon channel. This acquisition reinforces our strategy to first educate and consult with our brand partners, and then develop and implement cutting-edge holistic services that allow them to grow profitably and navigate the complexity of the Amazon marketplace.”

The new company will have 115 employees, including 20 who formerly worked for Amazon.

## C-19 NEWS

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### Schlumberger Surplus Industrial Auctions Wednesday June 17



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**Buildings Open:** 11-2pm Fri May 29 & June 5

**Above properties auction:** 12pm, Wed Jun 17 at 1739 E 1500 S, Naples, UT or bid online at [auctionnetwork.com](http://auctionnetwork.com)

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These properties are part of a Nationwide Industrial Assemblage auctioning in June. For all properties, see [williamsauction.com/SLB](http://williamsauction.com/SLB).

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The company said it is expecting service to those airports to be suspended until at least September.

“The safety of our employees and customers remains our primary focus as we navigate these challenges together,” Sandy Gordon, Delta’s senior vice president of domestic airport operations, said in a news release. “By consolidating operations while customer traffic is low, we can allow more of our people to stay home in accordance with local health guidelines.”

### DWS launches rent HELP program for those ineligible for benefits

The Housing and Community Development Division of the Utah Department of Workforce Service-

es has launched a new Rental Assistance Program for renters impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. More than \$4 million is available through several programs, which will be implemented by regional agencies throughout the state.

The Rental Assistance Program is targeted to help individuals whose income has been impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic but have been found ineligible for unemployment benefits. Monthly rent payments of up to \$1,500 can be made directly to landlords.

“There is a lot of assistance available right now through unemployment and other programs, but we know there are individuals and families in Utah who may be falling through the cracks,” said Jonathan Hardy, division director. “We don’t want anyone to lose their housing as a result of this pandemic.”

Of the available funding, \$1 million is from existing federal HOME funds that might normally go to affordable housing construction or ongoing housing vouchers. The remaining funding, more than \$3 million, comes from the CARES Act.

To learn more about eligibility and where to apply, renters should call the information and community social services referral line at 2-1-1.



# How much should you pay for checking?

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*In response to the theater's shutdown due to the COVID-19 pandemic, six stitchers in the Utah Opera costume shop have begun sewing general protection masks for Salt Lake Regional Medical Center using unused cotton and muslin remnants, including leftover fabric from costumes for the January 2019 production of "The Little Prince." They produced over 400 masks in the first two weeks. They are also making several hundred stretch extenders for people to use across the back of their heads to alleviate the uncomfortable rubbing of elastic around the ears from prolonged wearing of masks. The costume team is also sewing 700 medical-grade masks for healthcare workers around the state from kits provided by the Utah chapter of Just Serve, a community service organization. Utah Opera announced the suspension of 13 performances through May 23, including the opera productions of "The Barber of Seville" and "Thais" and has canceled all symphony education concerts, all in-school opera assemblies and other outreach events.*

## Lindsey named Banjo CEO

Banjo, a Park City-based technology company that develops and markets software services that help first responders receive information they need to deploy public safety resources as quickly as possible, has announced that Justin R. Lindsey has been named the company's new CEO.

Lindsey, Banjo's current chief technology officer, replaces founder Damien Patton, who resigned following revelation of his past involvement with white supremacist organizations, including hate-motivated criminal activity as a youth.

A \$21 million contract that Banjo has with several Utah state agencies to aid first responders and law enforcement investigators in detecting incidents and crimes has been put on hold pending an audit by the attorney general's office that will include evaluations of personal privacy protections stipulated in the state's contract with Banjo and any evidence of racial or religious bias in work already performed by the company.

Banjo has announced it stopped processing information related to its Utah clients pending the audit's outcome.

The University of Utah has also announced it had terminated its contract with Banjo.

Lindsey has been with the company for nine months and will be assuming his new responsibilities immediately, a release from the company said. Lindsey has had management positions in the technology sector for more than 25 years, including a stint as chief technology officer for the FBI in Washington, D.C. He founded Internet systems engineering firm Lavastorm Inc. in the Boston area after receiving an MBA from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

"Nine months ago, I was inspired by Banjo's mission to join the company full time as the CTO," Lindsey said in a statement. "As CEO, I'm looking forward to continuing Banjo's dedication to technology solutions that protect privacy."

# Middle market jolted by sweeping effects of COVID-19; Now is time to look forward

Communities around the world have been socially and economically distressed by the COVID-19 pandemic and the business and public gathering shutdowns enacted to slow its spread. Middle market business owners and executives are not immune to its far-reaching impact. KeyBank's quarterly sentiment survey connected directly with middle market executives to explore their outlook and how it has changed.

Each quarter, to understand what impact current macroeconomic conditions and government policies have on the business environment, KeyBank surveys 400 owners and executives of middle market businesses — defined as those in the \$10 million to \$2 billion range.

This March, because of the unprecedented circumstances of the public health crisis, KeyBank conducted a second survey to see how sentiment changed between early March to late March, when many states in the U.S. responded to contain community spread of the novel coronavirus.

Within just a few weeks, respondents shared a marked difference in their levels of optimism for their own businesses and the economy as a whole. As they deal with the reality of office and retail closures, remote workforces, supply chain disruption and a plummeting investment market, middle market business owners are facing an ambiguous future.

### Positivity dips as coronavirus hits U.S.

As recently as the beginning of March 2020, middle market executives were still in a good place about their companies' outlook for the next 12 months. The overwhelming majority said, at the time, that it was excellent (41 percent) or very good (33 percent), similar to their responses to the same questions in December 2019. Also in early March, middle market leaders felt relatively positive about their states' outlook and the overall U.S. economy, with more than half saying it was excellent or very good in both cases.

But as state stay-at-home orders throughout March and early April took effect, more than a quarter of the U.S. economy was taken offline and the public markets dropped by historic amounts, according to an analysis by the *Wall Street Journal*. During the same time period, the outlook of respondents in our second round of outreach shifted significantly. In late March, middle market ex-

ecutives reported feeling much less optimistic about their own companies.

And, when it comes to their overall U.S. outlook, middle market businesses are even more pessimistic since the outbreak of COVID-19.

### Middle market businesses react

Many middle market companies are taking action to rise to the challenges that the pandemic is bringing to their operations, including the economic repercussions of the pandemic. Among their responses are de-

veloping a contingency plan for the business and laying off staff, as well as seeking help from their business banking institutions. They are also seeking out capital, using business credit cards for payment, and transferring money out of savings or investment accounts to ensure liquidity during the crisis.

### Challenges in the new normal — and looking forward

The pandemic has changed the way nearly all companies do business and has tested their resilience and adaptability. Respondents listed maintaining staff productivity (46 percent), adjusting to a new remote operating model (43 percent), and managing overall cash flow (42 percent) as their top challenges as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.

In the current environment, middle market businesses do feel more positive than negative regarding their own company's overall business health — if only slightly. However, among those with a negative view of the overall health of their business, the majority of business executives (about four-fifths) feel that a return to normalcy is still at least four months away, with a similar amount thinking it might be another seven-plus months.

The pandemic's profound effect on the global economy has the International Monetary Fund anticipating the worst recession since the Great Depression this year, with a partial recovery in 2021 if the global pandemic fades in the second half of the year. While the effects will be particularly harrowing in the developing world, the U.S. will feel its share of the pain, already evident in skyrocketing unemployment figures and permanent business closures.

It's no shock a potential economic recession tops the respondents' reasons for low U.S. economic outlook, dwarfing other formerly top-of-mind issues such as healthcare costs, changes to

trade agreements, increasing tariffs, and increasing labor costs.

### Cybersecurity in a volatile world

Remote work during social distancing has taken in-person interactions into the digital realm of video conferences and online collaboration, making cybersecurity more visible than ever before. The survey investigated how middle market businesses are addressing their companies' cybersecurity, which is of heightened importance as the COVID-19 outbreak poses a significant threat to enterprise resiliency, along with employees' health.

Our survey found that most middle market businesses believe their organization's network is somewhat or very secure, with 35 percent in each category. The majority of middle market companies are using anti-virus and anti-malware protection. Additionally, since they were last surveyed about cybersecurity topics in June 2019, companies have increased measures such as limited administrative rights, VPN for outside access and dual authorization for outgoing payments. Most report a strong awareness of cyber insurance. Yet despite this enhanced security, more middle market businesses have experienced a cybersecurity incident within the last 12 months, increasing to 34 percent from 27 percent.

In this unprecedented environment, companies have had to make compromises on the physical security of company devices, the use of unsecured Wi-Fi networks, and the use of unsecured personal devices and have had to increase their use of third-party applications such as video conferencing platforms. This has led to increased scams and threats targeting remote workers, making it important for companies to establish secure work-from-home protocols for their employees and additional monitoring and security efforts.

While much is unknown about how long shutdown measures will be in place, and how quickly parts of the economy will be able to reopen, businesses of all sizes need to address their resiliency plans, including understanding their financial picture and how they'll move their businesses forward once the pandemic is controlled.

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Drew Yergensen is the commercial banking sales leader with KeyBank in Idaho.





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# Industry Briefs

Industry Briefs are provided as a free service to our readers. Company news information may be sent to [brice@slenterprise.com](mailto:brice@slenterprise.com). The submission deadline is one week before publication.

## BANKING

• **Bank of St. George**, currently being organized, has added **Fred Lampropoulos** to its board of directors. Lampropoulos, involved in the medical device industry for more than 30 years, served as chairman and chief executive of Utah Medical and founded Merit Medical Systems Inc. in 1987. He currently serves as the company's chairman and CEO. Lampropoulos joins eight other board members of the bank.

• **D.L. Evans Bank**, based in Idaho, has promoted **David Mumm** to vice president branch manager of the bank's new branch in Logan. Mumm has over 30 years of banking experience and was previously a vice president commercial loan officer at the D.L. Evans Bank South Ogden branch.

## DIVIDENDS

• The board of directors of **Nu Skin Enterprises Inc.**, Provo, has declared a quarterly cash dividend of 37.5 cents per share. The dividend will be paid June 10 to shareholders of

record May 29. Nu Skin focuses on consumer products, product manufacturing and controlled-environment agriculture technology.

• The board of directors of **Utah Medical Products Inc.**, Salt Lake City, has approved a quarterly cash dividend of 28 cents per share of common stock. The dividend is payable July 3 to shareholders of record June 17. Utah Medical develops, manufactures and markets disposable and reusable specialty medical devices.

• The board of directors of **Huntsman Corp.**, with main offices in Utah and Texas, has declared a 16.25-cent cash dividend on its common stock. The dividend is payable June 30 to stockholders of record June 15. Huntsman manufactures and markets chemicals.

• The board of directors of **Dominion Energy** has declared a quarterly dividend of 94 cents per share of common stock. The dividend is payable June 20 to shareholders of record June 5. The Virginia-based company provides has more than 7 million customers in 20 states with electricity or natural gas, including natural gas in Utah.

• The board of directors of **Clarus Corp.**, Salt Lake City, announced that, in light of the COVID-19 pandemic, it has temporarily replaced its quarterly cash dividend with a stock dividend. Each Clarus stockholder will receive 0.00234 of a share of Clarus common stock for each share of stock held on May 11. The company will distribute the stock dividend May 22. The quarterly stock dividend will have a value of 2.5 cents per

share. No fractional shares will be issued, and stockholders will receive cash for fractional interests based on the closing market price of Clarus common stock on May 11. Clarus is focused on the outdoor and consumer industries.

## ECONOMIC INDICATORS

• **Utah** has only 10 percent of households without Internet connectivity, according to **SatelliteInternet.com**. That puts Utah second, behind only Washington state, among the best-connected states. Mississippi was ranked as worst-connected. Data analysts at SatelliteInternet.com used the percentage of households that don't have an Internet subscription to find "Internet deserts." The data came from the U.S. Census Bureau's American Community Survey.

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## EDUCATION/TRAINING

• **Western Governors University**, Salt Lake City, has appointed **Mark David Milliron** to lead its Teachers College as senior vice president and executive dean. WGU said Milliron will drive the strategic direction of the college, which currently enrolls more than 27,000



Mark Milliron

students in all 50 states. Milliron has worked with colleges and universities, K-12 schools, corporations, nonprofit organizations and government agencies across the country and around the world. He is co-founder

of Civitas Learning, where he served as chief learning officer and executive director of the Next-Generation Leadership Academy. In addition, he served as faculty-in-residence in the College of Education at the University of Texas at Austin. Earlier, he was the founding chancellor for WGU Texas and deputy director for postsecondary success at the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation.

• The **Lassonde Entrepreneur Institute** at the University of Utah is raising funds to support students affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. The initiative was inspired by a \$150,000 matching gift from Pierre Lassonde. The institute said the funds will help students through scholarship assistance, aiding entrepreneurs at the undergraduate and graduate levels through the Lassonde Founders program and the Master of Business Creation. Details are at <https://www.givecampus.com/schools/DavidEcclesSchoolofBusiness/covid-19-support-for-lassonde-students#updates>.

## HEALTHCARE

• **ELITechGroup Inc.**, a Logan-based clinical laboratory diagnostic equipment and reagents company, has named **Diana Mejia** as area sales manager for Latin America. She will be in charge of managing a product portfolio of Aerospray Stainers, Cytocentrifuges, Sweat Test Systems and Vapor Pressure Osmometers to customers throughout Latin America. Mejia has 16 years of laboratory and medical sales experience.

• **5 For The Fight**, a movement inviting people to give \$5

for the fight against cancer, has launched a fellowship program at **Huntsman Cancer Institute** to attract new talent to the fight. The **5 For The Fight Fellowship** program will sponsor nine early-career researchers at the institute. Applications are currently being accepted. Researchers selected for the fellowship will each receive \$50,000 annually for three years. Awardees will be announced in June. An additional \$150,000 will be used to help disseminate the results of the research projects and to promote collaboration with other leading cancer researchers and institutions. 5 For The Fight was started by Qualtrics in 2016 as a way to crowdfund cancer research.

## INVESTMENTS

• **ELearning Brothers**, an American Fork-based learning solutions company, has received a \$38 million investment from **RLG Capital** and **Trinity Private Equity Group**. Co-investors include **HCAP Partners** and **Eagle Marsh Holdings**, with a senior debt facility provided by **KeyBank NA**.

## REAL ESTATE

• **Utah Valley University** has closed on the acquisition of a building at 2912 W. Executive Parkway, Lehi, at Thanksgiving Point, after a two-year process. The building has over 103,000 square feet. Brandon Fugal and Brent Haight of **Colliers International** facilitated the transaction for both UVU and **Hayman Properties**.

## RECOGNITIONS

• Thirteen Utah companies have been named among the **Best Workplaces of 2020, Inc.** magazine's fifth annual ranking of the top private compa-

see BRIEFS next page



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# Industry Briefs

from previous page

nies to work for in America. Among companies with 500 or more employees are **1-800 Contacts**, Draper; **BambooHR**, Lindon; **Health Catalyst**, Salt Lake City; **Podium**, Lehi; and **Weave**, Lehi. Among companies with 250 to 499 employees are **Divvy**, Lehi; **HireVue**, South Jordan; **Lendio**, Lehi; and **MX**, Lehi. Among companies with 50 to 99 employees are **97th Floor**, Lehi; and **JourneyTeam**, Draper. Among companies with 25 to 49 employees are **Big Cartel**, Salt Lake City; and **Scalar**, Draper. Employees from nearly 2,500 companies of all sizes and industries took part in a survey, conducted by Omaha's Quantum Workplace, on topics including trust, management effectiveness, perks, and confidence in the future. Inc. gathered, analyzed and audited the data.



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## RETAIL

• **The Gateway** in Salt Lake City has announced limited in-restaurant dining and extended hours of operation for several merchants. Several restaurants and stores had already been offering curbside pick-up from their individual locations. Some merchants are now offering limited in-person dining and shopping. Details about what is open is at <http://www.atthegateway.com/center-updates/>.

• **Industrial Supply Co.**, Salt Lake City, has promoted **Chad Littlefield** to vice president of human resources and people solutions. Littlefield previously was the



Chad Littlefield

company's manager of human resources. He has over 25 years of experience in human resources within the manufacturing, distribution and service industries. He joined Industrial Supply in 2014 and quickly became a member of the company's senior leadership team.

## SERVICES

• **Incorporate Massage**, a Salt Lake City-based corporate massage company, has completed its rebrand as **Zenovate**. The rebrand accompanies the company's release of a new platform providing stress management solutions and reflects the company's shift from services to technology, it said.

## TRANSPORTATION

• **Keystone Aviation**, a TAC Air company and private jet charter, aircraft management and maintenance company, has hired **J. Dan Govatos** as director of operations, based in Salt Lake City. Govatos will focus on aircraft operations, safety and training while strengthening aviation industry best practices and relationships. A pilot for more than 30 years, including time as captain on Airbus, Boeing, Falcon and Gulfstream, Govatos also served as director of operations, director of safety, director of training and chief pilot.



Dan Govatos

## TRAVEL & TOURISM

• The **Utah Office of Tourism** and **Visit Salt Lake** are partnering to create and produce **"Mighty Main Street: Places and Faces of Utah,"** a weekly radio program introducing and highlighting locally owned small businesses in Utah. It airs weekly on KSL Radio 102.7 FM and 1160 AM from noon-1 p.m. each Sunday. It is hosted by Chris Redgrave. Each program will feature three to four business organizations and individuals within the visitor economy spanning various industries, backgrounds and communities throughout Utah. Each weekly program will also be available as a podcast on Apple Podcasts, Google Podcasts, Spotify and Stitcher.

# CORPORATE FINANCIAL REPORTS

The following are recent financial reports as posted by selected Utah corporations:

## Extra Space Storage

Extra Space Storage Inc., based in Salt Lake City, reported funds from operations (FFO) attributable to common stockholders and unit holders of \$171.3 million, or \$1.24 per share, for the first quarter ended March 31. That compares with \$156.5 million, or \$1.15 per share, for the same quarter a year earlier.

Net income attributable to common stockholders totaled \$108.2 million, or 83 cents per share. That compares with \$94.8 million, or 74 cents per share, for the same quarter a year earlier.

Revenues in the most recent quarter totaled \$332.5 million, up from \$311.5 million in the year-earlier quarter.

"Despite the impact from COVID-19, we had a solid first quarter, with same-store revenue growth in line with expectations and same-store NOI (net operating income) and FFO growth per share ahead of expectations at 1.2 percent and 6.9 percent, respectively," Joe Margolis, CEO, said in announcing the results.

"We are pleased with the durability of our need-based sector, and we have made significant efforts to continue to operate safely during these challenging times. We are confident that our balance sheet, portfolio and operating platform are all prepared to navigate this uncertain landscape."

The company has chosen to withdraw its 2020 annual guidance, he said. "As the situation unfolds we may reinstate guidance later in the year," Margolis said.

## SkyWest

SkyWest Inc., based in St. George, reported net income of \$30 million, or 59 cents per share, for the quarter ended March 31. That compares with \$88 million, or \$1.69 per share, for the same quarter a year earlier.

Revenue in the most recent quarter totaled \$730 million, up from \$724 million in the year-earlier quarter.

SkyWest Inc. is the holding company for SkyWest Airlines and SkyWest Leasing, an aircraft leasing company. SkyWest Airlines has a fleet of nearly 500 aircraft connecting passengers to over 250 destinations throughout North America.

SkyWest expects to receive approximately \$438 million as payroll support under the Coronavirus Aid, Relief and Economic Security Act (CARES Act), of which approximately \$337 million will be a direct grant and ap-

proximately \$101 million will be in the form of a 10-year, low-interest unsecured loan. SkyWest has elected to receive the funds in four monthly disbursements from April to July 2020. SkyWest received \$219 million of the \$438 million in April.

"COVID-19 has caused unprecedented disruption across the airline industry," Chip Childs, CEO, said in announcing the results.

"Our priority is the safety and well-being of our people and passengers, and we have taken numerous steps to that end. We are taking aggressive action to maintain strong liquidity and work collaboratively with our partners on flexible fleet solutions during this period of uncertainty. I want to thank our 14,000 employees for their resilience, commitment and flexibility during this pandemic."

## Nu Skin

Nu Skin Enterprises Inc., based in Provo, reported net income of \$19.7 million, or 36 cents per share, for the first quarter ended March 31. That compares with \$43 million, or 77 cents per share, for the same quarter a year earlier.

Revenue in the most recent quarter totaled \$518 million, down from \$632.6 million in the year-earlier quarter.

Nu Skin focuses on consumer products, product manufacturing and controlled-environment agriculture technology.

"The efforts and resiliency of our sales leaders and global teams helped us achieve revenue and earnings above guidance in the first quarter," Ritch Wood, CEO, said in announcing the results. "While COVID-19 continues to present significant challenges globally, we are grateful for the heroic efforts of healthcare workers, first responders and other essential workers around the world."

Wood said the company is optimistic it will perform well as sales leaders leverage technology investments to drive product demand and interest in the business opportunity. "The situation in Mainland China is stabilizing with the country returning to work, a key development we believe will translate into improvement throughout the year. We anticipate similar trends in most of our other markets as pandemic restrictions begin to ease elsewhere across the globe. We continue to believe this trend, paired with the global preview of our newest beauty device late in 2020, sets our business up for a return to growth toward the end of the year."

## LifeVantage

LifeVantage Corp., based in

Salt Lake City, reported net income of \$1.7 million, or 11 cents per share, for the fiscal third quarter ended March 31. That compares with \$1.8 million, or 12 cents per share, for the same quarter a year earlier.

Revenue in the most recent quarter totaled \$56 million, flat with the year-earlier quarter.

LifeVantage is focused on the identification, research, development and distribution of advanced nutraceutical dietary supplements and skin and hair care products.

"We continued to generate strong gains in operating income and adjusted EBITDA (earnings before interest, taxes, depreciation and amortization) during the third quarter while holding revenue consistent with the prior-year period," Darren Jensen, president and CEO, said in announcing the results.

"While the current global health pandemic has had a modest negative impact on our business activities, our operating model and the recurring revenue base inherent in our subscription model is demonstrating resiliency across our global footprint and our strong balance sheet and robust cash flow position our company very well."

Jensen said the company remains on track to meet its fiscal 2020 expectations for adjusted EPS (earnings per share) and adjusted EBITDA while falling "modestly below" its previous revenue guidance range based on current business conditions.

## Profire Energy

Profire Energy Inc., based in Lindon, reported a net loss of \$365,000, or 1 cent per share, for the first quarter ended March 31. That compares with net income of \$1.7 million, or 3 cents per share, for the same quarter a year earlier.

Revenue in the most recent quarter totaled \$7.4 million, down from \$10.8 million in the year-earlier quarter.

The company creates, installs and services burner management solutions in the oil and gas industry.

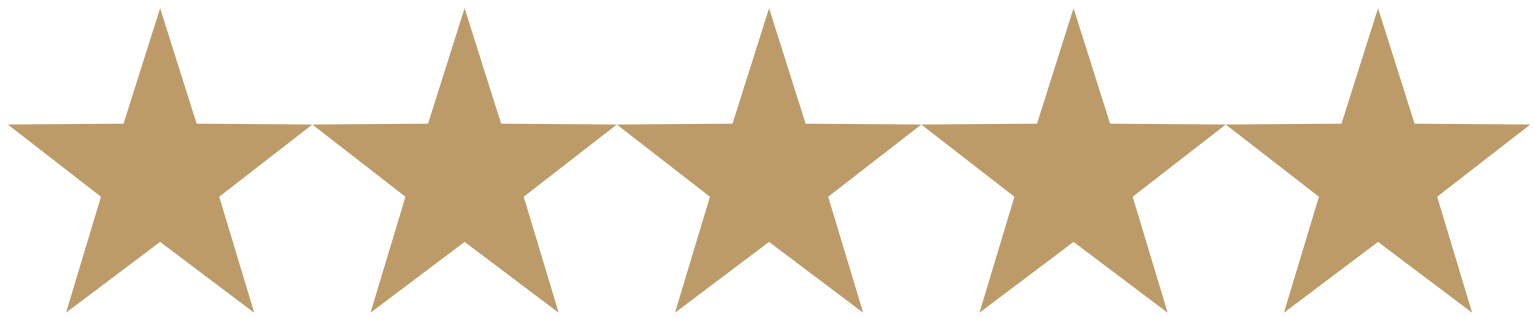
"Our first-quarter results reflect the early impact of the unprecedented combination of a global pandemic, the economic slowdown and reduced demand corresponding to the virtual shutdown of multiple countries, and a price war within the oil and gas industry," Brenton Hatch, chairman and CEO, said in announcing the results.

"Our deliberate approach to maintain a debt-free balance sheet

see EARNINGS page 12



# The stars are aligned!



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# UTAH COUNTY UPDATE SPONSORED BY CENTRAL BANK



## Things are happening in Pleasant Grove

The city has seen major growth over the past few years in both government projects and economic development.

### Pleasant Grove Economic Development

DoTERRA was one of the first companies to plant its roots in Pleasant Grove. It helped spark further development in the area and it has been an excellent community partner with projects in Pleasant Grove City. Its worldwide headquarters keep expanding as the company rapidly grows. Its investment in the community has been gratefully received as it paved the way for others to follow in its footsteps.

DoTERRA's presence has spurred other businesses that complement essential oils to develop specifically near doTERRA. DoTERRA's presence was helpful in the city having its first hotel, Hyatt House, come to town.

One of the main developers to come to Pleasant Grove is St. John Properties (SJP). The company has purchased over 60 acres near the I-15 interchange and has put in a mixed-use development. The crown jewel of the development is the six-story, 195,000-square-foot Grove Tower. This Class A office space has set a development standard in Pleasant Grove for quality development. This development houses numerous companies, including Instructure and Coldwell Banker.

Next to the Grove Tower is single-story offices and in-line retail building. This development offers diverse options for businesses

to locate in Pleasant Grove. The in-line retail is the home of Jersey Mike's Subs, Kolache Krave and Starbucks.

Other developments initiated by St. John Properties includes another six-story office tower named Valley Grove No. 1. As its leasing capacity ramps up, SJP has started construction on Valley Grove No. 2, which will be a five-story office tower. SJP has also brought other restaurants to Pleasant Grove, including R&R BBQ, Village Baker and Wok the Line. These restaurants help take care of those people that work nearby as well as residents of Pleasant Grove that would like to have a dining experience in the city.

Pleasant Grove has also become a magnet for large entertainment facilities. Evermore Park is a live role-playing themed park that allows patrons to dress in character, go on quests and be immersed in the Evermore world. Depending on the season, there are different themes that change the experience at the park.

The Grid is a high-end racetrack for electric carts. The top speeds on the carts can reach 40 mile per hour. The Super Track is almost one-half mile long and has many technical turns. It also has a large arcade to allow patrons to be entertained in many different ways. A restaurant is also planned at the site.

Many other businesses have chosen to come to The Grove area in Pleasant Grove. There is still plenty of room for

future development if businesses would like to be a part of a thriving part of the state of Utah with close proximity to I-15.

### Pleasant Grove City Projects

In 2019, Pleasant Grove City finished its new public safety buildings. The residents voted for a general obligation bond in order to fund the facilities. There were also \$2 million in donations for generous people who care about the well-being of Pleasant Grove.

These buildings were major upgrades from the small, cramped facilities that the Pleasant Grove police and fire departments were operating out of. These buildings allow for future growth of these departments as Pleasant Grove reaches buildout. The safety of Pleasant Grove citizens is a high priority for the elected officials.

In conjunction with the new public safety buildings in downtown Pleasant Grove, the city refurbished its Downtown Park. The whole block, with the new buildings and remodeled park, has set a tone for the revitalization of downtown. The downtown park wasn't very well patronized until it was redone. After that, it has been a high-traffic area with three new pavilions and new playground equipment with a large strawberry in homage to Strawberry Days.

This park was partially funded by donors and a recently passed CARE Tax, which is an additional sales tax that generates revenues that are earmarked for parks and recreation. The CARE Tax has been instrumental in helping Pleasant Grove upgrade

its facilities and add facilities for the use of its citizens.

Discovery Park was a citizen volunteer effort that was built over a 10-day period in May 2019. Lots of generous donors helped fund the park along with a large grant from Utah County. The volunteer labor saved the project \$400,000 in cash as well as gave the residents a sense of pride of what a community can do. Building the park was akin to an old-fashioned barn-raising as the community rallied together to get it done.

Coming this fall to Pleasant Grove are new pickleball courts. These eight courts with lights will serve the community well as pickleball has gained popularity worldwide. Pleasant Grove was one of the leaders in establishing indoor pickleball and now is looking to add to that by building the outdoor courts.

Pleasant Grove has seen great growth in the past 10 years. It has become a destination for families with its high quality of life and many opportunities for employment and recreation. It is a very safe community as it is diversifying its tax base and retail options. Look for more good things to happen in Pleasant Grove as development continues. Come and be a part of it and become part of a great community.

Mayor Guy Fugal, a lifelong resident of Pleasant Grove, was elected in 2017. He formerly served on the Alpine School District board and is part-owner of Fugal & Sons, a utility construction firm.



## EARNINGS

from page 9

is proving very prudent given current macroeconomic events, and believe we are well-positioned to weather the near- and medium-term impacts of COVID-19 and a return to more-favorable oil and gas prices.”

### **Superior Drilling Products**

Superior Drilling Products Inc., based in Vernal, reported a net loss of \$198,000, or 1 cent per share, for the first quarter ended March 31. That compares with a loss of \$246,000, or 1 cent per share, for the same quarter a year earlier.

Revenue in the most recent quarter totaled \$5.4 million, up from \$5 million in the year-earlier quarter.

“We were off to a strong start early in the year because of the success of the Drill-N-Ream (DNR) well bore conditioning tool,” Troy Meier, chairman and CEO, said in announcing the results.

“Even as the oil and gas industry weakened over the last year, we were on pace to exceed our earlier expectations for 2020 when the world suddenly changed in March. The COVID-19 pandemic impact on the oil industry is creating significant declines in the North American rig count, which had already been falling. As a result, demand for our products and services in the U.S. has declined.”

Middle East activity is expected to slow also. “We believe the actions we have taken will enable us to weather this storm and be in a solid position when the market stabilizes,” he said. “As we previously announced, cost reductions included the reduction of executives’ salaries and directors’ fees by 20 percent, compensation reductions of 5 percent to 10 percent for management and salaried staff, workforce reductions and deferral of product development. In addition, we have implemented hiring freezes and eliminated discretionary spending.”

### **Lipocine**

Lipocine Inc., based in Salt Lake City, reported a net loss of \$5.8 million, or 14 cents per share, for the first quarter ended March 31. That compares with a loss of \$3.2 million, or 14 cents per share, for the same quarter a year earlier.

Lipocine is a clinical-stage biopharmaceutical company focused on metabolic and endocrine disorders.

### **Vivint Solar**

Vivint Solar Inc., based in Lehi, reported a net loss attributable to common shareholders

of \$40.3 million, or 32 cents per share, for the first quarter ended March 31. That compares to a loss of \$2.2 million, or 22 cents per share, for the same quarter a year earlier.

Revenue in the most recent quarter totaled \$91.2 million, up from \$69.4 million in the year-earlier quarter.

Vivint Solar is a residential solar provider in the United States.

“COVID-19 has been unlike any other crisis that we have experienced in our lifetimes,” David Bywater, CEO, said in announcing the results.

“The health and safety of our customers and employees has been our greatest concern during this pandemic. We have responded by making painful but necessary changes to our sales practices and cost structure. Our team has shown great resilience and remains focused on the values of our business. Although our volumes have declined, we expect that navigating this crisis will make us a stronger and more nimble company in the future.”

### **CleanSpark**

CleanSpark Inc., based in Salt Lake City, reported that revenues for the seven months prior to April 30 were about \$5.6 million, which is above its revenues for the entire 2019 fiscal year by 24 percent.

CleanSpark is a software and services company.

“We have achieved significant progress even in the face of COVID-19,” Zach Bradford, CEO, said in announcing the results. “Our current fiscal year-to-date revenues through April 30, 2020, of approximately \$5.6 million represent an increase of approximately 414 percent over the comparable year-to-date revenues in 2019. Our projections lead us to believe that we can maintain course and double our 2019 fiscal year revenues in 2020 and achieve our corporate goal of profitability by the end of this calendar year.”

### **Utah Medical Products**

Utah Medical Products Inc., based in Salt Lake City, reported net income of \$3.1 million, or 84 cents per share, for the 2020 first quarter. Those figures are flat with the same quarter a year earlier.

Sales in the most recent quarter totaled \$10.9 million, up from \$10.7 million in the year-earlier quarter.

Utah Medical Products develops, manufactures and markets disposable and reusable specialty medical devices.

“Despite 1Q 2020 overall higher sales and gross profits, those increases fell short of UTMD’s expectations due to a delay in ‘elective surgeries’ resulting from COVID-19,” Kevin Cornwell, CEO, said in announcing the results. “Sales of the Filshie Clip System worldwide fell precipi-

tously in March, and have continued that way in April. Filshie device sales were 36 percent of consolidated UTMD revenues in 2019, and were projected to grow in 2020 as a result of direct to end-user distribution in the U.S.”

Cornwell said the company does not expect any shortage of its specialty devices.

“Fortunately, despite current challenges, we can operate exempt from the CARES Act without government support and any restrictions that might go along with that, such as limits on share repurchases and dividends. In other words, I am confident in the company’s continued viability and the prospect that future stockholder dividends are safe.”

### **Vivint Smart Home**

Vivint Smart Home Inc., based in Provo, with its indirect subsidiary, APX Group Holdings Inc., reported a net loss of \$138.1 million for the first quarter ended March 31. That compares with a net loss of \$89.2 million for the same quarter a year earlier.

The most recent quarter included \$20.9 million in restructuring costs.

Revenues in the most recent quarter totaled \$303.2 million, up from \$276.2 million in the year-earlier quarter.

Vivint is a smart home company.

“We are pleased with our strong first-quarter results, highlighted by improving momentum in new subscriber adds, double-digit revenue growth, and a sharp increase in profitability from the prior year,” Todd Pedersen, CEO, said in announcing the results.

“We know from experience that our customers value our services even more during extraordinarily difficult and uncertain times like these. We are confident that our customers will continue to prioritize home security and smart home technology through the current pandemic as well.”

### **USANA Health Sciences**

USANA Health Sciences Inc., based in Salt Lake City, reported net income of \$26.6 million, or \$1.23 per share, for the first quarter ended March 28. That compares with \$24.2 million, or \$1.01 per share, for the same quarter a year earlier.

Sales in the most recent quarter totaled \$266.6 million, down from \$272 million in the prior-year period.

USANA develops and manufactures nutritional supplements, healthy foods and personal care products that are sold directly to associates and preferred customers.

“During this unprecedented period, we extend our gratitude to medical personnel, health officials, government leaders and volunteers around the world who are work-

ing tirelessly to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic,” Kevin Guest, CEO, said in announcing the results.

More people are working from home and virtually, he said. “Although these modifications, and COVID-19 in general, negatively impacted our business during the quarter, strong consumer demand for our high-quality, essential, health products and successful promotions helped us deliver operating results moderately ahead of our expectations,” he said.

The company’s manufacturing facilities in the U.S. and China remain fully operational and the company has experienced no meaningful disruptions to its worldwide supply chain, he said.

### **Myriad Genetics**

Myriad Genetics Inc., based in Salt Lake City, reported a net loss of \$115.2 million, or \$1.55 per share, for the fiscal third quarter ended March 31. That compares with net income of \$6.9 million, or 9 cents per share, for the same quarter a year earlier.

Revenue in the most recent quarter totaled \$164 million, down from \$216.6 million in the year-earlier quarter.

Myriad discovers and commercializes molecular diagnostic tests that determine the risk of developing disease, accurately diagnose disease, assess the risk of disease progression, and guide treatment decisions.

“We saw several signs of improved business progress in the fiscal third quarter and test volumes were trending above expectations prior to the initiation of social distancing policies in mid-March,” R. Bryan Riggsbee, interim president and CEO and chief financial officer, said in announcing the results.

“These policies have led to unprecedented delays in elective testing for the lab industry and negatively impacted all aspects of our business.”

On April 8, Myriad withdrew its annual financial guidance and is not issuing new financial guidance due to the business uncertainty created by the COVID-19 pandemic.

### **Purple Innovation**

Purple Innovation Inc., based in Lehi, reported net income of \$20 million, or 11 cents per share, for the first quarter ended March 31. That compares with a net loss of \$720,000, or 2 cents per share, for the same quarter a year earlier.

Revenue in the most recent quarter totaled \$122.4 million, up from \$83.6 million in the year-earlier quarter.

Purple is a comfort products designer and manufacturer.

“Our first-quarter performance improved significantly year-over-year despite the challenges created by the COVID-19 pandemic,” Joe Megibow, CEO,

said in announcing the results. “We entered the new year with great momentum in our business and strategies in place to build on our recent performance.”

The COVID-19 pandemic disrupted the company’s plans, particularly for its wholesale channel as most states enacted temporary shutdowns of non-essential businesses and shelter-at-home directives.

The company reacted by scaling back mattress production, furloughing employees, postponing investments in capacity and retail showroom expansion, and deferring executive and board compensation.

The company has withdrawn its fiscal year guidance due to uncertainty related to the pandemic.

### **Nature’s Sunshine**

Nature’s Sunshine Products Inc., based in Lehi, reported net income of \$3 million, or 15 cents per share, for the first quarter ended March 31. That compares with \$1.7 million, or 9 cents per share, for the same quarter a year earlier.

Sales in the most recent quarter totaled \$95.9 million, up from \$91.3 million in the year-earlier quarter.

Nature’s Sunshine is a manufacturer and sells nutritional and personal care products.

Responding to COVID-19, the company implemented procedures to comply with established safety protocols, ensuring production and distribution operations could effectively and safely meet strong consumer demand, according to Terrence Moorehead, CEO.

“We were successful, supporting a rapid acceleration of sales in several markets as the pandemic escalated. While this initial surge is not expected to continue in the second quarter as volumes have begun to normalize more recently and macroeconomic challenges will be difficult to forecast, we have seen the strong foundation and demand for Nature’s Sunshine products globally,” he said.

### **Clarus**

Clarus Corp., based in Salt Lake City, reported net income of \$36,000, or zero cents per share, for the first quarter ended March 31. That compares with \$3.8 million, or 12 cents per share, for the same quarter a year earlier.

Sales in the most recent quarter totaled \$53.6 million, down from \$61.2 million in the year-earlier quarter.

Clarus develops, manufactures and distributes outdoor equipment and lifestyle products, with brands including Black Diamond, Sierra, PIEPS and SKINORISHMENT.

# Calendar

Calendar listings are provided as a free service to our readers. Information about upcoming events may be sent to [brice@slenterprise.com](mailto:brice@slenterprise.com). The submission deadline is one week before publication. NOTE: Because of concerns with the coronavirus, events listed here may be postponed or canceled. Check with organizers to determine if individual events are taking place.

## May 19-20, 8 a.m.-noon

**“Introduction to Excel,”** a Salt Lake Community College event. Microsoft Excel is a popular software program used for creating budgets, producing graphs and charts, and organizing data. This course will teach ribbon tabs, commands, and basic budget and spreadsheet setup. Event takes place online. Cost is \$249. Details at <https://www.slcc.edu/workforce/courses/employee-development.aspx>.

## May 19-20, 10-11:30 a.m.

**“Employment Law for Managers,”** a Salt Lake Community College event. Speaker is attorney Jonathan Driggs, who will cover realistic scenarios and how to navigate employment law challenges created by the coronavirus pandemic. Event takes place online. Cost is \$149. Details at <https://www.slcc.edu/workforce/courses/employee-development.aspx>.

## May 19, 11:30 a.m.-1 p.m.

**Lunch Event,** a Holladay Chamber of Commerce event. Location is Taqueria 27, Holladay, 4670 Holladay Blvd. East, Holladay. Details are at [holladaychamber.com](http://holladaychamber.com).

## May 19, 3-4:30 p.m.

**“Jump Start: Intro to Entrepreneurship,”** a Women’s Business Center of Utah event. Event takes place online (registration is required). Free. Details are at [wbcutah.org](http://wbcutah.org).

## May 20, 11 a.m.

**Spring 2020 Real Estate Economic Forecast,** for ULI (Urban Land Institute) members only and part of the ULI Spring Meeting Webinar Series taking place through June 19. Speakers are Mark Wilschmann (moderator), MetLife Investment Management-Real Estate; Stuart Hoffman, PNC Financial Services Group; Suzanne Mulvey, GID Real Estate Investments; and Tim Wang, Clarion Partners. Event takes place online. Free for ULI members. Full schedule is available at [spring.uli.org](http://spring.uli.org).

## May 20, 3:30-5 p.m.

**“Business Connections,”** a ChamberWest event. Event takes

place online. Details are at [www.chamberwest.com](http://www.chamberwest.com).

## May 21, 10 a.m.-3:30 p.m.

**“Employers Guide to Pandemics Conference: 2020 and Beyond,”** an Employers Council event providing attendees with information on the lessons employers have learned from the COVID-19 crisis, insights into the unexpected opportunities that have been uncovered for workers and employers alike, and the tools businesses will need to rebuild their workplace and to prepare for the post-pandemic future. Event takes place online via Zoom. Cost starts at \$125 for members, \$145 for nonmembers. Details are at [employerscouncil.org](http://employerscouncil.org).

## May 21, 11:30 a.m.-1 p.m.

**“Multiplying Lasting Profitable Relationships,”** a West Jordan Chamber of Commerce event. Presenter is Clay Neves of Personal Sales Dynamics. Location is West Jordan City Hall Community Room, 8000 S. Redwood Road, West Jordan. Free for members, \$10 for nonmembers. Details are at [westjordan-chamber.com](http://westjordan-chamber.com).

## May 22, 1-3 p.m.

**“Pitch Deck Basics for Beginners,”** a VentureCapital.Org event featuring the basics in creating an investor presentation. Event takes place online via Zoom. Cost is \$50. Registration can be completed at [Eventbrite.com](http://Eventbrite.com).

## May 26, 10-11 a.m.

**“Art of Negotiation,”** a West Jordan Chamber of Commerce event. Presenter is Marty Gale. Location is West Jordan Chamber, 8000 S. Redwood Road, West Jordan. Free. Details are at [westjordan-chamber.com](http://westjordan-chamber.com).

## May 26, noon-1 p.m.

**Women in Business Professional Growth Series,** a ChamberWest “Lunch Break” event. Speaker Michelle McCullough will discuss tips on how to navigate challenges and be a source for good both personally and professionally. Event takes place online via Zoom. Details are at [chamberwest.com](http://chamberwest.com).

## May 26, 1-2:30 p.m.

**“Business Essentials: Being Courageous in Your Life and Business,”** a Women’s Business Center of Utah event. Speaker is Annie Sisson. Event takes place online. Free. Details are at [wbcutah.org](http://wbcutah.org).

## May 27, 7:30-8:30 a.m.

**Coffee Connection,** a Holladay Chamber of Commerce

event. Location is Kokopellis Koffee House, 3955 S. Highland Drive, Holladay. Details are at [holladaychamber.com](http://holladaychamber.com).

## May 27, 8-9 a.m.

**Workforce Seminar: “Building a Business Culture of Inclusivity and Diversity.”** Speaker is Anita Fleming-Rife, president and CEO of AmericaOne Diversity & Inclusion Solutions. Event takes place online via Zoom. Free, but registration is required. Registration can be completed at <https://bit.ly/WF0527>.

## May 27, 8 a.m.-4 p.m.

**Utah Women’s Entrepreneurial Conference 2020,** featuring general sessions, breakouts and a grant-pitching competition. Theme is “Driving Growth: Strategies to Kick Your Business Into Gear.” Event takes place online. Early-bird registration cost is \$59, \$79 thereafter. Details are at <https://www.utahwec.com/>.

## May 27, 8:30-10 a.m.

**“Retaliation: The Trap That Keeps Catching Employers,”** an Employers Council event that is part of the five-part Legal Breakfast Briefing Series. Location is Employers Council, Utah office, 423 W. Broadway, Suite 200, Salt Lake City. Cost is \$99. Details are at [employerscouncil.org](http://employerscouncil.org).

## May 27, noon-1:30 p.m.

**“Solve the Business Puzzle: Let’s Talk Recovery for Rural Utah,”** a Women’s Business Center of Utah event. Speakers include Debbie Drake, Women’s Business Center of Utah; Kara Laws, Small Town Hub; Mike Sarles, Utah State University Extension; and DebraLee Terry, Financial Liberty. Event takes place online. Free. Details are at [wbcutah.org](http://wbcutah.org).

## May 28, 3-4:30 p.m.

**“Understanding Financial Statements to Manage Your Business,”** a Women’s Business Center of Utah event. Event takes place online. Free, but registration is required. Details are at [wbcutah.org](http://wbcutah.org).

## May 28, 4:30 p.m.

**WLI Candid Conversations Social Hour,** hosted by Women’s Leadership Initiative of the Urban Land Institute (ULI). Event takes place online. Free for ULI members, \$15 for nonmembers. Details are at [https://netforum.uli.org/eweb/DynamicPage.aspx?webcode=EventInfo&Reg\\_evt\\_key=69814A76-BB96-4D95-A429-09E7E2E9EBF8](https://netforum.uli.org/eweb/DynamicPage.aspx?webcode=EventInfo&Reg_evt_key=69814A76-BB96-4D95-A429-09E7E2E9EBF8).

## May 29, 9-11 a.m.

**“How to Raise Money: Cap Table Considerations,”** a VentureCapital.Org event. Event takes place online via Zoom. Cost is \$30. Registration can be completed at [Eventbrite.com](http://Eventbrite.com).

## June 1, 7 a.m.-2 p.m.

**Chamber Champions Golf Tournament 2020,** a Utah Valley Chamber event. Location is Fox Hollow Golf Club, 1400 N. 200 E., American Fork. Cost is \$450 for members, \$600 for nonmembers, \$1,500 per foursome. Details are at [thechamber.org](http://thechamber.org).

## June 2, 11:30 a.m.-1 p.m.

**Business Alliance Networking Luncheon,** a Davis Chamber of Commerce event. Location is Boondocks Fun Center, 525 Deseret Drive, Kaysville. Free. No RSVP required. Details are at [davischamberofcommerce.com](http://davischamberofcommerce.com).

## June 2, noon-1 p.m.

**“Building Earthquake Resilient Communities,”** a ULI (Urban Land Institute) Utah event that was originally scheduled for May 14. Speakers are Nick Norris, planning director for Salt Lake City (moderator); Ibrahim Almufti, structural engineer and risk and resilience leader for Arup San Francisco; Marissa Aho, chief resilience officer for the city of Houston and former CRO for the city of Los Angeles; and Greg Schulz, municipal administrator for the Magna Metro Township. Event takes place online. Cost is \$10 for ULI members, \$20 for nonmembers. Details are at <https://utah.uli.org/events-2/>.

## June 3, 9-10 a.m.

**“Three Keys to Healthy HR,”** a Women’s Business Center of Utah event that is part of its “Coffee with Clancy” series. Speakers are Jill Shroyer, founder and lead consultant, Expedition HR; and Clancy Stone, business advisor for the northern region for the Women’s Business Center of Utah. Event takes place online. Free. Details are at [wbcutah.org](http://wbcutah.org).

## June 3, 3:30-5 p.m.

**“Business Connections and Bowling,”** a ChamberWest event. Location is All-Star Bowling & Entertainment, 1776 W. 7800 S., West Jordan. Cost is \$15 for members, \$20 for nonmembers. Details are at [chamberwest.com](http://chamberwest.com).

## June 3, 6-8 p.m.

**“Starting Your Business,”** a Small Business Development Center (SBDC) event. Location is Salt Lake SBDC, Salt Lake Community College, Building 5, Room 110, 9750 S. 300 W., Sandy.

Free. Details are at <https://clients.utahsbdc.org/events.aspx>.

## June 4, 7:30-9 a.m.

**Morning Speaker Series,** an Ogden-Weber Chamber of Commerce event. Location is Weber Center, 2380 Washington Blvd., Ogden. Free for chamber members and first-time guests. Details are at [ogdenweberchamber.com](http://ogdenweberchamber.com).

## June 4, 8:30-11:30 a.m.

**“Harassment Prevention for Managers and Supervisors,”** an Employers Council event. Location is Employers Council, Utah office, 423 W. Broadway, Suite 200, Salt Lake City. Cost is \$145. Details are at [employerscouncil.org](http://employerscouncil.org).

## June 5, 8-10 a.m.

**Friday Forum,** a Utah Valley Chamber event. Location is Utah Valley Convention Center, 220 W. Center St., No. 200, Provo. Details are at [thechamber.org](http://thechamber.org).

## June 5, 8-10 a.m.

**First Friday Face to Face,** a West Jordan Chamber of Commerce event. Location is Megaplex Theatres, second floor, The District, 3761 W. Parkway Plaza Drive, South Jordan. Details are at [westjordan-chamber.com](http://westjordan-chamber.com).

## June 9, 8 a.m.-4 p.m.

**“Coaching for Results,”** part of the Salt Lake Community College Frontline Leader Workshop Series featuring information about how to apply the coaching process to ensure performance, productivity and profitability and to help people meet or exceed expectations through effective coaching relationships. Location is SLCC’s Miller Campus in Sandy. Cost is \$250. Details at <https://www.slcc.edu/workforce/courses/frontlineleader.aspx>.

## June 10, 5-7 p.m.

**Business After Hours,** an Ogden-Weber Chamber of Commerce event. Location is The Argo House, 529 25th St., No. 200, Ogden. Free for chamber members and first-time guests, \$10 for nonmembers. Details are at [ogdenweberchamber.com](http://ogdenweberchamber.com).

## June 11, 8:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m.

**“Orientation/Onboarding Essentials: Accelerating Competence, Connection and Commitment,”** an Employers Council event. Location is Employers Council, Utah office, 423 W. Broadway, Suite 200, Salt Lake

# Succeeding in Your Business

## A pandemic survival lesson from ancient Rome

As a lifelong student of history and philosophy (my two college majors), I always look for the bigger picture when following events in the news.

While many history-minded commentators are comparing the COVID-19 pandemic to previous epidemiological disasters, such as the bubonic plague pandemic, which devastated Europe in the 1350s, or the Great Plague that devastated London in 1665-1666, not so many have looked for historical antecedents to the (almost) unprecedented intrusion of government into our lives the past few weeks.

Make no mistake about it. Whatever your views of democratic socialism, it is what we are all living now. Government, believing (in good faith, let it be said) that it is acting in our best interests, is now telling us who can leave their homes, who stays indoors, how many people are allowed in a supermarket at one time, what we wear when we do go outdoors or get our hair cut — micromanaging our lives in ways few of us would have tolerated before the pandemic.

It is also a sad commentary

on world events that authoritarian governments such as those of China and Russia are doing a better job of managing the pandemic than democratic, market-oriented governments (one outlier being Belarus, whose dictator-for-life has chosen to keep his economy open on the theory that it is “better to die on your feet than live on your knees”).

One of the inconvenient truths of human history is that while democracy is “the worst form of government, except for all the others” (Winston S. Churchill), in times of crisis, nothing beats top-down, military-style autocracy.

The ancient Romans knew this better than anyone.

In the earliest days of the Roman Republic (roughly 500 B.C. to 50 B.C.), Rome was governed by a “senate” that made and enforced the laws. Unlike today’s legislative bodies, the senate was not popularly elected but rather consisted of representatives of the wealthiest and most influential families (or clans) in the region surrounding Rome — an oligarchy, if you will, not a democracy.

The senate elected two of

its members (called “duovirs” or “consul”) to perform the executive functions of government for two-year periods. Term limits for the consuls were “de rigueur” — rarely did they serve consecutive terms — and although senators generally served for as long as they wanted to, they were subject to removal if they engaged in improper or illegal behavior.

During peacetime, the senate system of government worked well enough. What’s really interesting about the system is what happened during periods of crisis, such as Hannibal’s invasion of Italy in the early second century B.C. or the Social Wars of the early first century B.C.

When Rome was threatened, the Senate suspended government as usual and appointed one of its members — the one with the most and best military experience — to serve during the crisis as sole ruler with virtually dictatorial powers. This individual was called the “imperator” — literally, “emergency person” (see the Wikipedia page for imperator) — and this is probably where the word “emperor” originated.

During its 500-year existence, the republic appointed an imperator on about a dozen occasions — some of the best known are Cincinnatus

(after whom Cincinnati, Ohio, is named) and Scipio Africanus (the guy who whipped Hannibal and the Carthaginians about 200 B.C.). And each time — here is the truly amazing thing — the emperor voluntarily handed power back to the senate when the crisis passed and government as usual could resume.

The fact that for nearly 500 years, none of these individuals chose to make their emergency powers permanent and become a dictator for life is a tribute to the moral values the Roman system of education instilled in its young people. This system ended, as every student of history knows, when a wild and crazy emperor named Julius Caesar crossed the Rubicon in 49 B.C., broke with tradition and appointed himself “dictator perpetuo” at the head of a huge army, ending the republic and giving birth to the Roman Empire. A couple of years later, he took a couple dozen daggers in the back, showing that old traditions die hard.

Probably the greatest weakness of democratic government is that it is slow to react in times of emergency. By its nature, democracy relies on the consensus of the governed, and consensus takes time to build. When a democratic

system works the way it should, government is restrained from taking action (and is sometimes gridlocked) until a sizable majority of citizens determines that action is appropriate (and is willing to pay the price for such action).

Many intelligent, highly educated people are looking at the way China and Russia have dealt with the coronavirus and are wondering if an authoritarian system is a superior way to deal with pandemics, climate change and other emerging threats to our safety that require long-term planning.

This is nothing new — the intelligentsia were similarly impressed by Soviet Russia and fascist Italy during the Great Depression of the 1930s and predicted democracy’s obsolescence. They were wrong then, and they are wrong now.

The ancient Romans got it right — emperors have power only until the crisis passes. Patrick Henry got it right — give us liberty or give us death.

Heck, even the dictator of Belarus got it right.

Cliff Ennico (crennico@gmail.com) is a syndicated columnist, author and former host of the PBS television series “Money Hunt.”

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## CALENDAR

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City. Cost is \$145. Details are at employerscouncil.org.

### June 11, 3-4:30 p.m.

“Jump Start: Intro to Entrepreneurship,” a Women’s Business Center of Utah event. Event takes place online (registration is required). Free. Details are at wbcutah.org.

### June 12, 7:45-9 a.m.

Women in Business Networking, an Ogden-Weber Chamber of Commerce event. Location is The Argo House, 529 25th St., No. 200, Ogden. Free for WIB members. Details are at ogdenweberchamber.com.

### June 12, 11:30a.m.-1 p.m.

“Second Friday Casual Lunch,” a ChamberWest event. Location to be determined. Details are at chamberwest.com.

### June 15, 6:30 a.m.-2 p.m.

2020 Annual Golf Tournament, a Davis Chamber of Commerce event. Location is Valley View Golf Course, 2501 E.

Gentile St., Layton. Details are at davischamberofcommerce.com.

### June 16-18

FSMA-PCQI Certification Course, a Salt Lake Community College event featuring how to meet the FDA’s requirements for the Preventive Controls for Human Food regulation of the Food Safety Modernization Act; and how to develop a food safety plan, analyze hazards, and identify preventive controls. Event takes place online. Cost is \$849. Details at <https://www.slcc.edu/workforce/courses/employee-development.aspx>.

### June 16, 8 a.m.-4 p.m.

“Coaching for Results,” part of the Salt Lake Community College Frontline Leader Workshop Series featuring information about how to apply the coaching process to ensure performance, productivity and profitability and to help people meet or exceed expectations through effective coaching relationships. Location is SLCC Westpointe Campus in Salt Lake City. Cost is \$250. Details at <https://www.slcc.edu/workforce/courses/frontline-leader.aspx>.

### June 16, 11:30 a.m.-1 p.m.

Business Alliance Network-

ing Luncheon, a Davis Chamber of Commerce event. Location is Boondocks Fun Center, 525 Deseret Drive, Kaysville. Free. No RSVP required. Details are at davischamberofcommerce.com.

### June 17, 8:30 a.m.-noon

“Performance Documentation Skills,” an Employers Council event. Location is Employers Council, Utah office, 423 W. Broadway, Suite 200, Salt Lake City. Cost is \$145. Details are at employerscouncil.org.

### June 17, 9-10 a.m.

“Women Owned Small Business Certification,” a Women’s Business Center of Utah event that is part of its “Coffee with Clancy” series. Speakers are Speaker Cody Neville, 8(a) program manager in SBA’s Utah District office; and Clancy Stone, business advisor for the northern region for the Women’s Business Center of Utah. Event takes place online. Free. Details are at wbcutah.org.

### June 17, 3:30-5 p.m.

“Business Connections and Bowling,” a ChamberWest event. Location is All-Star Bowling & Entertainment, 1776 W. 7800 S., West Jordan. Cost is \$15 for mem-

bers, \$20 for nonmembers. Details are at chamberwest.com.

### June 18

14th Annual Utah Economic Summit, hosted by Gov. Gary Herbert and presented by the Governor’s Office of Economic Development, World Trade Center Utah and the Salt Lake Chamber. Event includes Utah Global Forum programming. Several general and breakout sessions will address Utah’s role in the global marketplace, how local businesses can benefit from an international strategy and Utah’s already strong track record of global exports. Location is Grand America Hotel, 555 S. Main St., Salt Lake City. Early pricing is \$155. Details to be announced.

### June 18, 11:30 a.m.-1 p.m.

“Multiplying Lasting Profitable Relationships,” a West Jordan Chamber of Commerce event. Presenter is Clay Neves of Personal Sales Dynamics. Location is West Jordan City Hall Community Room, 8000 S. Redwood Road, West Jordan. Free for members, \$10 for nonmembers. Details are at westjordanchamber.com.

### June 22, 7 a.m.-2 p.m.

Classic Golf Tournament, a Salt Lake Chamber event. Events include a 7 a.m. registration/breakfast and 8 a.m. shotgun start. Location is Salt Lake Country Club, 2400 Country Club Drive, Salt Lake City. Cost is \$500, \$1,800 for a foursome. Details are at slchamber.com.

### June 23, 8:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m.

“I-9: Advanced Practice,” an Employers Council event. Location is Employers Council, Utah office, 423 W. Broadway, Suite 200, Salt Lake City. Cost is \$145. Details are at employerscouncil.org.

### June 23, 9-10:30 a.m.

“Jump Start: Intro to Entrepreneurship,” a Women’s Business Center of Utah event. Event takes place online (registration is required). Free. Details are at wbcutah.org.

### June 23, 10-11 a.m.

“Art of Negotiation,” a West Jordan Chamber of Commerce event. Speaker is Marty Gale.

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## CALENDAR

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Location is West Jordan Chamber, 8000 S. Redwood Road, West Jordan. Free. Details are at west-jordanchamber.com.

### **June 23, 11 a.m.-1 p.m.**

**“Business Women’s Forum: Cultivating Strength, Bravery and Confidence.”** Location is Hilton Garden Inn Salt Lake City Downtown, 250 W. 600 S., Salt Lake City. Cost is \$30 for members, \$40 for nonmembers. Details are at slchamber.com.

### **June 23, 11:30 a.m.-1 p.m.**

**Lunch Event**, a Holladay Chamber of Commerce event. Location is Taqueria 27, Holladay, 4670 Holladay Blvd. East, Holladay. Details are at holladaychamber.com.

### **June 23, 11:30 a.m.-1 p.m.**

**Women in Business Luncheon**, an Ogden-Weber Chamber of Commerce event. Location is The Monarch, 455 25th St., Ogden. Free for WIB members, \$20 for first-time guests, \$30 for nonmembers. Details are at ogdenweberchamber.com.

### **June 24, 7:30-8:30 a.m.**

**Coffee Connection**, a Hol-

laday Chamber of Commerce event. Location is Coffee & Cocoa, 6556 S. 3000 E., Holladay. Details are at holladaychamber.com.

### **June 24, 8:30 a.m.-4 p.m.**

**“Supervision: Critical Skills for Effective Leaders,”** an Employers Council event. Location is Employers Council, Utah office, 423 W. Broadway, Suite 200, Salt Lake City. Cost is \$225. Details are at employerscouncil.org.

### **June 24, 11:30 a.m.**

**“Mid-Year Construction Forecast Review for Utah and the Region,”** hosted by the Mountainlands Area Plan Room to benefit the American Society of Professional Estimators (ASPE) and the National Association of Women in Construction (NAWIC) Utah chapters. Location is Megaplex at Valley Fair Mall, 3620 S. 2400 W., West Valley City. Cost is \$25 pre-paid donation to NAWIC or ASPE, \$35 at the door. Seating is limited to the first 100 paid RSVPs. RSVPs can be completed by contacting Mike Luke at mike@MAPR.com.

### **June 26, 8-11 a.m.**

**Professional Development Workshop**, a Salt Lake Chamber event. Sara Jones, president

of InclusionPro, will discuss “Inclusion by Design.” Location is the Salt Lake Chamber, 175 E. 400 S., Suite 600, Salt Lake City. Cost is \$75 for members, \$99 for nonmembers. Details are at slchamber.com.

### **June 29, 3-4:30 p.m.**

**“Understanding Financial Statements to Manage Your Business,”** a Women’s Business Center of Utah event. Event takes place online. Free, but registration is required. Details are at wbc-utah.org.

### **July 1, 3:30-5 p.m.**

**“Business Connections and Bowling,”** a ChamberWest event. Location is All-Star Bowling & Entertainment, 1776 W. 7800 S., West Jordan. Cost is \$15 for members, \$20 for nonmembers. Details are at chamberwest.com.

### **July 7, 11:30 a.m.-1 p.m.**

**Business Alliance Networking Luncheon**, a Davis Chamber of Commerce event. Location is Boondocks Fun Center, 525 Deseret Drive, Kaysville. Free. No RSVP required. Details are at davis-chamberofcommerce.com.

### **July 8, noon-1 p.m.**

**“Startup Stories,”** a Kiln

event featuring speaker Syd Mcgee, CEO of Studio Mcgee. Location is Kiln, 2701 N. Thanksgiving Way, Suite 100, Lehi. Details are at kiln.co.events.

### **July 9, 8:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m.**

**“Conflict: Recognizing and Navigating Workplace Differences,”** an Employers Council event. Location is Employers Council, Utah office, 423 W. Broadway, Suite 200, Salt Lake City. Cost is \$145. Details are at employerscouncil.org.

### **July 10, 7:45-9 a.m.**

**WIB Networking**, an Ogden-Weber Chamber of Commerce event. Location is The Argo House, 529 25th St., Ogden. Free for WIB members. Details are at ogdenweberchamber.com.

### **July 15, 8-10 a.m.**

**M.A.C.H. Speed Networking**, a Murray Area Chamber of Commerce event. Location is Urban Arts Gallery, 166 S. Rio Grande St., The Gateway, Salt Lake City. Free with pre-registration. Details are at murraychamber.org.

### **July 15, 8:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m.**

**“Family and Medical Leave Act Advanced Practice,”** an Employers Council event. Location is Employers Council, Utah office, 423 W. Broadway, Suite 200, Salt Lake City. Cost is \$145. Details are at employerscouncil.org.

### **July 15, 3:30-5 p.m.**

**“Business Connections and Bowling,”** a ChamberWest event. Location is All-Star Bowling & Entertainment, 1776 W. 7800 S., West Jordan. Cost is \$15 for members, \$20 for nonmembers. Details are at chamberwest.com.

### **July 16, 8:30-10:30 a.m.**

**“Confidentiality and Privacy Rights in the Workplace: Briefing for Managers and Supervisors,”** an Employers Council event. Location is Employers Council, Utah office, 423 W. Broadway, Suite 200, Salt Lake City. Cost is \$99. Details are at employerscouncil.org.

### **July 16, 5-7 p.m.**

**Business After Hours**, a Salt Lake Chamber event originally scheduled for May 21. Location is Squatters Pub, 147 W. Broadway (300 S.), Salt Lake City. Cost is \$7 through July 9 for members, \$10 for members the week of the event, \$15 for nonmembers. Details are at slchamber.com.

### **July 17, 8 a.m.-noon.**

**“You’ve Got Two Minutes: Modifying Your Message for Any Audience,”** a Salt Lake Chamber event. Speaker is Bill

Nixon, chairman and CEO of Policy Impact Communications. Location is Salt Lake Chamber, 175 E. 400 S., Suite 600, Salt Lake City. Workshop costs \$99 for members, \$149 for nonmembers. Course fee for “Mastering Media Management” is \$350 for members, \$550 for nonmembers (includes three workshops during 2020). Details are at slchamber.com.

### **July 21, 11:30 a.m.-1 p.m.**

**Business Alliance Networking Luncheon**, a Davis Chamber of Commerce event. Location is Boondocks Fun Center, 525 Deseret Drive, Kaysville. Free. No RSVP required. Details are at davischamberofcommerce.com.

### **July 22, 5-7 p.m.**

**Business After Hours**, an Ogden-Weber Chamber of Commerce event. Location is Ogden Pioneer Days Office, 1810 Washington Blvd., Ogden. Free for chamber members and first-time guests, \$10 for nonmembers. Details are at ogdenweberchamber.com.

### **July 28, 8:30 a.m.-4 p.m.**

**“Lead Worker Training,”** an Employers Council event. Location is Employers Council, Utah office, 423 W. Broadway, Suite 200, Salt Lake City. Cost is \$225. Details are at employerscouncil.org.

### **July 28, 11:30 a.m.-1 p.m.**

**Women in Business Luncheon**, an Ogden-Weber Chamber of Commerce event. Location is The Monarch, 455 25th St., Ogden. Cost is \$20 for WIB first-time guests, \$30 for nonmembers. Details are at ogdenweberchamber.com.

### **July 29, 7:30-8:30 a.m.**

**Coffee Connection**, a Holladay Chamber of Commerce event. Location is Kokopellis Koffee House, 3955 S. Highland Drive, Holladay. Details are at holladaychamber.com.

### **July 30, 8:30 a.m.-4 p.m.**

**“Supervisory Skills Program,”** an Employers Council event over four consecutive Thursdays. Location is Employers Council, Utah office, 423 W. Broadway, Suite 200, Salt Lake City. Cost is \$740. Details are at employerscouncil.org.

### **Aug. 4, 8:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m.**

**“HR Management Program: Introduction to Core HR Functions,”** an Employers Council event taking place over five consecutive Tuesdays. Location is Employers Council, Utah office, 423 W. Broadway, Suite 200, Salt Lake City. Cost is \$740. Details are at employerscouncil.org.

## EARNINGS

*from page 12*

“We began the year with great momentum after record financial results in 2019,” John Walbrecht, president, said in announcing the results. “However, in the final weeks of the quarter, our Black Diamond business experienced a dramatic global slowdown as our retail partners shut their doors and cancelled open orders due to the COVID-19 pandemic.”

The company, he said, has “the structural elements to benefit from what we believe, at least in the near-term, will be increased staycations and higher levels of interest in health, wellness and the outdoors. We also think these mega-trends play well when the consumer heads back outside after many weeks under stay-at-home ordinances.”

The company has withdrawn its guidance issued March 9 due to the pandemic effects.

### **Park City Group**

Park City Group Inc., reported net income of \$272,000, or 1 cent per share, for the fiscal third quarter ended March 31. That compares with \$1 million, or 5 cents per share, for the same quarter a year earlier.

Revenues in the most recent quarter totaled \$4.6 million, down

from \$5 million in the year-earlier quarter.

Park City Group, is the parent company of ReposiTrak Inc., a compliance, supply chain and e-commerce platform for retailers, wholesalers and their suppliers.

“The COVID-19 pandemic has impacted nearly everyone, and certainly the grocery supply chain has been profoundly affected,” Randall K. Fields, chairman and CEO, said in announcing the results. “In the short term, this situation has benefited transaction revenue from our MarketPlace platform, while impacting ReposiTrak revenues as our customers shifted their full attention to more pressing pandemic-related matters.”

Fields said the company has “taken steps to reduce our expenditures during these challenging times, and we are positioning ourselves to weather the storm. ... We believe the disruptions will cause a great deal of re-thinking about the food supply chain, and the we will be able to assist our customers building a more resilient system in the future.”

### **Huntsman**

Huntsman, with main offices in Salt Lake City and Texas, reported net income of \$708 million, or \$3.16 per share, for the first quarter ended March 31 That compares with \$131 million, or 51

cents per share, for the same quarter a year earlier.

Revenues in the most recent quarter totaled \$1.59 billion, down from \$1.67 billion in the year-earlier quarter.

Huntsman manufactures and markets chemicals.

“Fortunately, we have been well-prepared for this global economic crisis,” Peter R. Huntsman, chairman, president and CEO, said in announcing the results. “The ongoing transformation of our business has made us a much better company. Our balance sheet is stronger than ever before, with significant cash and robust liquidity. Visibility has at no time been more difficult, but our portfolio of businesses has never been more differentiated.”

### **Dominion Energy**

Dominion Energy, based in Virginia but with natural gas customers in Utah, reported a net loss of \$270 million, or 34 cents per share, for the first quarter ended March 31. That compares with a loss of \$680 million, or 86 cents per share, for the same quarter a year earlier.

Operating revenue in the most recent quarter totaled \$4.5 billion, up from \$3.9 billion in the year-earlier quarter.

Dominion has more than 7 million electricity or natural gas customers in 20 states, including Utah.

## Opinion

# Plenty to go around as coronavirus blame game continues to spread

The coronavirus did apparently originate in China. Now Pres. Donald Trump wants to punish that country for its role in letting the virus spread to the United States. This is just another poor excuse to push the same protectionist policies he has always favored. It's also a way for him to deflect responsibility for the failures of his own administration and the many agencies that intrude daily into our lives.

Trump's administration is reportedly exploring the exact details of potential punishments to inflict on China. Among the options being discussed by senior U.S. officials are \$1 trillion in tariffs on Chinese products and canceling part of the U.S. debt obligation to China. While both of these options may hurt China, when all is said and done, Americans will be hurt the most.

This is true even though the Chinese government unquestionably covered up the COVID-19 outbreak and failed to take important measures that could have reduced the virus's spread. While there may be a constructive way to put China on notice, if blame is the name of this game, there's

plenty to go around. For instance, some could blame Trump for buying the early Chinese propaganda, as he did in his Jan. 24 tweet: "China has been working very hard to contain the Coronavirus. The United States greatly appreciates their efforts and transparency. It will all work out well. In particular, on behalf of the American People, I want to thank President Xi!"

Trump is also much to blame for the fact that the trade war he started with China has reduced Americans' access to many essential medical supplies to fight the pandemic, including thermometers, face masks, medical-grade personal protective gear and hand sanitizer. It's not for lack of being warned. Economists, healthcare professionals and even lobbyists all told the president that his tariffs would create shortages and higher prices. The president refused to listen. Now Americans and healthcare professionals on the frontlines are paying an exorbitant price.

Of course, some blame also belongs to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and to the Food and Drug

Administration. The first of these agencies is supposed to protect us from this kind of pandemic, while the other is supposed to oversee the production of the drugs, vaccines and technologies that could save us from this nightmare. Let us never forget the crushing events that are unfolding before our eyes and the lives lost to this virus. Some bureaucrats at each agency spread misinformation and displayed a certain level of incompetence.

For instance, CDC employee emails obtained through a Freedom of Information Act request reveal that on Jan. 28, CDC director Robert Redfield sent emails to his employees to inform them that "the virus isn't spreading in the US at this time." In reality, it was indeed spreading and had been for weeks. A month later, the CDC was still telling state and local government officials that its "testing capacity is more than adequate to meet current testing demands." It wasn't. One day, we were supposed to wear masks; the next, we weren't; then we find out that, yes, we should wear masks.

In truth, the CDC and the FDA did their most destructive work when they worked as a tag team. While the FDA

prevented private and academic development of COVID-19 tests for weeks, the CDC arrogantly denied Americans access to functioning foreign tests, only to produce its own defective tests. If time was of the essence to reduce the number of people infected and killed by the virus, the CDC and the FDA only prolonged the testing process when they should have been expediting it. The result has been to force most Americans into their homes voluntarily or under state government mandates, with no hope of getting out because of the lack of testing.

I could go on. The bottom line is that the Chinese government behaved like we expect such an authoritarian regime to behave. Only our president seems to be surprised by that. However, American public officials — including all the members of Congress who passed a poorly designed and massive spending bill — deserve a lot of the blame for the way they behaved during this crisis, too.

Veronique de Rugy is a senior research fellow at the Mercatus Center at George Mason University in Fairfax, Virginia.

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# Why are we seeing so many viruses jump from animals to humans?

The Trump administration and many in Congress are trying to whip the country into an anti-Chinese frenzy because the coronavirus might have been accidentally transmitted from a laboratory rather than a wet market. But surely the larger question we should be asking is why we have been seeing viruses jump from animals to humans with such frequency in recent years. SARS, MERS, ebola, bird flu and swine flu all started as viruses in animals and then jumped to humans, unleashing deadly outbreaks. Why?

Peter Daszak is a disease ecologist and renowned "virus hunter." He ventures into bat caves in full protective gear to get the animals' saliva or blood to determine the origins of a virus. In a conversation with me he was clear: "We are doing things every day that make pandemics more likely. We need to understand, this is not just nature. It is what we are doing to nature."

Remember, most viruses come from animals. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention estimate that three-quarters of new human diseases originate in animals.

The coronavirus might simply have come from one of the wildlife markets in China where live animals are slaughtered and sold, a practice that should be banned around the world. But as human civilization expands — building roads, clearing farmland, constructing factories, excavating mines — we are also destroying the natural habitat of wild animals, bringing them closer and closer to us. Some scientists believe this is making the transmission of diseases from animals to humans far more likely.

The COVID-19 virus appears to have originated in bats, which are particularly good incubators for viruses. Scientists are still studying what happened, but in other cases, we have seen how human encroachment can lead bats to look for food around farmland, where they infect livestock — and through them, humans.

There are other paths for pathogens. The most likely one comes directly from our insatiable appetite for meat. As people around the world get richer, they tend to eat more meat. Some 80 billion land animals are slaughtered for meat each year around the world. Most livestock is factory-farmed — an estimated 99 percent in America, 74 percent around the world, according to one animal rights group. That entails crowding thousands of animals inches from each other in gruesome conditions that are almost designed to incubate viruses and encourage them to spread, getting more virulent with each hop. Vox's Sigal Samuel quotes the biologist Rob Wallace: "Factory farms are the best way to select for the most dangerous pathogens possible."

Factory farms are also ground zero for new, antibiotic-resistant bacteria, which is another path toward widespread human infections. Factory-farmed animals are bombarded with antibiotics, which means the bacteria that survive and flourish are highly potent. Some 2.8 million Americans are sickened by antibiotic-resistant bacteria annually — of whom 35,000 die, according to the CDC.

And then there is climate change, which intensifies everything, transforming ecosystems, forcing more animals out of their

habitats and bringing tropical conditions to places that were previously temperate. *Scientific American* reports, "The warmer, wetter and more variable conditions brought by climate change are ... making it easier to transmit diseases such as malaria, dengue fever, chikungunya, yellow fever, Zika virus, West Nile virus and Lyme disease in many parts of the world." As we change ecosystems and natural habitats, long-dormant diseases can emerge to which we have no immunity.

In May 2015, two-thirds of the world's population of saigas, a small antelope, died suddenly within a few weeks. A bacterium called *Pasteurella multocida*, which had

long lived in the animal without doing harm, suddenly turned virulent. Why? The *Atlantic's* Ed Yong explains that the region was becoming more tropical, and 2015 was a particularly warm, humid year. "When the temperature gets really hot, and the air gets really wet, saiga die. Climate is the trigger, *Pasteurella* is the bullet."

The real scandal is not what China did to us, but what we together are doing to the planet — and what only we together can stop.

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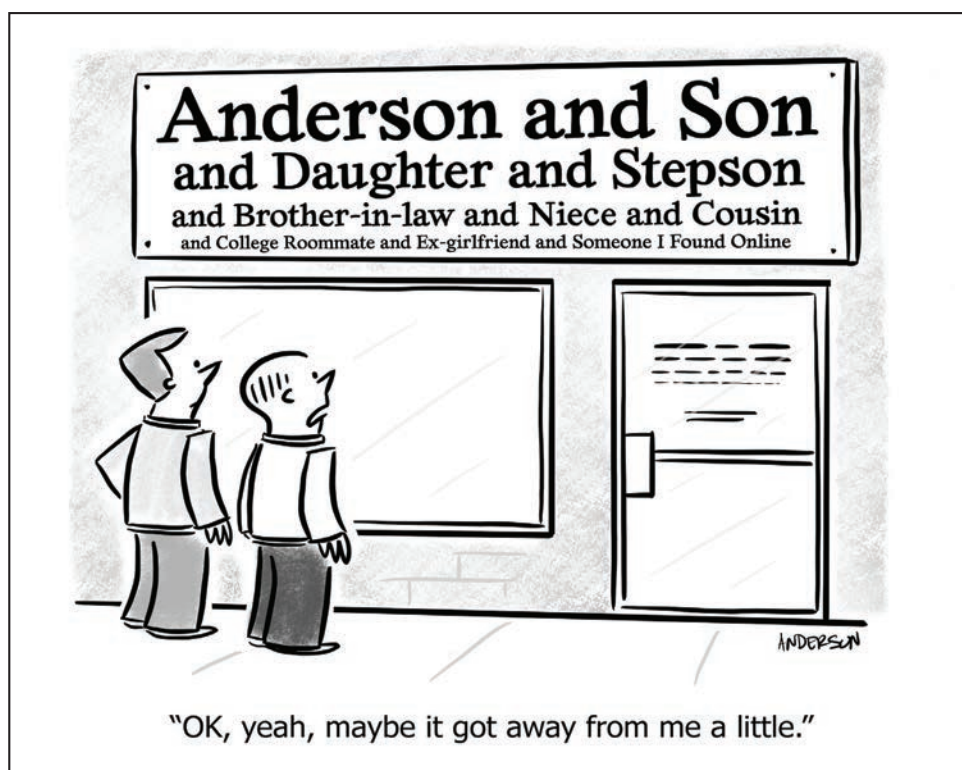
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VERONIQUE  
de RUGY



FAREED  
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## Opinion

# Overzealous lawyers champing at the bit to file coronavirus-related lawsuits

As we restart the economy, U.S. businesses that survive the novel coronavirus pandemic could now face a lawsuit pandemic. That is why Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell, R-Kentucky, is insisting that any further COVID-19 relief legislation include liability protections for U.S. businesses. House Speaker Nancy Pelosi (D-Calif.) calls that “disgraceful.” No, what is disgraceful would be to leave already battered U.S. businesses exposed to legions of overzealous trial lawyers who are champing at the bit to file frivolous lawsuits.

To understand this fight, put yourself in the shoes of a small- or medium-sized-business owner today. Until March, you were doing fine. Indeed, the biggest challenge you had was finding workers — because unemployment was so low that there were more than 1 million more job openings than unemployed Americans to fill them.

Then, suddenly, a once-in-a-generation pathogen arrived on our shores from China — and the government ordered you to cease operations to protect the public health. Overnight, most of your revenue dried up. You were forced to furlough or lay off most of your workers, and now you don't know if you will be able to pay your

rent. If you don't open soon, your business may go under.

Now, after almost two months, you are being told you can reopen. You know opening up is a risk, because the virus has not yet been defeated, but you have no choice. So, you do everything you can to operate safely. You follow all the guidelines that the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and your local health authority recommend — cleaning equipment regularly and requiring your workers and customers to wear masks and practice social distancing.

But despite your best efforts, one of your employees gets sick — and sues you for negligence. Or perhaps you seek to verify an employee's COVID-19 status or their vulnerability due to underlying health conditions and they sue you for violating their health privacy. Or maybe you decide not to hire an at-risk worker and they sue you for age or disability discrimination. Or perhaps shortages of masks and protective gear persist, and so you allow your workers to provide their own — and are sued for failing to supply or train your employees in the use of personal protective equipment.

And it's not just reopened businesses

like yours that need protection. Think of all the grocery stores, pharmacies and other firms that continued to operate through the worst of the pandemic. Are we as a country going to reward them for keeping us supplied during the lockdown by exposing them to frivolous litigation? How about companies that shifted operations to make items that are new to them, such as cleaning products and hand sanitizers? Should they be subject to lawsuits because they stepped up in a crisis to produce things our country desperately needed?

The trial lawyers' lobby cites a poll showing Americans oppose giving businesses “guaranteed immunity” against COVID-19-related lawsuits. But no one is arguing for that kind of blanket protection. Republicans are asking for limited, temporary, targeted liability protections during the COVID-19 national emergency and recovery period — and Americans support that by overwhelming margins. According to a U.S. Chamber Institute for Legal Reform poll, 82 percent of Americans agree that when restaurants, stores and other businesses are allowed to open again they should be not be “sued by people who claim they contracted the coronavirus at that place of business unless the business was grossly negligent.” And 84 percent support “protecting businesses like grocery stores and pharmacies, which have

been allowed to stay open as essential businesses, from lawsuits related to the coronavirus.

In other words, Americans want liability protections for businesses who do their best to operate safely, but they want those protections written carefully so they do not shield bad actors. Why would Democrats oppose such reasonable measures? Because the Democratic Party is a wholly owned subsidiary of the trial lawyers' lobby, who send Democrats 95 percent of their political donations.

To get our economy moving again, we are asking business owners to do something inherently risky: restart operations before we have a therapeutic, much less a vaccine that can immunize people from the virus. When the government first asked businesses to shut down, Congress helped them mitigate the economic risk by passing more than \$2.6 trillion in economic support. Now that we are asking them to reopen, it makes sense to help them mitigate the legal risk by offering them limited protection against frivolous lawsuits that will expire when the danger passes. McConnell is right to stand his ground.

Follow Marc A. Thiessen on Twitter, @marc-thiessen.

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MARC THIESSEN

## WEBINAR

from page 1

“As you all know, we're in a housing shortage. We have been for a good five years or so. And the demand is still there, so this will continue to add more pressure on the housing shortage,” Eskic said. “But we are starting to see a bit of activity pick up. Some builders have looked at their April numbers and they are not as bad as they projected when this whole thing started.”

Widespread unemployment among office-using workers, those using industrial buildings, or those working in construction or the retail sectors “translates into serious headaches for the real estate sectors,” he said. Many renters are unemployed and facing financial issues, which could lead to an increase in evictions and forbearances.

“The demand for a starter home price point is virtually endless in our market,” Eskic said. “We're a younger demographic. Affordability is likely to become an even bigger challenge as we face this thing right now.”

“We're experiencing decrease in supply, record unemployment and lenders stricter in lending requirements. So, it makes buying a home very difficult for everyone right now, but especially for those first-time

homebuyers. We're likely to see a little bump up in credit score requirements or down payments.”

The construction industry likewise started the year strong. “The construction industry, be it commercial or residential construction, carried tremendous momentum into the teeth of this pandemic,” said David Layton, president and CEO of Layton Construction. “Whether you were a small homebuilder or a large commercial contractor like ourselves, backlog and our book of business was very robust. That puts us in a little different circumstance than so many other businesses throughout the country.”

Construction also has been deemed essential, so companies have been able to continue their work, even if faced with new jobsite protocols to ensure safety and health of workers.

“As an industry, we're going to have to really look forward,” Layton said. “I think the momentum has really tempered the impact thus far, but I foresee the next 7 1/2 months being very telling of where our industry ends up going into '21 and '22.”

The industrial market will have to adjust as clients go from a “just in time” inventory to a “just in case” inventory, according to Steve Price, founder and CEO of Price Real Estate. That means that manufacturers and companies distributing consumer product goods

will carry larger inventories and thus need more space.

Brandon Fugal, Utah chairman of commercial real estate company Colliers International, predicted the office market is “going to experience some difficulty,” although not as much as in retail and hospitality. Office users will take a close look at their densities and workspace environments and the ability for employees to telework and likely will reverse the decade-long trend of cramming more employees into less space. Replacing it will be more space between workers in the office.

The current remote-work structure, he said, comes at a cost.

“I think with a few exceptions, it is impossible to maintain a corporate culture, a unique company culture and also accountability in a long-term remote working, Zoom, ‘Brady Bunch’ tile, video-conferencing world,” Fugal said.

While a great tool for productivity, it cannot replace collaboration and ideas that come from “the casual collisions” in the workplace, the ability to see coworkers and drive innovation, he said. The current crisis, he hopes, will underscore the importance of interaction with coworkers and lead companies to make the most of meetings and opportunities to interact in the workplace.

In the retail sector, City Creek Center has been in the early stages of reopening after having been

closed March 20. Linda Wardell, general manager, predicted that City Creek would survive the current crisis, making it among only 250-300 of the 1,200 shopping centers in the U.S. she believes will do so over the next few years.

A key in emerging from the virus crisis will be to make patrons feel safe, she said.

“We think that people will feel safe about coming back downtown and hopefully about coming back to their work environments in downtown Salt Lake City, as well,” she said.

“We think if people don't feel safe, they won't come out of their homes, so even if we do motivate them to leave their homes, once they get here, if they don't feel safe, they certainly are not going to stay, they won't spend money and then they won't make a return

trip.

“And, unfortunately, if we do motivate them to come to City Creek Center and they have a bad experience, they may not go anywhere else. So it's very important that we get it right so [people] do feel safe.”

Fugal said helping retailers, restaurants, entertainment venues and hospitality companies “really is on all of our shoulders going forward.”

“I think we as a community have learned first-hand over the course of the last six weeks how interconnected and codependent we really are,” he said. “And I think being positive, being responsive, being supportive of each other and being quick and nimble to offer solutions will be what sets Utah apart from the rest of the country.”

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## C-19 TEST

from page 1

per day have been given, according to the COVID Tracking Project, mostly due to a lack of testing supplies such as swabs and reagents. Typically, a six-inch swab is inserted through the nose to the back of the cavity for 15 seconds to obtain a sample that is sent to a lab for analysis. Most tests take between four to seven days for the results.

Tabib-Azar's technology, which was profiled in two papers published last month in *IEEE Sensors Journal*, involves just a drop of saliva and can produce results in a minute. It is based on a sensor Tabib-Azar first began developing for the NSF about a year ago to detect the Zika virus. He is now converting the same technology to work with COVID-19.

The sensor would use single-strand DNA called aptamers in the sensor that would attach to the proteins in the COVID-19 virus molecule if it is present. A person would plug the small sensor into the cellphone's power jack and launch an app made for the device. To test for the presence of the virus, the user would place a drop of saliva on the sensor, and the results would appear on the phone. It is designed to also test for the virus on the surface of something, like a table or desk, by brushing a swab on the surface and then on the sensor. And it might be able to detect the presence of COVID-19 in floating microscopic particles in the air in enclosed spaces such as an elevator (while the virus is currently considered not airborne, studies are being conducted to determine if minute particles of the virus can

hang in floating droplets in the air.)

If the virus is present, the DNA strands in the sensor would bind to the virus' proteins and an electrical resistance is measured in the device, signaling a positive result.

Tabib-Azar said the sensor would include an array of tiny devices inside it, each with a DNA strand that looks for a different protein. A specific combination of proteins would be unique to just COVID-19.

"By increasing the number of devices and single-strand DNA, we can increase the sensor's accuracy and reduce the false positives and false negatives," he said.

The sensor is designed to be reusable because it can destroy the previous sample on it by producing a small electrical current that could heat up and remove or disintegrate the virus. Tabib-Azar said the entire process would use little battery power from the cellphone.

Another possible method would involve putting the saliva sample on disposable sheets that are placed on top of the sensor like a Sticky Note. This would decrease cross-contamination on the sensor and eliminate the need to heat up and destroy the sample afterward.

The device also can be designed to upload the results to a central server that maps out positive results in an area, giving researchers a clearer and more accurate picture of where hotspots are with big outbreaks of the virus.

Because Tabib-Azar has already developed the technology — and a prototype — to detect the Zika virus, he said he could have a prototype of the new COVID-19 sensor for clinical trials in two to three months.

## UPDATES

from page 1

### June 17, 8-10 a.m.

**M.A.C.H. Speed Networking**, a Murray Area Chamber of Commerce event at Urban Arts Gallery in Salt Lake City.

### June 24, 7 a.m.-3 p.m.

**Annual ChamberWest Golf Classic** at Stonebridge Golf Club in West Valley City.

### June 25, 7 p.m.

**"Business is No Laughing Matter,"** a South Valley Chamber event at the Sandy Amphitheater in Sandy.

## POSTPONEMENTS

**"Building Earthquake Resilient Communities,"** a ULI (Urban Land Institute) Utah event, originally scheduled for May 14, has been rescheduled for June 2, noon-1 p.m., online. Details are at <https://utah.uli.org/events-2/>.

**"Giant in Our City 2020,"** a Salt Lake Chamber event originally scheduled for March 26 at the Grand American Hotel in Salt Lake City, has been rescheduled for June 11 (tentative).

**Cybersecurity Conference 2020**, a Salt Lake Chamber event originally scheduled for April 15 at Jordan Commons Megaplex, has been postponed until Oct. 6 (tentative).

**"We Are Utah" Manufacturers Association Expo** has been rescheduled for Sept. 23 at the Mountain America Expo

Center in Sandy.

**Utah Veteran Business Conference 2020**, a Utah Veteran Owned Business Partnership event originally scheduled for May 8 at Salt Lake Community College's Miller Campus in Sandy, has been postponed until a date to be determined.

**Employers Council's "I-9: Self-Audit Workshop,"** originally scheduled for April 2, has been postponed to July 1, 8:30-10:30 a.m., at the council's offices in Salt Lake City.

**Annual Children's Charity Golf Classic**, a Murray Area Chamber of Commerce event originally scheduled for June 26 at Murray Parkway Golf Course in Murray, has been postponed until Aug. 21.

**Business After Hours**, a Salt Lake Chamber event originally scheduled for May 21 at Squatters Pub in Salt Lake City, has been postponed until July 16.

**Ninth Annual Governor's Energy Summit**, presented by the Governor's Office of Energy Development, in partnership with Utah Media Group and HBW Resources, originally scheduled for May 18 at the Grand America Hotel in Salt Lake City, has been postponed until Oct. 21.

**The South Jordan Business and Entrepreneurial Summit and Expo**, originally set for April 29 at Salt Lake Community College's Miller Campus in Sandy, has been postponed until a date to be determined.

**The Zions Bank Business Success Academy** workshop

## PUBLIC NOTICES

In accordance with Sec. 106 of the Programmatic Agreement, AT&T plans a new utility pole at 440 EAST 100 SOUTH, SALT LAKE CITY, UT 84111. Please direct comments to Gavin L. at 818-898-4866 regarding site UTL07027F\_R0.

titled "De-Stink Your Marketing," originally scheduled for April 29 at Zions Bank Business Resource Center in Salt Lake City, has been postponed until a date to be determined.

**Professional Development Series**, a ChamberWest event, originally set for April 23 at TownePlace Suites by Marriott West Valley, has been postponed until a date to be determined.

**"America's Role in the World: Why Leading Globally Matters to Utah,"** a U.S. Global Leadership Coalition invitation-only event originally set for April 6 at the Grand America Hotel in Salt Lake City, has been postponed until a date to be determined.

## OTHER INFORMATION

**The Lassonde Entrepreneur Institute** at the University of Utah has moved all of its summer events and activities online.

**"Business Connections,"** a ChamberWest event on May 20, 3:30-5 p.m., has been moved online. Details are at [www.chamberwest.com](http://www.chamberwest.com).



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