

Talking UP

Economic Development UPdates

University Place
WASHINGTON



April 2020

Surviving by Adjusting

In a normal year, Theresa Fouquette would be getting ready for her busiest season. She would be reviewing her inventory, ordering ingredients, reviewing her staffing requirements and trying out new flavors on aficionados who never wait for summer as a reason to eat ice cream.

But as we all know, this is not a normal year.

Fouquette's business, [Bliss Small Batch Creamery](#), is one of the lucky ones, though. She is still open, although business is a fraction of what it would normally be at this time of year. The COVID-19 pandemic has forced Fouquette to re-think how she does business now...and what she will need to do in the future.



"We are in survival mode," she says. Having received an emergency loan from her own lender as well as a federal Paycheck Protection Program (PPP) loan, Fouquette has been given some breathing room and has used it to adjust her business model to accommodate the Governor's Stay Home, Stay Healthy order. Bliss has closed its dining room but Fouquette is open daily for two hours from 5 to 7 p.m. for to-go orders of prepacked pints of its signature ice cream.

Although customers can still place walk-up orders at their front door, Bliss is encouraging customers to place pre-orders so her staff can have the products ready for quick pickup with minimal contact. "Whether people use GrubHub or Uber Eats or just contact us directly, our goal is to try to fill all orders with the ultimate concern for our customers' safety and our own," Fouquette says. The business is currently staffed by Fouquette,

her husband, Dave and their son, Caden, as well as Fouquette's sister and business partner, Stacie Leaf.

No one knows when the crisis will end, so Fouquette is also re-thinking her summer business plans. She has begun to research the idea of making neighborhood deliveries, offering curbside service and will be marketing new half-pint pre-packed ice cream through the growing network of neighborhood food trucks. "We know that we won't be doing samples anymore, but I have brought back two college students who worked for us last summer to help us with our packing," she says. And they can also lend a hand with what Fouquette says is a rising demand.



"With everyone staying home, we are seeing a big rise in cake orders. Everyone wants an ice cream cake," she says.

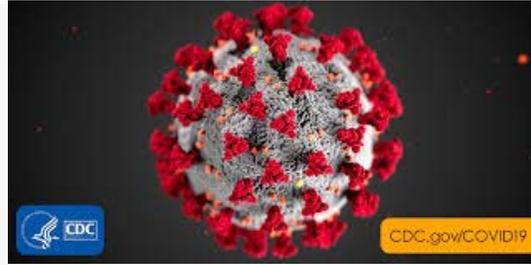
Coronavirus UPdates from City Hall

City Operations: The City is still accepting, processing and issuing building permits. Staff have been in touch with a number of contractors, who have responded favorably (under the circumstances) to our outreach and education efforts.

City Finances: City Manager Steve Sugg instructed department heads to identify areas where they could reduce expenditures as a precautionary measure. Those reductions (over \$1 million) take effect immediately. Staff will also look at additional reductions for next year's budget.

Economic Development: In his message to the community last week, Sugg encouraged the community to support local businesses rather than driving to other communities to purchase goods and services. "Purchasing locally will not only help local businesses, the sales tax dollars you pay also will help support local essential services," he said. Visit the dedicated [COVID-19 Business Support page](#) on the City of U.P. website for critical information on federal, state and local resources available to area businesses.

Human Services: The City's website has a list of links to critical community resources such as meal sites for students, mental health support, utility and tax payment deferrals and much more. Please be sure to share this information with your neighbors, especially if they are elderly or disabled.



Public Events: Special events, including Duck Daze, have been cancelled for the foreseeable future, given that at this time planners have no idea when the Governor's Stay at Home order will be lifted. Updates will be provided through the City's Headlines newsletter and on the City's [website](#) , [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#) and [Instagram](#) accounts.

Public Safety: U.P. Chief of Police Greg Premo says the University Place Police Department is not conducting active patrols or investigations on potential violations of the Governor's Stay at Home order or Social Distancing directive. The department's goal is one of education to help the public understand the provisions of the orders. Citizens can call the non-emergency number at 253.798.4721 if they are concerned about activity that appears to violate the official order.

Business Continuity Plans

Amid the myriad of challenges presented to small businesses as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, many business owners are discovering that they have no continuity plan in place to give them the best chance for surviving and recovering when the crisis is over.

The Disaster Recovery Plan for Small Businesses booklet provides useful templates for documenting things such as:

- Critical assets and inventories
- Critical operations
- Key personnel
- Key suppliers and contractors
- Alternate business location

With some businesses closed because of the Governor's executive order, this may be a good time to [download the booklet](#) and begin to complete some of these key pieces of information so that you

can be ready to resume operations as quickly as possible when this is over...and be well-prepared if disaster strikes again.



Disaster Recovery Planning for Small Businesses

Prepare, Plan, and Prevail!

Business Climate Survey Results

Although we received only 25 responses to our Business Climate Survey (out of a possible 491), we understand that many businesses are facing pressing issues that took priority over completing the survey. Of those who did respond, 60% (or 15) are still open, with several having adjusted their hours to accommodate for social distancing requirements by working split shifts or by having employees work from home (particularly professional services businesses).

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