

# Coachella Valley

CORONAVIRUS PANDEMIC

## Small business programs crop up to help desert businesses

About half say they can't stay open under the current conditions

**Melissa Daniels**  
Palm Springs Desert Sun  
USA TODAY NETWORK

As the economic realities of the coronavirus pandemic sink in, about nine out of 10 small business owners nationwide say they have been negatively affected by the outbreak.

And about half say they won't be able to stay open under current conditions for more than two months, according to a survey from the National Federation of Independent Businesses.

In the Coachella Valley, preliminary survey results from the Coachella Valley Economic Partnership suggests about a third of businesses have closed, 70% of which were forced to shut down after shelter-in-place orders came down and rendered their typical business nonoperational. In the Inland Empire, about 18% of small businesses have already laid off half or more of their employees.

"How do I take care of my family, and how do I take care of my business family? Those are the two challenges in front of small business owners," said Josh Bonner, CEO of the Greater Coachella Valley Chamber of Commerce.

State and federal governments have responded to the crisis with a few different options meant to help local businesses keep the lights on and not lay off workers, from forgivable low-interest loans to long-term planning efforts.

Here's a look at what these programs can provide:



Gov. Gavin Newsom stands near a chart showing the impact of the mandatory stay-at-home orders, as he gives an update on the state's response to the new coronavirus, at the Governor's Office of Emergency Services in Rancho Cordova, Calif., on Wednesday. RICH PEDRONCELLI/AP

### State programs

Gov. Gavin Newsom on Thursday announced a sales tax relief program for small businesses in the form of a \$50,000 interest-free loan.

Small business owners can take up to \$50,000 of what would be sales tax money turned over the state. They won't have to pay those taxes to the state for the next 12 months, without any interest payments.

The option is open to businesses that have less than \$5 million in taxable sales each year, according to the California Department of Tax and Fee Administration.

John Kabateck of the California state director of NFIB said businesses will be able to keep already-collected funds, providing money business owners can use immediately. He praised Newsom's team for the plan, saying the governor's staff has been quick to act on relief measures.

Many small business owners don't have a cash flow beyond a couple of months, and Kabateck said the program will be "immensely helpful to give them some hope to staying alive."

In conjunction with the sales tax deferral, Newsom also announced a

See BUSINESS, Page 9A



**Powers of Observation**  
Shad Powers  
Palm Springs Desert Sun  
USA TODAY NETWORK

## How to vacation at home during a quarantine

**Editor's note:** We understand the seriousness of the coronavirus pandemic, but we know everyone could also use a laugh in these challenging times. With that in mind, here is a lighter take from our columnist that we hope gives you a brief break from the current serious news cycle.

Almost every year, I take a vacation during the last week of March.

It usually follows the grueling two weeks of covering the BNP Paribas Open and always includes my parents, who visit the desert from Michigan around that time every spring. We might go to Vegas, watch college basketball, go to the movies, hit my favorite desert restaurants, and shuffle through valley casinos during their trip.

This year I still had the week off, and thanks to the coronavirus, the only things missing from my usual routine were the tennis tournament, my parents, Vegas, college basketball, movies, restaurants and casinos.

So I had to get creative. I still traveled a lot. I went to my living room, my backyard, the kitchen, my bedroom, and for something a little more exotic, the guest bedroom.

I did the usual stuff, jigsaw puzzle, sudoku, read a book. I can't lie to you

See POWERS, Page 10A

Virtual meetings. Real savings.



Renova can meet with you virtually to answer all your questions and prepare a customized proposal without coming into your home. You may also qualify for a SunPower lease or loan with a credit score as low as 640, so it makes sense to explore it now and lock in your savings! Here are some other reasons why Renova Energy should be your first choice for solar and battery storage:

- Lease with no money down, free installation and fixed payments for 20 years
- Loan with no money down, free installation and the payment amount and term that works for you
- \$1,035 SunPower rebate on loan or purchase with A Series panels. Hurry, offer ends soon!
- SunPower Elite Dealer and Certified Tesla Installer
- Six time Best of the Valley winner and 5-Star Rating on Yelp

renova.energy

RenovaEnergy.com | (760) 576-2409



SUNPOWER®  
Elite Dealer



SOLAR BATTERIES. BETTER!

## CALIFORNIA TAX RESIDENTS

Thinking of moving from California to a low- or no-tax state?

*It's much harder to cease paying California tax than you think!*

Let us help you plan and implement your move so it is effective for state tax purposes!

Call for an appointment at

**760-578-5093**

**"We can work with you remotely!"**

[www.lancecrossborder.com](http://www.lancecrossborder.com)

LANCE  
CROSSBORDER  
LAW AND TAX



Atty. Brent Lance,  
LL.M. (Tax)

DS-TD00010649-03



## IN BRIEF

**Air Force determines human error caused parachutist death in Perris**

PERRIS – Air Force officials announced this morning that human error caused the death of a non-commissioned officer during a military freefall training parachute jump in Perris.

Staff Sgt. Adam K. Erickson, 29, a specialist assigned to the 412th Operations Support Squadron at Edwards Air Force Base, sustained fatal injuries during a training jump as a member of the Test Parachutist Program at Skydive Perris on Sept. 10, 2019, according to a statement from the Air Force Materiel Command Accident Investigation Board. The board determined Erickson, who was conducting his second jump of the day from a civilian aircraft, “over-

controlled his parachute system, which induced a stall and collapsed his canopy at an altitude too low to recover.” Two factors, “inadequate real-time assessment” and “fixation” were identified by the board as substantial contributors to the deadly accident.

Investigators determined Erickson “recognized he was at a higher altitude than planned for his desired landing point and elected to use braking to increase his rate of descent without sufficient altitude to recover to a fully inflated canopy.”

The investigation also revealed Erickson “was focused on landing at the desired point, to the exclusion of recognizing he was too low to use a full break input.”

— City News Service

**Pechanga Indian tribe donates N95 masks to three hospitals**

CITY NEWS SERVICE

TEMECULA – Three hospitals in western Riverside County were able to replenish their critical stock of N95 masks thanks to a donation from The Pechanga Band of Luiseño Indians.

Temecula Valley Hospital, Rancho Springs Medical Center and Inland Valley Medical Center each received 1,000 masks for doctors, nurses and other frontline medical staff, said Jacob Mejia, a spokesman for the Pechanga Indian tribe. “We deeply appreciate the critical work of our frontline medical professionals,” Tribal Chairman Mark Macarro said in a state-

ment. “These hospitals serve our Tribe, our Team Members and our community. We’re going to do all we can to help get through this pandemic together.”

The masks were delivered Thursday morning. “You have no idea, this is like receiving gold, literally,” said Darlene Wetton, CEO of Temecula Valley Hospital. “It is so important that we protect our healthcare workers. With the 1,000 masks, this will last us about ten days because we are using about 100 per day.”

The Pechanga tribe also donated food to the Temecula Valley Hospital two weeks ago to bolster food supply and increase capacity for nurses, doctors, staff and patients, Mejia said.

**Business**

Continued from Page 3A

\$50 million allocation to the California Infrastructure and Economic Development Bank. The loan program will be open to business owners who are ineligible to receive federal supports, including businesses owned by people who are immigrants without documentation.

Newsom also said he’s developed an economic advisement team consisting of “some of the best and brightest from around the country.”

The team will focus on “how to get the state back on its feet,” he said.

**Federal programs**

Many small businesses are expected to take advantage of a new \$349 billion program that was passed as part of the \$2.2 trillion federal financial relief program known as the CARES Act.

The Paycheck Protection Program (PPP) will loan up to \$10 million to companies with up to 500 employees. It’s meant to help with immediate payroll and operating expenses.

The portion of the loan that’s spent on payroll costs and other operating expenses in the first eight weeks will be forgiven. The rest of the loan will have a 0.5% interest rate.

Bonner said he anticipates an “outrageously high” participation rate —

about 750 small business owners tuned into webinars from Riverside County Fourth District Supervisor V. Manuel Perez. Local business advocate offices have had twice-daily informational calls.

“I think you’re going to see huge numbers come out of the desert,” he said.

The NFIB survey said 63% of small business owners would consider applying for a loan program like the PPP.

According to the U.S. Treasury Department, the loan payments will be retroactive from Feb. 15, 2020. That means employers can rehire their recently laid-off employees and pay them.

In order to get the funds dispersed as fast as possible, businesses can apply for same-day approval on the loan at any participating SBA lender, bank or credit union. The federal government said the program is open as of April 3.

Nonprofits also are eligible to apply, with other guidelines available through the Treasury Department.

The Economic Injury Disaster Loan (or EIDL, which is pronounced like “idle”) is an existing federal low-interest loan program open to businesses with 500 employees or fewer. It provides loans at 3.75% interest or 2.75% for nonprofits, and repayment terms can go up to 30 years.

The recently passed \$2.2 trillion federal financial relief program known as the CARES Act expanded the number of organizations that could apply for EIDL — it now includes independent contractors.

And it created a grant program that

gives an emergency advance of up to \$10,000 to small businesses and private non-profits financially injured by the coronavirus pandemic.

Ronald Galati with the SBA Orange County/Inland Empire District Office of the SBA said on a recent webinar that businesses can apply for both PPP and EIDL.

**Other local resources**

In recognition of the long-term effects the pandemic will have on the valley’s business climate, a group of local agencies recently formed the Coachella Valley Economic Recovery Team.

Their charge: What will the Coachella Valley look like, and what will its people and economies need, when the dust settles?

Bonner said when the shelter-in-place order lifts, businesses may not operate the way they did before the pandemic. Coordinated efforts will aid the region’s recovery, Bonner said.

“When that transition starts to happen, how can we position our local economy to get back as quickly as we can?” Bonner said.

Economic development experts on the team come from: Riverside County, the Greater Palm Springs Convention & Visitors Bureau, the Greater Coachella Valley Chamber of Commerce, the Coachella Valley Economic Partnership, and the U.S. Small Business Association.

But for the short-term, the main focus remains on spreading the word about aid

programs and helping businesses through this time. In Indio, the Chamber of Commerce this week opened up a bilingual hotline operation at the Indio Visitors Center to answer questions from residents and businesses: it’s staffed from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. and weekdays and can be reached at (760) 347-0676 or info@gvcc.org.

Riverside County created a website, rivcobizhelp.org, that includes links for multiple programs that business owners can use, as well as relief funds.

The Coachella Valley Small Business Development Center is also sharing resources and workshops for business owners available at coachellavalleyebdc.org.

So has the city of Palm Springs, which has had a link for business aid pinned to its online homepage for days.

Mayor Geoff Kors said the city has hosted teleconference calls with business owners to help share information about the programs that are available to them.

“People have worked their whole life to build their businesses,” he said. “We want to make sure our small business know about it but also help them do those applications.”

*Melissa Daniels covers business in the Coachella Valley. Do you have any stories to share about how the coronavirus is affecting your job or business? Have a question about available resources? Reach out at (760)-567-8458, melissa.daniels@desertsun.com, or on Twitter @melissamdaniels.*