

SPRINGFIELD REGIONAL CHAMBER COVID-19 ACTIVITIES

The COVID-19 pandemic has been a difficult and unsettling time - around the world, across the country, and right here in Springfield. Our member businesses and organizations have all been impacted in various ways, as has our community. Our members look to us for leadership and guidance and we have done our best to provide support and resources specific to the crisis, while also maintaining as many of the services we are known for as possible. We are all in this together. If we stay connected and help each other, we will all get through this. The time will come when we can once again gather, make plans for recovery, and move forward collectively as a community.

Website Resources Page - an ever-growing list of COVID-19 resources for small businesses including local, state, and federal links regarding safety guidelines and best practices, disaster funding information, remote work support, etc.

<http://www.springfieldvt.com/covid-19-resources-for-businesses>

Support Springfield Project - a collaboration with BRIC and Indelible Inc. providing a new online platform for providing folks with the opportunity to financially support local businesses and organizations - community members can send funds and also access info about online shopping, gift cards, ordering take-out, fundraiser T-shirts through the Exit 7 Vermont project, etc.

<https://support.springfieldvt.com/>

Advocacy - we're in regular contact with our local and state legislators and our colleagues at the Vermont Chamber, keeping an eye on legislation as things progress, and speaking up on issues like the call for tax abatement for restaurants and hospitality businesses, encouragement of increased grant opportunities for small businesses, disaster funding for 501c6s and nonprofits other than c3s, support for sole proprietors and the self-employed, and encouraging tourism funding to assist in the recovery process when the time comes.

Members Emails - filtering through the vast sea of information, providing our members with clear and current resources related to best practices for safety and sustainability during the pandemic, disaster relief funding, announcements about regional calls with legislators, the VT Dept of Labor Town Hall series, and ways to continue supporting local businesses and each other.

Community E-newsletters - we're working hard to continue to provide the uplifting and inspiring monthly newsletters that our community has come to know and enjoy. We have incorporated a variety of new elements including coronavirus news and guidelines, tips for working remotely, fun and free things to do with kids, features highlighting folks in our community that are doing good deeds to help each other, online events and ways to virtually gather, updates about local businesses and future events, and any other good news we're able to find! Encouragement about sticking together and having hope for the future.

LSEVT - local leadership is more important than ever during a crisis, and we are striving to stay on track with our 2020 program, in spite of the pandemic. We are working to convert our program content to digital format, so that our class participants can continue to be involved and strive to still graduate this summer. Community stewardship is a value we promote, and we are so grateful to the individuals that are committing their time to the program as well as the businesses and organizations that sponsored participants.

Facebook Community Engagement - our active Facebook page is a place where we are able to interact with our community even as we Stay Home and Stay Safe. We are constantly sharing member news and information, and have also expanded our reach to non-member promotion during this time, as we're all in this together! We share stories of folks volunteering and supporting each other, and examples of fun things to do while we all wait out the pandemic. Our Facebook page not only provides exposure for our members, it's an avenue for maintaining connections and continuing to provide encouragement and support to hopefully inspire folks to plan for a bright future collectively.

Direct Support - responding directly to emails, calls, and social media messages, answering questions, connecting folks with resources, making referrals for funding and services, and anything else we can do to help!