

Resources for business during COVID-19...

By: **Stuart Harrison, President & CEO, Peterborough Chamber of Commerce**

Our staff at the Chamber, all working from home, are focussed on two things: providing answers and lobbying all levels of government for meaningful support for both employers and employees.

Government Announcements

The biggest announcement this week, so far, was the Ontario Government's closure of all non-essential businesses. Here is the link to the list of what is essential vs non-essential. This is a list of 74 categories of business that could remain open at this time.

One sentence from the government website we know is causing some confusion is: "This does not preclude the provision of work and services by entities not on this list either online, by telephone or by mail/delivery."

Here is what we heard from MPP Dave Smith's office: "If your business is not listed as an essential business and you have a bricks and mortar location, that location must be closed by 11:59pm on Tuesday, March 24, 2020. If your business is able to operate online, by telephone, or by mail/delivery you may continue to operate."

Our dedicated website is being updated daily and is considered the go-to source for quality, filtered information. If you need information about any



announcement from any level of government; links to the proper government agencies; or available support locally, provincially and federally, you'll find it here:

www.peterboroughchamber.ca/covid-19-pandemic-preparedness.html

One of the big areas of confusion is around employment. Also on our website you will find links to:

1. **Employment Insurance**
2. **The Temporary Wage Subsidy**
3. **The new Canada Emergency Response Benefit**

This will provide a taxable benefit of \$2,000 a month for up to 4 months in certain cases. This benefit replaces the previously announced Emergency Care and Emergency Support Benefits.

And here are two existing Employment Insurance programs that may also prove to be useful:

1. **Supplementary Unemployment Benefit**

Program - This program allows employers to submit a plan to top up their employees on EI.

2. **Work-Share Program** - This program could also be helpful, as it could help certain businesses keep running by offering a job-share program.

Lobbying

We continue to meet by conference call almost daily with all three levels of government. We are listening to you and learning what works and what doesn't. For example, the announced 10% wage subsidy compares to as much as 80% in other Countries. The question from business is: Is it better to lay people off and swamp the employment insurance system, or to provide a wage subsidy that allows employers to keep people employed? This is a key policy position of the Canadian Chamber of Commerce, and we anticipate some movement on this issue.

This lobbying/advocacy work is the core work of the Chamber in good times, let alone now. Thus it is important that our membership remain strong.

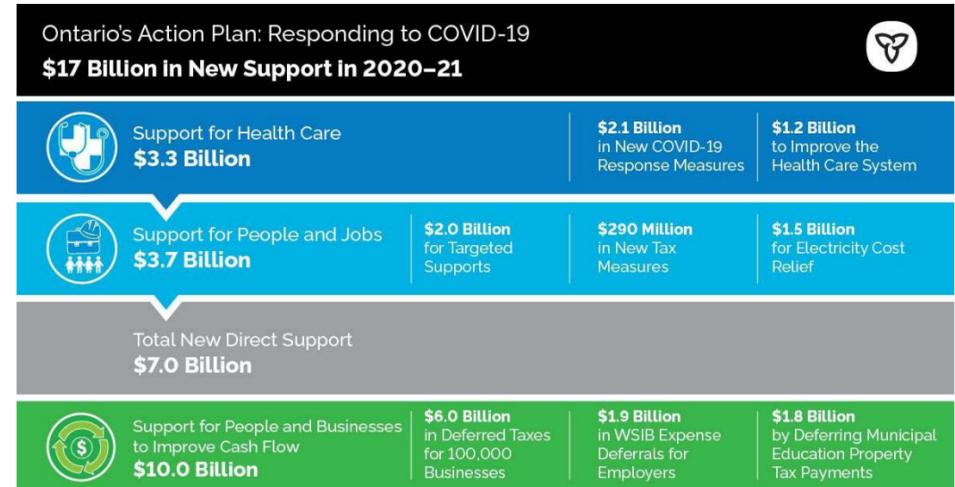
Not only do we appreciate the support of our existing members, but to the businesses that have reached out and joined our Chamber in the past week, thank you. As the situation evolves we are confident that we can continue to provide "Influence, Profile, Knowledge" to our members.

Information is key

A consortium of local organizations involved in economic development have already provided our elected leaders with an important temperature check about what is really happening in the business community. A second survey has just been released today, and will also provide important information for all three levels of government as they design a strategy to support the business community. Please take the time to complete the 3-minute survey which can be found on our COVID-19 website:

www.peterboroughchamber.ca/covid-19-pandemic-preparedness.html

Provincial government announces COVID-19 Response Plan



GREATER Peterborough Chamber of Commerce STRENGTHENING BUSINESS

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Member Milestones

- Many of our Chamber members are finding ways to offer their services virtually, everything from:
 - dog walking
 - tips on how to host virtual meetings
 - virtual meet ups & exercise tracking
 - virtual discussions on business issues
 - take out/delivery of products

- We are sharing their messages and ideas through our Facebook page.
- Be sure to connect with your favourite restaurants and shops online and through the Peterborough Chamber of Commerce Business Directory.
- If you are able to purchase gift cards from your favourite Peterborough store, please consider doing so.
- The federal government has pushed back the tax filing deadline to June 1st, 2020.
- The provincial government has released Ontario's Action Plan: Response to COVID-19.
- You can find links to business resources during the COVID-19 pandemic on our website: peterboroughchamber.ca

Featured Member Discount Program: Savings on Gas

Chamber Members, send your Member Milestones to shelby@peterboroughchamber.ca or call 705-748-9771 x 0.

Watch our social feeds for businesses connected to these themes...

...and Thoughtful Thursday

www.peterboroughchamber.ca

Member Directory

Our members do it all...

- Agriculture, Fishing & Forestry
- Arts, Culture & Entertainment
- Automotive, Aviation & Marine
- Business & Professional Services
- Communications
- Computers, IT & Technology
- Family, Community & Non-Profit
- Finance & Insurance
- Government & Education
- Health Care & Wellness
- Home & Garden
- Industrial & Manufacturing
- Lodging, Travel & Tourism
- Pets & Veterinary
- Real Estate & Construction
- Restaurant, Food & Beverage
- Shopping & Specialty Retail
- Membership Directory

peterboroughchamber.ca

Chambers of Commerce Group Insurance Plan*

FOR FIRMS WITH 1-50 EMPLOYEES

Insurance for small business that's anything but small

contact: Brian Bulger at 741-1400

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And I didn't expect that. Thank you, Nexicom.

Janet McLeod
Owner, East City Flower Shop

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