

MEDIA RELEASE



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COVID-19 BUSINESS RESOURCES: BOONE COUNTY MOVING FORWARD, TOGETHER

May 20, 2020 (BOONE COUNTY, IL) – Moving forward, together. That’s the buzz phrase in Boone County these days. Boone County organizations, business partners and local officials teamed up with the Boone County Health Department to move forward, together.

Collaboratively, the community partners, known as Forward Boone County, have identified the most relevant resources and guidelines available to aide businesses as they look to re-open amid COVID-19 impacts.

Creating a one-stop shop for Boone County businesses, the Boone County Health Department and county partners launched a shared website which can be viewed at <https://sites.google.com/view/forwardboonecounty>. Each community partner’s website will display a shared image linking visitors to the same resources and information. This unified approach allows Boone County to display and support consistent messaging and materials.

As the state prepares to enter Phase III on May 29th, Forward Boone County remains actively engaged in daily conversations with the Boone County Health Department, local elected officials and Boone County organizations to determine safe opening guidelines. Boone County has taken a public health approach to reopening, using science-based and data-driven metrics to determine safe and effective ways for businesses to welcome customers back through their doors. Recognizing that there are economic and financial stresses associated with COVID-19 impacts, they continue to work diligently to accommodate the needs of the entire community.

“Boone County is committed to providing our businesses, residents and patrons a safe place to live, play, work and shop,” stated Amanda Mehl, Boone County Health Department Public Health Administrator. “We want to see customers back in our businesses as soon as possible, while understanding there may need to be some safety modifications.”

Some of those safety modifications will include continued social distancing and enhanced cleaning guidelines, among others. The types of safety protocols will differ from business to business and between industries. Resources identifying general practices and industry-specific guidelines will be available on the Forward Boone County website.

“The goal with our resources is not to have a blanket approach,” commented Pamela Lopez-Fettes, Growth Dimensions – Economic Development Executive Director. “Our business owners are the experts in their fields and we are not in a position to dictate to them what we ‘think’ is right. That is why we are providing them with vetted and trusted resources from local, state and national health and industry-based organizations.”

Currently, Boone County is developing a checklist to prepare businesses as they return to a more familiar business model. The checklist is meant to be a guide for businesses before, during and after reopening.

Expressing the importance of reassessment, Amy Grafton, Belvidere Area Chamber of Commerce Executive Director explained, “Once a business has reopened, we encourage them to continually reassess their procedures and safety protocols. What may work on day one, may not work on day 25.” She continued, “Our sharing of information doesn’t stop the day our businesses reopen. We’re here with them for the long haul.”

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