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[Online Version at FloridaBusiness.org](https://www.floridabusiness.org)

COVID-19 Business Resource Center: [VolusiaBusinessResources.com](https://www.volusiabusinessresources.com)

SMALL BUSINESSES RAMPING UP ACTIONS TO SURVIVE PANDEMIC – Small businesses are transitioning to more virtual ways of working and seeking more flexibility and financial resources to survive the coronavirus pandemic, [according to a monthly poll taken April 21-27 and released last week by the U.S. Chamber of Commerce](#) and MetLife. The number of small business owners reporting an increase in teleworking and asking for rent flexibility has nearly doubled from their prior month survey (20% up from 12%, and 17% up from 9%, respectively). Additionally, 17% of small business owners say they have transitioned their retail presence to be more virtual or digital, up 10% from their prior month.

SCORE WEBINARS THIS WEEK – SCORE Volusia/Flagler has a series of instructor-led live training webinars this week covering topics including: “Four Key Things Business Owners Should be Focused on Right Now”; “Essential PR Tools and Tactics – Elevate the Visibility of Your Business While Being Sheltered in Place”; and “Road to Recovery – Strategies for Business Owners.” [Find more details including speaker information, date, time and registration links.](#)

APRIL JOB LOSSES REFLECT SEVERITY OF CORONAVIRUS PANDEMIC – Last Friday, the [U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics reported](#) that total nonfarm payroll employment fell by 20.5 million in April. The number of unemployed persons rose by 15.9 million to 23.1 million. The nation’s unemployment rate increased by 10.3% to 14.7%. This is the highest rate and the largest over-the-month increase since the data series began in 1948. Employment in leisure and hospitality plummeted by 7.7 million, or 47%. Almost three-quarters of the decrease occurred in food services and drinking places (-5.5 million). Professional and business services shed 2.1 million jobs, and the retail trade sector declined by 2.1 million. The changes in these measures reflect the effects of the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic and efforts to contain it.

COVID-19 REAL ESTATE SENTIMENT SURVEY REVEALS DECLINES – Last month, real estate analysis and business planning firm [RCLCO conducted a survey across several property sectors on the COVID-19 downturn](#) and recovery from it. Respondents to the COVID-19 Real Estate Sentiment Survey believe that hotel, retail and resort residential segments will take some time to recover. Nearly 90% indicated that hotels and regional malls would experience “severe” (10% to 20% declines in revenues/values) or “dramatic” (>20% declines in revenues/values) impacts. Lifestyle and big box/power center retail, senior housing, and office are likely to experience severe impacts as well. Convenience/necessity retail will fare much better, with only “moderate” (5% to 9% declines) or “minimal” (<5% declines) impact. Grocery stores have been experiencing 20%-plus increase in sales, while sales in the balance of the centers are down more than 50% and many tenants are reaching out to landlords seeking primarily deferment, but also forbearance.

ADVERTISING AUTHORITY PLANS FOR ECONOMIC RECOVERY “STIMULUS PACKAGES” – The West Volusia Advertising Authority, in coordination with local tourism and lodging partners, announces its [\\$99 for 99 Days “stimulus packages.”](#) These new “stimulus packages” began May 8 and run 99 days to August 14 to encourage people to travel, stay in hotels and just have fun in the area...all while staying safe. Businesses interested in being part of the program should [email the Visitors Center](#) or call [386-734-0162](#).

HOME VALUES RISING IN FLORIDA AMID COVID-19 CRISIS – As reported at personal finance website [MoneyWise.com](#), [home values have been rising throughout Florida](#) amid the COVID-19 crisis and values are up 1.4% from a year ago. Statewide, the current median value for a single-family home — meaning half are worth more, half are worth less — is reported as \$682,669. The state’s median home value is higher than the U.S. median of \$248,948, which is up 5.1% from a year ago. Real estate agents say would-be homebuyers in some parts of the country are starting to overcome the obstacles caused by COVID-19 and are going virtual house hunting to take advantage of today’s bargain mortgage rates and the low monthly house payments they provide.

COVID-19 LOCKDOWNS SEEN TO DECREASE GLOBAL AIR POLLUTION – According to [Nationalgeographic.com](#), [the COVID-19 pandemic has temporarily cleaned the skies.](#) From China’s Hubei province to industrial northern Italy and beyond, pollution levels have plummeted as lockdowns aimed at slowing the viral spread have shuttered businesses and trapped billions of people at home. Areas in Germany, the United Kingdom, Czechia and northern Italy saw large reductions in nitrogen dioxide, while some eastern European countries like Ukraine saw an increase. In Asia, South Korea and China took dramatic lockdown measures to slow the spread of the virus. Satellites recorded significantly less pollution compared to the same period last year.

TELL THE TPO – COMMUNITY TRANSPORTATION SURVEY – The River to Sea Transportation Planning Organization (TPO) is responsible for carrying out the urban transportation planning and programming process for the designated Metropolitan Planning Area (MPA), which includes all of Volusia County and the developed areas of Flagler County including Beverly Beach and Flagler Beach, as well as portions of the cities of Palm Coast and Bunnell. Every two years, the [TPO conducts a survey seeking public participation](#) as it plans transportation improvements for the MPA. The survey is open until May 30.

NEWS ITEMS WANTED! – Please send your business news items to Joanne Magley at jmagley@volusia.org. If you wish to be removed from this weekly broadcast, please let us know.