



Volusia County  
FLORIDA

Economic Development

# Quarterly

An official publication of the Volusia County Economic Development Division

Second Quarter 2020

## *Collaborative and Innovative Economic Recovery*



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# Collaborative and innovative economic recovery



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Evidence shows that the economic health of any community can in large part be attributed to the diversity, creativity and agility of its local businesses, especially during difficult times. The veracity of that statement can be seen in our own experience during and after the Great Recession in 2008/2009. Through determination, hard work and willing collaboration with local partners, Volusia County businesses brought stability and helped restore the county's economic vitality. Our community has prospered since then, but a new challenge has come.

In the first quarter of 2020, COVID-19 arrived. With its arrival came personal and economic disruption that has not been seen for a century. It has changed how we live, work and survive – not just from a health perspective, but also financially.

COVID-19 may appear to be an insurmountable economic obstacle, but it isn't. Already we've seen businesses face the challenge and break through. With creativity and collaboration, businesses have added new products, performed new services, repurposed facilities and saved jobs. Business response to the COVID-19 crisis has been an encouragement to others, and it highlights the resolve and sense of community that exists within Volusia County.

In this issue of Economic Development Quarterly, we will profile some examples

of Volusia County businesses that have shown great agility and innovation during this unprecedented time. Some of these businesses include:

**7-Keys Co-Packing**, a DeLand company that creates shelf-stable gourmet foods, but now uses its innovation lab to create hand-sanitizer.

**RCM Fabrics in Edgewater**, which pivoted from making marine products like boat cushions and Bimini tops to lifesaving medical face shields.

**FitUSA Manufacturing** in Ormond Beach, a specialty sports apparel company that is now protecting front-line medical workers with its production of protective masks and gowns.

These are just a few examples of the seven companies profiled in this issue. There are no doubt many more that are using agility, creativity and pure grit to survive and eventually thrive. If you know a business that is rising up in the face of adversity, let us know! Email us at [doed@volusia.org](mailto:doed@volusia.org) so we can continue to tell the story of how Volusia County is rising up.

Also in this issue, we'll show you how our key economic development agencies throughout Volusia County are working together to help local businesses with the resources they need to recover. From local economic development departments in cities to our regional partners, resources are available and subject matter experts are here to assist in navigating the road to recovery. It's not just a catch phrase – we really are #AllInThisTogether.

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## 7 Keys Co-Packing Inc. offers hand sanitizer



*7 Keys Co-Packing Inc. went from producing specialty food items to hand sanitizer almost overnight, with volume reaching 3,000 gallons per day in 32-ounce spray bottles, 8-ounce bottles and gallon jugs.*

7 Keys Co-Packing Inc., a division of Roman Enterprises in DeLand, produces specialty shelf-stable, private label gourmet foods and customer consultation. Their products include dry rubs and spices, dips, barbecue sauce, honey, drink mixers and more.

"We produce these and other items from client-provided recipes or from our own portfolio of more than 200 recipes made available to our clients," said owner David Roman. "That's how the new year started, serving clients with specialty food products. But when COVID-19 hit, the company received a new product request – hand sanitizer."

That over-the-phone request got company officials thinking, "We can do that!" And by the end of February, 7 Keys had shifted to producing and distributing hand sanitizer. "The world was changing, and in the blink of an eye we changed our production regimen almost exclusively to hand sanitizer, helping to ease the sudden

shortage of what had become a vital commodity," said Roman.

The company was well-prepared to produce and bottle hand sanitizer. With its in-house research and development lab, 7 Keys was able to quickly develop a formula that met World Health Organization standards. Now they produce about 3,000 gallons of hand sanitizer per day, selling it directly to stores, hospitals and cleaning supply companies and distributing it to food suppliers and wholesalers. Individual sales are also offered at the company's front office, in 8-ounce bottles or gallon jugs. Soon, the product will also be available in a 32-ounce spray bottle.

7 Keys Co-Packing Inc. demonstrated flexibility in their process conversion but they showed some real creativity in bottling the sanitizer, using honey bottles. "Ordering bottles can take eight weeks or more, so it made sense to use honey bottles already in stock," said Roman. "In fact, we have become a distributor of bottles to help meet that demand across a broad spectrum of packers."

Roman calls the new production an interesting revolution. "We are fortunate to have found markets to keep our company in operation, and we're pleased to help meet the need for hand sanitizer, which has emerged as an effective and powerful tool in containing the dangerous COVID-19 virus."

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For more information:

7 Keys Co-Packing Inc. | 1701 Airport Terminal Drive | DeLand, FL 32724 | 386-624-6485 | [www.7keyscopacking.com](http://www.7keyscopacking.com)

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## Command Medical Products help meet demand for ventilators



*Command Medical Products endotracheal tubes used in the intubation process.*

The soaring demand for lifesaving ventilators came into sharp focus as the effects of a new coronavirus strain spread across the globe and overwhelmed hospitals. Few were prepared for the highly contagious COVID-19 virus and the deadly effect it had on pulmonary function where, for many patients, immediate ventilator use was the only solution. Hospital demand quickly outpaced supply, and that meant manufacturers like Command Medical Products had to step up to support the production of these critical devices.

Command Medical Products, headquartered in Ormond Beach and with an additional plant in Nicaragua, manufactures medical and surgical products, including parts used with respiratory care devices. Command's core competencies include extrusion of medical tubing, radio frequency welding, assembly and packaging services, including endotracheal tubes used to intubate patients for invasive ventilation.

"In order to meet increased demand, we redirected some production from products used in non-emergency procedures to the urgently needed respiratory products," said company

founder and CEO David Slick. "Doing that was a challenge given the need to maximize employee safety during the coronavirus crisis. We have isolated workspaces, while maintaining the strictest standards of cleanliness throughout our facilities."

Stephanie McGee, vice president of sales and marketing, said Command Medical Products is fortunate to have a long history of producing this class of medical product. "So, while we did make some adjustments to help meet increased demand, we did not have to start from scratch, nor did we have to learn about the precise standards under which these products must be

manufactured, handled and delivered. We have met and exceed these standards every day, and have done so for decades."

Company President Jim Carnall added that while meeting demand under critical time constraints brings challenges, it is particularly gratifying to know that Command Medical's products are playing an important role in helping the nation and the world fight COVID-19. "Our staff is proud to be a part of the solution, and rightfully so. It is our hope that this exercise supports preparation for the next health related crisis as the world grows smaller and smaller."

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For more information:

Command Medical Products | 15 Signal Avenue | Ormond Beach, FL 32174 | [www.commandmedical.com](http://www.commandmedical.com)

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## Copper Bottom Distillery turns spirits into sanitizer



Copper Bottom Distillery is the Craig family business run by co-owners Mark (CEO) and his wife, Joanne (CFO), Jenni (CMO) and her husband, Jeremy (COO).

The Craig Family established Copper Bottom Distillery in Holly Hill just three years ago, offering vodka, silver rum and single barrel rum. They are passionate about their product and love their community. So it's no surprise that in March, when COVID-19 brought the economy to a standstill and people were panicking over the inability to find hand sanitizer, the Craigs redirected their distilling expertise to making hand sanitizer for anyone who needed it.

"I knew there was no hand sanitizer to be found in stores," said Copper Bottom Head Distiller Jeremy Craig. "People then bought alcohol to make their own hand sanitizer – until there was no alcohol to be found either. It occurred to us that we make the main ingredient so why not help? By the very next morning, we were making preparations to produce hand sanitizer for the community at no charge."

The Craigs are familiar with helping out during emergencies. Every hurricane season, they provide free filtered water to those impacted by the storms. "We get maybe a couple dozen people who come to us for water, so we expected about that many people to come by for hand sanitizer, said Craig. "We quickly learned that hurricane prep is not at

all like COVID-19 prep. That first day people were coming in all day long. The phone did not stop ringing. We have barely been able to keep up ever since. In fact, if it weren't for the community helping us help them, we would not have been able to do this for more than a few days. Donations have allowed us to press on. Local businesses donated bottles. Embury-Riddle Aeronautical University donated labels. Volunteers provided labor. Neighbors donated white table sugar to help us make alcohol - thousands of pounds! And some people offered cash donations to support the cause. To say the community has stepped up is an understatement, and to say this has been a gratifying experience for our family also would be an understatement."

Copper Bottom Distillery has produced more than 2,000 gallons in less than one month, and the demand continues. The distillery took an economic hit when restaurants closed for dining. Sales to liquor stores are up a bit, but not enough to make up for the loss of restaurant business, but there is a constant flow of people coming to Copper Bottom Distillery – people who had never been there and did not know it existed. They may come for hand sanitizer or to lend a hand, but often they buy spirits or a T-shirt. Copper Bottom Distillery has won awards for its products. It has also won the affection and loyalty of many, many new friends.

"We get to know them, and they get to know us," said Craig. "They say they will be back when the COVID-19 stranglehold on society eases. We believe them."

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For more information:

Copper Bottom Distillery | 998 N Beach Street | Holly Hill, FL 32117 | 386-267-5104 | [www.copperbottomspirits.com](http://www.copperbottomspirits.com)

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## FitUSA Manufacturing: From sports apparel to masks, gowns



Team members at FitUSA create masks and gowns to help alleviate the critical shortage of personal protective equipment that contributed to the COVID-19 crisis.

FitUSA Manufacturing in Ormond Beach specializes in dye sublimation printing for the sports apparel industry, listing among its clients many of the nation's leading athletic teams and leagues. But with the global shutdown of businesses, including professional sports, the company had to find new markets to serve with their design and manufacturing capabilities. Not long after the professional sports shutdown, FitUSA president Troy Olson saw the growing need for personal protective equipment (PPE) that was created by the onset of COVID-19. Isolation gowns and face masks were in high demand, and FitUSA's cut-and-sew capabilities were a good match for the products. Troy knew his team could make the transition from sportswear to PPE.

"While we had one eye focused on the catastrophic plunge in orders for custom sports apparel, we had the other trained on what was becoming a terrifying health problem affecting us all," said Olson. "Yes, we were concerned for the health of our staff members and their families, but we also had to face the reality that the customer orders that have fueled our success and provided incomes for our team were shutting down, silencing our factories."

Conversations with staff from Ormond Beach's Economic Development office led to Olson's participation in a state conference call on March 13 that included Sen. Rick Scott, Gov. Ron DeSantis, Florida Department of Health officials, and hospital presidents from throughout Florida. Olson listened in. As the call was winding down, the moderator said there was time for one more question. Olson seized the opportunity to explain his company's capabilities,

which drew immediate interest from several participants on the call.

Shortly after that call, several hospitals reached out to Olson. Within minutes he was speaking with Jeff Feasel, president of Halifax Health, about their need for PPE. Within days, and after modifications and testing of product samples, FitUSA was producing face masks for Halifax Health. A similar scenario played out with David Ottati, CEO of AdventHealth's Central Florida Division, and other hospitals throughout Florida and the United States.

"We have shipped 100,000 masks to Orlando Health," said Olson. "We're working with Baptist Hospitals in Florida and Georgia, Baylor Scott & White Hospitals in Texas, hospitals in Minnesota and New Jersey, everywhere. Apparently, my cellphone number was circulated among participants on that call. I was getting calls in the middle of the night."

FitUSA is shipping materials all over the country – to hospitals, first responders and other agencies. As of April 2020, the company was producing about 45,000 protective masks and 10,000 isolation gowns a day.

"I've got three shifts working in our factory, and three other factories working for us to help maintain that volume," said Olson. "Among our factories, we brought back 200 workers who had been idled due to the coronavirus crisis. The margins are razor-thin, but the volume is high, so the orders keep our factories active, give our people meaningful work, and it support the nation's efforts to beat back COVID-19," said Olson.

Watch:  
FitUSA Manufacturing  
featured on CNN for  
mask and PPE production

For more information:

FitUSA Manufacturing | Ormond Beach, Florida | 877-715-6886 | [www.fitusamanufacturing.com](http://www.fitusamanufacturing.com)

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## *Germfree Laboratories: Containment of dangerous pathogens*



*Germfree Laboratories continued design and manufacturing operations under modified circumstances to help protect workers from the COVID-19 virus.*

Germfree Laboratories is no stranger to meeting urgent needs within the medical, pharmaceutical and laboratory research communities. In fact, the Ormond Beach company has been producing state-of-the-art bio-isolation and control solutions for nearly 60 years. Over that time Germfree products have been enlisted to help fight global health security threats such as SARS, MERS, Ebola, Avian Influenza and others. So today it is no surprise that the company is fully engaged in the war on COVID-19.

"We have been focused on bio-containment since the company was founded in 1962," said Germfree President Kevin Kyle. "We are experts in the handling and containment of dangerous pathogens, and clearly COVID-19 falls into that category. That we quickly set our sights on the war against COVID-19 was an instinctive reaction for our team. "

Germfree has served health care systems and research organizations since the company's inception. Lately, it has been providing tractor-trailer and modular building based containment clean rooms. These can and are being converted for testing of COVID-19 patients, which can keep patients from having to enter the hospital for testing.

"We have a fleet of more than 20 such mobile laboratories in service at major health systems such as Baptist

Health, Miami's biggest not-for-profit hospital system," said Kyle. "We also engineered and produced a highly specialized tractor-trailer laboratory for a global pharmaceutical company working on a COVID-19 vaccine. We diverted production and engineering completely to designing the clean room system they needed for working on the coronavirus vaccine. We got it done in a week, had a crew at its Midwest headquarters over the weekend to install and commission it, and got them up to speed in record time."

Kyle said this illustrates the resolve of his team. "Many have not had time off since this battle began," he said. "But still, this kind of achievement generates great satisfaction and overwhelming pride in making a major contribution to the global response to the crisis.

Germfree is working with several other major pharmaceutical companies to provide tractor-trailer labs that meet biosafety level 2 and 3 standards. This is critical since researchers at these companies require a higher level of containment as they work to develop a vaccine.

Through it all, Germfree is staying in touch with government leaders through U.S. Rep. Michael Waltz and others who keep them informed of developments in the war on COVID-19. Congressman Waltz and his staff have in turn shared Germfree's capabilities with leaders of the national COVID-19 response so they are aware of the systems and products the company offers – systems and products that can save lives and reduce the threat.

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## Daytona International Speedway and the NASCAR family join the fight against COVID-19



3-D printers at NASCAR's Research & Development Center in Charlotte produced thousands of protective face shields that were shipped across the country.

The roar of motorcycles typically fills the stadium at Daytona International Speedway (DIS) during annual Bike Week festivities in March. The coronavirus put the brakes on all public events at DIS and other stadiums around the world, but the closed stadium was the perfect setting for major relief efforts in the fight against COVID-19.

Daytona International Speedway became the site of drive-up coronavirus testing for more than 5,000 people through a partnership with AdventHealth. "We are proud to partner with AdventHealth on this important community initiative," said Chip Wile, president of Daytona International Speedway.

Daytona International Speedway's parent company NASCAR, headquartered in Daytona Beach, also has a research and development center in North Carolina that is helping in the fight against COVID-19. The team at that high-tech facility pivoted from the science of automotive and track safety to the design and production of protective face shields. They reconfigured 3-D printers to produce thousands of the shields, which have been shipped to facilities across the country.

"We're in a unique position to provide this kind of help," said Eric Jacuzzi,

senior director of aerodynamics at the center. "We have some of the best fabricators and engineers in the world, a high-skilled talent pool, plus the machinery and the desire to help, so we're all in on this."

There is even support from race teams that compete in NASCAR Cup Series events. Roush Fenway Racing has manufactured a custom containment device that helps protect medical workers administering intubation so their personal protection equipment (PPE) becomes their second or third line of protection instead of their first (and only). This not only protects the workers, but extends the life of the PPE. The devices are in service in hospitals from North Carolina to Florida.

Another NASCAR and DIS initiative teamed company employees with area restaurants, including those in ONE DAYTONA and the Shoppes at

ONE DAYTONA, to provide more than 500 complimentary meals to health care workers and frontline employees, first responders and educators.

"Now more than ever, it's important for our community to do their best to support our locals who are working so hard throughout this crisis," stated NASCAR Executive Vice Chair Lesa France Kennedy.

"Providing meals to essential employees is just a small token of our appreciation for their daily dedication to our community."

"With the participation of many in the extended NASCAR family, we have been able to help provide food, protective equipment, cleaning supplies, hygiene products and much more. Our hearts and prayers go out to the many families who are experiencing difficulties during the COVID-19 crisis."

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## *RCM Fabrics reconfigures plant to produce medical devices*



*A fabricator at RCM Fabrics producing protective face shields like the one she is wearing.*



*RCM Fabrics also produces headbands for health care workers.*

RCM Fabrics in Edgewater has served the marine and other outdoor-related industries for 37 years. The company works with heavy duty fabrics to create boat cushions, sail covers, golf cart seating, Bimini tops, plastic windows and more. But now, because of COVID-19 pandemic, its primary product has become protective face shields.

"Working with canvas and other heavy materials is a capability that requires specialized sewing machines and equipment as well as skills developed over a period of time," said Rob Martins, who has owned the company for 33 years. "With all the concern over urgent demand for protective face shields – and the lack of supply in the United States – we knew we could serve health care providers quickly and efficiently, so we reconfigured our equipment and began creating high-quality protective face shields."

Martins plans to make this new production line permanent, under the name Canvas Pros. He formed a new division within the company called CPI Medical Products, which is now manufacturing about 4,000 face shields per week on a made-to-order basis. The current

production capacity for the Canvas Pro shield line is 10,000 to 15,000 per week.

The company now serves hospitals, clinics, labs, doctor offices and medical groups with the new product line. Martins expects the demand to remain steady at least while a COVID-19 vaccine is being developed, but he also sees long-term growth potential from customer protection changes at grocery stores, restaurants, barber shops and salons, and even individuals who want extra protection.

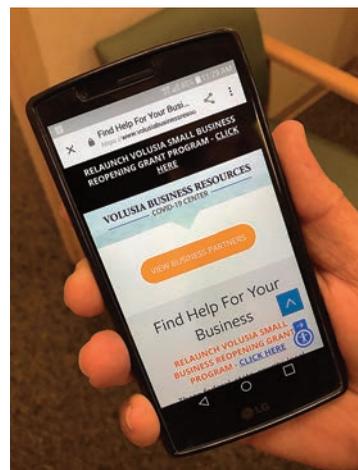
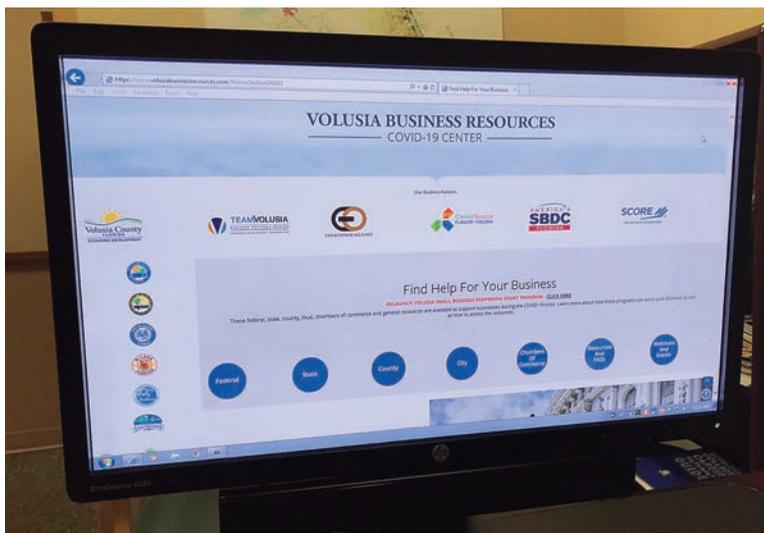
"So, while we have been serving clients such as Boston Whaler and Edgewater Boats for a decade – and will continue to do so – I expect hospitals and medical practices will continue to turn to us for quality, properly priced products that are readily available and are made in the

United States," said Martins. "It is gratifying that our products are playing an important role for so many institutions that are working to save lives and contain this ferocious virus. But there are challenges."

Martins expects the Centers for Disease Control to eventually put certifications in place for all personal protective equipment vendors, which could pose a challenge for smaller businesses. "Not all small business owners will be willing or able to navigate what is likely to be a daunting certification processes," said Martins. "But we will do what is necessary to certify our processes and product. This new product line allows us to help enhance personal safety among very brave health care professionals, and it helps provide jobs for our dedicated and talented stitchers."

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## *Relevant, timely, inclusive – a new Volusia County business information website*



When the world was turned upside down with the COVID-19 pandemic, whole communities were impacted, including a large majority of businesses that had to close to reduce the spread of the virus. In response, a flurry of information about business assistance programs began streaming in through various media channels. Some was inaccurate, and much of it was confusing and time-consuming to read.<sup>9</sup>

Business owners needed help. They wanted to find reliable information about emergency funding programs and best practices for employee and customer safety without having to scour the internet and websites.

Within days of recognizing the problem, a collaboration among Volusia County's governments, chambers of commerce and business service organizations produced a concept that would help the community find pandemic-related information more easily. The plan was to harness the fast changing information from countless resources and present it all in one virtual location, a microsite with countywide scope. The site would be named VolusiaBusinessResources.com.

Leading the effort to launch the microsite were Volusia County's Division of Economic Development, Team Volusia Economic Development Corporation and the CEO Business Alliance. The collaboration began with Volusia County's 16 municipal economic development professionals and the project leaders discussing common business concerns and best practices that could assist local businesses. Soon after, the Small

Business Development Center, SCORE, CareerSource Flagler Volusia and the area's seven local chambers of commerce joined the collaboration. Within a matter of days, VolusiaBusinessResources.com was launched.

"The microsite is a wonderful idea," said Kent Sharples, president of the CEO Business Alliance. "Our entire world was turned upside down a couple of months ago. We now have to redefine the way we do business and foster growth. This collaboration with our economic development partners is an outstanding opportunity to assist businesses as we move forward."

"Team Volusia is pleased to have collaborated on this effort," said Team Volusia President and CEO Keith Norden. "Information on federal, state, regional, county and local resources and programs can be overwhelming. The need for a collaborative, countywide business resiliency initiative was clear."

"This is just one of many steps being taken to assist our local business community with today's immediate needs through the challenges of

tomorrow's recovery," said George Recktenwald, county manager for Volusia County Government. "The goal is to keep Volusia County businesses informed of the most up to date information about all recovery programs, but in a way that makes it easy to navigate. This is probably one of the most stressful times most of us have lived through, but we are all in this together, and we'll get through it together. I believe we will come out of this a much stronger community."

The importance of [www.VolusiaBusinessResources.com](http://www.VolusiaBusinessResources.com) becomes more evident as the COVID-19 crisis stretches on. Updates are added daily, and just recently the microsite became Relaunch Volusia's Small Business Reopening Grant application portal. Links to legislative updates, executive orders, business assistance resources, grant programs and other best practice information can be found on the site.

"It is Volusia's business resource, and based on its rapid formation, inclusive content and broad acceptance, I believe VolusiaBusinessResources.com will remain a valued resource for our community long after COVID-19," Recktenwald added.

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## On the Economic Scene Goes Digital



*On the Economic Scene*, the popular weekly rapid-read newsletter of the Volusia County Economic Development Division, is now distributed exclusively by email. The e-publication is also posted at <http://www.floridabusiness.org/economic-reports/scene.stml>.

If you wish to be added to the *On the Economic Scene* distribution list, send your email address to [doed@volusia.org](mailto:doed@volusia.org) with your request.

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