



## Special COVID-19 Edition

April 13, 2020

[Online Version at FloridaBusiness.org](http://FloridaBusiness.org)

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**NEW CDC GUIDELINES ON ESSENTIAL EMPLOYEES** – The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention ([CDC](https://www.cdc.gov)) [has issued new guidelines](#) on when and how essential employees can go back to work, even if they have been exposed to infected people. To ensure continuity of operations of essential functions, the CDC is advising that critical infrastructure workers may be permitted to continue work following potential exposure to COVID-19, provided they remain asymptomatic and additional precautions are implemented to protect them and the community. A potential exposure means being a household contact or having close contact within 6 feet of an individual with confirmed or suspected COVID-19. The timeframe for having contact with an individual includes the period of time of 48 hours before the individual became symptomatic. Review the guidelines for all details.

**VOLUSIA COUNTY MAY 8 QUARTERLY ECONOMIC BRIEFING CANCELED** – Consistent with current COVID-19 public health and safety protocols, the May 8 quarterly economic development briefing or “Q” meeting from the Volusia County Division of Economic Development (VCDOED) has been canceled. However, the traditional “Q” economic information that you have come to expect, such as unemployment rates, labor force levels, employment by industry and building permit data will be provided by May 8 at our website, [www.floridabusiness.org](http://www.floridabusiness.org). You can view the presentation by VCDOED Director Helga Van Eckert to the County Council tentatively scheduled for May 5. [County Council meeting information is available here](#). Any updates to the presentation’s scheduling at Council will be included in upcoming Economic Scene editions. For further information, call VCDOED at 386-248-8048 or [send us an email](#).

**FLORIDA DEO COVID-19 RESOURCES WEBSITE FOR EMPLOYERS AND INDIVIDUALS** – The Florida Department of Economic Opportunity is providing resources to communities, businesses and individuals via a newly developed website that businesses and individuals can access at [www.floridajobsresources.com](http://www.floridajobsresources.com). In coordination with state and federal partners, support is available to help those impacted by the state’s efforts to mitigate the spread of COVID-19. To assist small businesses and their employees, there are available loans and short-time compensation programs to bridge the gap. Such programs include the Paycheck Protection Program, the SBA Debt Relief Program, the SBA Economic Injury Disaster Loan Program and the Short Time Compensation Program. To assist individuals, resources including Reemployment Assistance are available with access to short video explanations, online applications, and paper applications.

**FLORIDA DEO ANNOUNCES NEW MOBILE-FRIENDLY SITE TO APPLY FOR REEMPLOYMENT ASSISTANCE** – The Florida Department of Economic Opportunity (DEO) has launched a new, mobile-friendly online application available at [www.FloridaJobs.org/RAApplication](http://www.FloridaJobs.org/RAApplication). Floridians who do not have a current open Reemployment Assistance claim should complete their application on the new website or download a paper application. In addition, CareerSource locations across the state are available to assist with completing and submitting online applications and are available to provide paper applications. Visit [CareerSourceFlorida.com](http://CareerSourceFlorida.com) for center locations.

**CARES ACT TAX RELIEF PROVISIONS FOR EMPLOYERS** – The Volusia Manufacturers Association has shared an online [summary by James Moore CPA's](#) of three provisions of the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act. These employer provisions are aimed at helping avoid worker layoffs. The provisions comprise the following: 1) eligible employers in business during 2020 can get a refundable employee retention tax credit against Social Security taxes or the Railroad Retirement Tax; 2) the CARES Act employer payroll tax deferral relief provision allows deferred payment of the 6.2% social security tax, up to the maximum wage limit. This deferral applies to payroll taxes incurred from March 27 through Dec. 31, 2020; 3) the Payroll Tax Credits under the Families First Coronavirus Response Act (FFCRA) permits employers to claim a refundable payroll tax credit to offset the paid sick or family leave granted to employees under the Expanded Family Medical Leave Act (FMLA) requirement. This credit equals 100% of qualified sick and family paid leave wages paid in that calendar quarter. An employer is eligible only if subject to the terms of the Paid Sick and Family Leave Act.

**FPL & DUKE ENERGY REQUEST REDUCTION FOR MAY 2020 CUSTOMER BILLS** – On March 30 and April 2, the Florida Power & Light Company (FPL) and Duke Energy Florida respectively announced plans to lower customer bills in light of the ongoing coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic. If approved by the Florida Public Service Commission, fuel savings that are traditionally refunded over many months would be reflected in the single billing period for May 2020. The one-time decrease for a typical residential customer is estimated to be in the range of 20-25%. Business customers will also see a notable one-time decrease in May. For FPL, customers having difficulty paying their monthly bill, can [access online resources](#) or contact FPL at 1-800-226-3545. Duke customers can [access online resources here](#) or call 800-700-8744 (residential) or 877-372-8477 (business).

**CONNEXFLORIDA DATABASE TO SUPPORT MANUFACTURERS RESPONDING TO COVID-19** – The Associated Industries of Florida in partnership with Space Florida and FloridaMakes announced the deployment of the online database [ConnexFlorida](#) for Florida's small to large manufacturers to engage in the marketplace for needed COVID-19 products. More than 20,000 manufacturers across the state have the opportunity to compete for business by connecting them through this online tool. ConnexFlorida is a statewide manufacturing supply chain, workforce and R&D connection solution offered free of charge to manufacturers, educational institutions and those performing manufacturing R&D. To request access to the platform, [view this PDF](#) or contact [Connex@FloridaMakes.com](mailto:Connex@FloridaMakes.com).

**USDA IMPLEMENTS MEASURES TO HELP RURAL RESIDENTS, BUSINESSES AND COMMUNITIES AFFECTED BY COVID-19** – The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Rural Development has taken a number of immediate actions to help rural residents, businesses and communities affected by the COVID-19 outbreak. Immediate relief opportunities include Rural Development Guaranteed Loan Programs, whereby effective March 31 until September 30, 2020, lenders may offer 180-day loan payment deferrals without prior agency approval for various loan guarantees. Additional relief opportunities include rural housing service, rural utilities service and rural business-cooperative services. [Read the factsheet here](#). For more information, visit the [USDA RD website](#) for Rural Development loan payment assistance details, application deadline extensions and more.

**NEWS ITEMS WANTED!** – Please send your business news items to [Joanne Magley](#). If you wish to be removed from this weekly broadcast, please let us know.

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