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Different Boats

Since March 17th, I've been calling our members, reaching out to you to see how you're doing. As we all know, so much has happened in such a short amount of time. Many of you have commented that you've never had to think so hard about so much in such a short amount of time.

What do I need to do to keep my business alive? Do I qualify for a loan? Which loan? What is PPE? What is PPP? How will I keep my employees? When can I open again? Can I really do my business from home? Is virtual going to work? And what about this Governor's dial?

The Governor spoke yesterday, along with Commissioner Grove from DEED and my friend and colleague, Bruce Nustad, head of the Retailers Association. There is a great deal of collaboration happening and I hope we can move that dial faster than before. This is a challenging time for all of us – whether you've been open the whole time or not. Thank you for all that you are doing to provide a safe working environment for your employees.... And your customers. The question looming out there is, will the customers come back quickly or slowly or not at all...

You are a customer – what are your thoughts about shopping? Have you been supporting our local restaurants with take out and delivery? Are you ready to buy other items via curbside? That is still not a great option for many of our businesses, so we are working in tandem with the Minnesota Chamber to keep pounding the message in St Paul... The businesses that want to do business now are ready NOW!

Your boat has been sterilized, the hand sanitizer is available, the ability for social distancing has been addressed, your signage is up – MAKE SURE YOUR PLAN IS POSTED! This is maybe the most important link for you right now to prepare to open to the public and answer questions that you might have:

<https://mn.gov/deed/newscenter/covid/safework/>

The Chamber boat is still moving forward – we're adding Christine Fenner to help today and have also added Taylor Hubbard as our bookkeeper. We are working hard to keep the engines running and we appreciate all the support from our membership. As we continue forward, please work to be positive and welcome your customers back - slowly but surely – everyone will be able to do business again.

Remember that we are all in the same storm – but in different boats.