

## **Business, Not Quite as Usual**

By Karen Martin, Scarborough Economic Development Corporation (SEDCO)

SCARBOROUGH, Maine (April 16, 2020) COVID-19 has changed the way we live and the way we do business. In a few short weeks, every person and every business in this country has had to adapt on the fly to a constant flow of changing information about the virus, about the way we engage with our work, about the way business engages with customers, about how our children are educated and about how we interact with our friends and family.

In the face of these drastic changes, felt in every community across the country (and the world), Scarborough businesses and residents have reacted with grace, innovation and commitment.

Abbott, located right here in Scarborough, designed COVID-19 molecular rapid response testing kits that are in production now. Just this week, Abbott announced that they will also be producing an antibody corona virus test kit to determine whether a person has ever been infected with the disease. Both of these tests are part of the portfolio of steps needed to bring us back to work and school. And, Abbott is creating jobs in Scarborough to help make these test kits.

Hannaford, with their corporate headquarters here in Scarborough, has also led the way in assuring communities throughout the state that the food supply chain is secure and that their employees are busy restocking and serving customers.

Our small businesses have also stepped up to the plate in innovation and resilience. Restaurants, like O'Reilly's Cure, The Bait Shed and El Rayo adapted to curbside pickup. Oak Hill Beverage and Perk's Beer & Beverage have curbside pick-up. Lois's Natural Marketplace, Pinetree Seafood & Produce, and The Cheese Iron are all open for curb side pick-up. Realtors are coming up with new ways to show homes online.

Town Hall has adapted meetings to online formats. Town Council and the Planning Board are back in business – online. The Planning Board had its first online meeting as a workshop on April 15. Both Planning Board members and the applicant worked through the project, adapting to the new technology.

Town offices are up and running. Most of us are working from home, but essential services like Public Works and building inspections are still on the job.

Our Public Safety crew is busy protecting the community and the public health. They do not have the luxury of working from home.

SEDCO is up and running. Anyone can reach SEDCO at their regular office phone number and email. SEDCO is also hosting an open meeting on Zoom, every afternoon at 1:30 pm. You can

find the link on the SEDCO website. If you've got questions on where to start with any of the federal business programs, give them a call at 883-4893.

SEDCO has also joined with the Scarborough Community Chamber of Commerce and Scarborough Buy Local to offer a new Facebook page and E-Newsletter called the Business Update Scarborough (The BUS). The Facebook page provides a running source of business updates for consumers – new hours, new services etc. The e-news is geared toward businesses trying to navigate the waters of federal and state programs available to businesses, as well as, the new policies and rules of unemployment insurance.

The Portland Regional Chamber developed (and continues to develop) a great list of resources that are available to everyone -links to the resources are in the e-newsletter and on the SEDCO website.

You can reach the BUS Facebook page at <https://www.facebook.com/UpdateScarborough/>. You can sign up or view the previous e-news letters on the SEDCOMaine.com site.

Finally, let's end on a powerful, but simple concept put forth by Project GRACE, where their motto is "Neighbors Helping Neighbors." They partnered with the Town and the Scarborough Library, to bring you **ScarboroughHelps.org**. It's a great concept. If you need help you click one button, if want to help, you click a second button.

We know that this is a trying time, but Scarborough is and always has been a place that supports one another. Let's extend the Project GRACE concept to all that we do. If you need help, ask. If you can offer help, do it.