

COMMENTARY

Chamber shares economic concerns with Gov. Carney

EDITOR'S NOTE: The following letter was sent to Gov. John Carney from the Rehoboth Beach-Dewey Beach Chamber of Commerce.

By Carol Everhart

On behalf of the Rehoboth Beach-Dewey Beach Chamber of Commerce board of directors, I write to you today to raise our concerns regarding the economic effects of the coronavirus. The board fully understands, appreciates and supports the primary goal of keeping residents and visitors safe. The board further understands that you are in the difficult position of simultaneously representing the state of Delaware and its residents, visitors and business community.

We thank you for your initial efforts in having Delaware removed from the 14-day self-quarantine list required by some of our surrounding states. Unfortunately, we find ourselves back on several states' quarantine lists again, which has led to a devastating impact on our local businesses. Our business increased to some extent in the weeks after being taken off the lists, which leads to the importance of once again asking for Delaware to be removed from the lists.

As businesses across the state continue to suffer from the effects of COVID-19, those in Sussex County find themselves more susceptible to economic hardship, given that the road to recovery is running short. For many of our seasonal businesses, the opportunity to generate enough summertime cash flow to make it through the winter months is quickly fading away. For many businesses in the Delaware coastal communities, summer seasonal revenues in June, July and August count for as much as 80% of their annual revenue. While June was better than expectations, the month's positive sales trend was erased in the first two weeks of July. Revenue in 2019 compared to 2020 reflects that hotels have lost 35% to 50%, and retail stores and restaurants report losses of 75%. The financial and economic fallout will be like nothing we have ever experienced if our government officials do not provide some help or relief immediately.

Over the last two months, many of our industry trade organizations have offered solutions and plans directly to you and your staff. We will continue to offer feedback and suggestions to make you aware of potential pitfalls for businesses. We know our business-people, employees and customers. We are doing everything we can to protect them all. We are more than willing to share any information that will help in keeping our state safe and healthy, while allowing the business community the opportunity to thrive in the midst of this difficult situation.

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IN 'TOON



LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Biden endorsement needs more credibility

In her Letter to the Editor, Dr. Denise A. Davis presents reasons why Women's March Sussex-DE "wholeheartedly endorses Joseph Biden for president." ("Women's March endorses Biden," July 19)

Unfortunately, the reasons listed failed to address some important items:

- Simply listing many committee positions held by Mr. Biden does not give the reader information about specific contributions made while serving on those committees. Sadly, most of us likely know of someone who held a position in a group but didn't contribute significantly to the group's accomplishments.

- Dr. Davis also praises Mr. Biden as a believer in "the importance of virtue" and "having a moral compass." But do those admirable words resonate with how, when he served as vice president, Mr. Biden is said to have asked the president of Ukraine to fire the chief prosecutor who was investigating the corruption of Burisma? This, at a time when his son, Hunter Biden, was sitting on the board of directors of the organization and being paid \$80,000 a month in a position in which he had no expertise. And how is Mr. Biden's belief in "having a moral compass" demonstrated when a complaint to Senate personnel from aide Tara Reade, containing allegations of misconduct, is kept secret at the University of Delaware, where Mr. Biden turned over all his senatorial papers in 2011? Why hasn't Mr. Biden authorized release of those records?

- Lastly, Dr. Davis states "...we need a seri-

ous, experienced leader in this country. ... We need a person of courage and competence." Does Mr. Biden demonstrate those qualities when he takes cover in the basement of his home and refuses to take hard questions from the press? Instead, he gives statements and invites a small number of people to hear him and does not take questions. Why? And how could a "serious leader," when serving as vice president, be the only person who advised the President Obama in April 2011 not to pursue the elimination of Osama bin Laden? Mr. Biden was the only one who did not want to give the OK to the use of U.S. Navy Seals. And he wants to be our commander in chief?

Truly, Dr. Davis has presented a long listing of positions held by Mr. Biden and positive attributes she believes him to have, but there is a lack of detail about accomplishments, as well as a lack of detail demonstrating Mr. Biden's claimed attributes. Endorsements filled with generalities and with claims lacking demonstrated and proven specifics somehow lose their credibility.

Frederick C. Smiga
Frederica

EDITOR'S NOTE: There are published news reports saying that Vice President Biden was one of many officials and activists calling for the Ukraine prosecutor's resignation for stonewalling on the investigation and prosecution of corruption. Also, there are news reports that say Vice President Biden's advice to President Barack Obama was to wait for confirmation that bin Laden was at the site before approving the raid that resulted in his death.

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Delaware  State News

Darel LaPrade, Publisher
dlaprade@newszap.com

Andrew West, Executive Editor
awest@newszap.com

Ashley Dawson, Managing Editor
adawson@newszap.com

CEO/ President
Ed Dulin

Chamber

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The overwhelming percentage of businesses in Sussex County are adhering to the required social distancing, sanitizing and personal protective equipment standards. As our hospitalization and percent-positive testing numbers have decreased, we need to work with our leaders to get this reassuring message out.

We need to encourage both visitation and the following of guidelines. Though the late-June spike in positive COVID-19 cases was unfortunate, the business community reacted quickly and responsibly with forced quarantines, business closures and the offer of space for new testing sites. As a result, cases are dropping, and hospitalizations are at their lowest level in Delaware since the pandemic started. This positive and proactive approach was provided on a voluntary basis and should be applauded and recognized.

With the more recent enforcement attempts designed to slow the spread of the virus, it is now obvious that the actual messaging being communicated by the state is a factor in this latest downturn. Many of the recent messages are unwelcoming and confusing to residents and visitors. People believe our restaurants and bars are closed and that masks are required at all times, even while on the beach or seated at tables. We feel that it is necessary to release a clearly stated series of messages touting the success of the plan to keep residents, visitors and staff safe, while still providing a healthy, vibrant resort area. It is critical that this messaging come from our government leaders immediately.

Please use the tools that we possess to begin sending a positive message out to residents and visitors. We understand there is an advertisement ready to go at the Delaware Tourism Office. Dissemination of this would go a long way in sending a positive message about Delaware's

safety commitment to the stated virus-reducing guidelines. A clearly communicated marketing message can effectively reach and attract the customers we want and need.

We suggest the time is now to begin serious conversation toward moving to Phase 3 of the recovery process. Let's work together to avoid missteps in communication as we enter this next phase.

Neglecting to address the current economic disaster at the beaches and surrounding areas will result in dire consequences eventually felt by all. A sampling of our 1,200 members indicates hundreds of millions of dollars in lost revenue. These losses will be shared by all when tax revenues are not realized. Our state is small, and losses in several sectors of up to 75% are much more than a larger state. How will we pay for the operations of our state? The notion of increases in property taxes, gas taxes or other creative taxes and fees will further hamper economic recovery for businesses and consumers alike. Many small businesses and residents will not have the means to pay additional taxes if an increase in jobs and revenue is not realized in the next six weeks.

The effects of an economic collapse to the business community in Sussex County will be felt across the entire state. Tourism is one of Delaware's strongest business sectors. Negative revenue trends in the restaurant, retail and lodging industries in particular have far-reaching consequences across the First State. We must do all we can, together, to avoid such an outcome. We ask that you direct key staff members to communicate that our businesses are open and adhering to the standards of responsible social distancing, sanitization and the wearing of masks. We want to be part of a safe and prosperous solution that gives our struggling business community the best chance to survive. We hope you will respond to this letter with the willingness to work with the chamber.

Carol Everhart is president/CEO of the Rehoboth Beach-Dewey Beach Chamber of Commerce.

SPEAK OUT

Commentary: What is Black Lives Matter?

If you listen to and watch the fawning, Joe Biden, mainstream media describe Black Lives Matter, you get a feeling that the organization represents a peaceful movement whose sole purpose is to improve the lives of Black people. Through that lens, the media has been able to distort and hide the true meaning of BLM from the American public. However, when you peel back the onion, the true philosophy and mission of BLM is frighteningly clear — Marxism and anarchy. Every life on this Earth matters.

• A nasty piece. Perhaps it tells us something about the character and intellect of hardcore Trump supporters. — Alan Muller

• BLM is a racist hate group focused on Marxism and destroying our great nation. The organization has absolutely nothing to do with improving the lives of Black Americans. — Vernon Weaver

• I think you're confused. That sounds more like Republicans to me. — Matt Hickman

• Demanding to not be killed for no reason isn't destroying the country. But you thinking so obviously shows that you fear them having equality. I marched with BLM, and I'm part of their local chapter. Please explain to me your in-person encounters with the organization. So far, our chapter held two peaceful protests and said a prayer before we started, has talked to local schools and has given out over a thousand books to young children and collected masks for children so they have extras for school. Defunding doesn't mean abolish police. It means putting some of the money to the community for mental health and children's support programs. — Jessica Gazvoda

• BLM Inc. has held protests and collected hundreds of millions of dollars, which, besides a donation of a few million to local chapters, has not been given to change Black lives for the better. Why not ask for accountability and

documentation from the very organization you promote? They are taking advantage of you! Stand for yourselves. Stop padding the pockets of others! — Ashley Reynolds

• The author is merely repeating more lies and fabrications. BLM as an organization only existed for the last four years. Anything else is just made up and someone has been listening to too much Rush Limbaugh. — Ellen Behringer

Are Delaware inmates safe from COVID?

The Delaware Department of Correction has reported 511 cases involving inmates and 158 involving staff. Per the agency, 104 employees and 415 offenders have recovered, while eight inmates have died from complications relating to the virus.

• Are average, noncriminal citizens safe from COVID-19? I think that's a no, so who cares about criminals? — Hilary Ennis

• Citizens can go to great lengths to minimize the risk. Since we live in a systemically racist society, it's just one more brick in the wall. — William Mazzariello

• Don't break the law and you won't have to be in prison. — Cynthia M. Starkey

• Just give them a paper mask. According to Carney, they stop the virus. — Marc Auger

QUESTION OF THE DAY

Join the conversation! Visit delawarestatenews.net/gotd and enter your answer in the comments section.

TODAY'S QUESTION: As discussions continue on reopening the economy and reducing government restrictions on business and schools, which is more important to you: stepping out into the new normal or controlling the spread of COVID-19? Why? Are there solutions or compromises you would suggest either to businesses or government?

The Delaware State News Opinion pages are a forum for civil discourse, public debate, and compromise. In order to participate in this forum, we ask that you follow this guideline when sharing your views:



BE KIND

Kindness goes further toward building trust than the other practices listed here. It is not weak, or naive, or mere politeness. Kindness is a language easily recognized and understood by everyone. Sincere kindness is a powerful way to influence others to desire to hear you. But, be wise: nothing shatters trust more than phony, manipulative kindness, or false respectfulness.

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