

One of Two Part Series

# *Post COVID-19: Real Ideas From Your Colleagues*

“The future starts today,  
not tomorrow.”

*Pope John Paul II*

# Post COVID-19

March 2020

Dear friends, colleagues and neighbors:

The past few weeks have been tough on all of us. And the next few weeks are not looking much brighter.

But now is the time for you to make a difference; establish a plan; set the stage for recovery; and determine what *you* – as a professional – will leave behind as *your legacy* in turning the economy around in your community, region, state and the country as a whole.

Let's plan for the turnaround. The rebuilding. The inauguration of a new economy. It is going to be tough. And it is not going to be overnight. But you can make the difference – by starting the planning now – not when the health crisis is over.

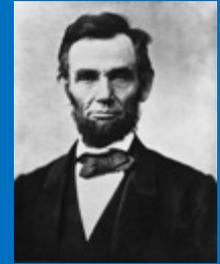
I want to share with you some thoughts on how your colleagues are working to set the compass in the right direction. My hope is to provide you some momentum to begin the process.

*Tim Chason*

## Post COVID-19

“You cannot escape the responsibility of tomorrow by evading it today.”

- Abraham Lincoln



First and foremost, we must change the questions from why and how COVID-19 caused a pandemic in our country.

*The new question is -*

What, as professionals, will we do immediately to initiate, lead and rebuild from the economic crisis that has just attacked our community, region, state, country and the world?

# Post COVID-19

Over the past few days, several key leaders from our industries have shared their ideas on what our professions should be doing to prepare for the day when each of us can reach out and shake the hands of those around us again.



Georgia has a strong reputation of building, supporting and maintaining our economic engines. From the ports of Savannah to the military in Warner Robins and the ag businesses in south Georgia. From the tourism of the Golden Isles to the beer manufacturer in Albany. From the fin tech firms in Columbus to the heavy equipment manufacturer in Athens and the coffee maker in Augusta. And from the steel fabricators in Rome to Hartsfield-Jackson International Airport in Atlanta.

*We are Georgians. Proud Georgians.*

Now let's get to work.

Here are some ideas from your colleagues to consider as you begin to move forward.

What will your legacy be "Post COVID-19"?

## Post COVID-19

*James McCoy  
President and CEO  
Forsyth County Chamber  
Cumming, Georgia*

The response in future weeks and months will depend in part on what you are doing now. Chambers should be deploying every resource they can to help local businesses apply for the SBA Disaster Loans, understand how the payroll tax credit will work and encourage residents to support their local restaurants and retailers in any way they can with curbside pickup and delivery options. Looking ahead, the most important thing chambers can do is help business owners get access to operating capital. Host meetings with local bank presidents to get a conversation going. Reach out to the SBDC to set up training on how to apply for and access that capital. Organize opportunities (especially virtual ones) for businesses to understand how federal, state and local business assistance programs work. Most important, chambers can lead campaigns to remind residents that businesses are really their neighbors and friends – and they need our support.



## Post COVID-19

*Jana Dyke*

*President and CEO*

*Waycross-Ware County Development Authority*

*Waycross, Georgia*

As EDO's evaluate programs and relevancy in a post COVID-19 economy, I would suggest evaluating our incentives based on the businesses' needs. Communities should function from a more a la carte menu vs. one that is preset. We need to focus on services that we can provide which are less costly to our community. We should better educate our smaller businesses and entrepreneurs on how to rebuild during hard times. A few ideas are through crafting in-house programs of lending so we can serve as that resource rather than sending to the next person down the line. Additionally, we need to ensure our community is one that does not have duplication of services. Although we say streamlined processes are in place, we need to ensure this is the case.



## Post COVID-19

*Daryl Ingram*

*Senior Vice President & Chief External Officer  
Electric Cities of Georgia*

First, dust off your BREP (Business, Retention, Expansion Program) or a hybrid of the BREP to assess local impacts.

Second, retool chambers of commerce to serve as a resource to assist local businesses with federal and state assistance opportunities.



## Post COVID-19

*Kali Boatright*

*President and CEO*

*Greater North Fulton Chamber of Commerce*

*Alpharetta, Georgia*

We are already getting a recovery task force together to work on several areas. Cash flow and liquidity will be very important, pressing issues. The service/entertainment industry will need help for mass hirings. Our chamber will be working with municipalities to discount/put off some of the expenses to small businesses. THE time for chambers to lead will be recovery time as we bring public and private sectors together.



# Post COVID-19

*Ryan Waldrep*

*President and CEO*

*Dublin-Laurens County Development Authority*

*Dublin, Georgia*

Small Business and Existing Industry: Being able to connect supplier networks and re-introduce customer relations for local and regional industries will be vital, especially for locally-owned entities. Communities should have a plan in place to point small businesses to resources as recovery begins.

Workforce: The workforce needs of the community post COVID-19 will be different than those March 1. Gather an inventory of job classifications that are available now and the skill/training required for the jobs. Be ready to assist those in sectors that may be slower to recover gain access to education and training for manufacturing/logistics jobs.



## Post COVID-19

*Misti Martin*

*President*

*Cherokee Office of Economic Development  
Woodstock, Georgia*

We as economic developers should continue with a holistic approach. There are many aspects to our field, even when recruitment and new location announcements are put on hold. Like the economic development focus during the great recession, we will need to increase efforts to support existing industry and small business. Innovative, customized existing industry assistance will be paramount during the months ahead. Supply chain issues will impact businesses during and after the pandemic. Support of startups, small businesses, and creatives will also be key. Further enhancement of shop local campaigns can boost awareness and show the importance of championing our local and regional economy.



## Post COVID-19

*Chris Clark, CCE, CEcD*

*President and CEO*

*Georgia Chamber of Commerce*

As community leaders we must start preparations now for the economic recovery. This reboot also provides us an opportunity to address systemic issues and refocus on the New Economy.

Here are a few ideas to get you started:

- Partner **Regionally**
- Form a **Recovery Task Force** to develop recommendations and programming
- **Promote** businesses, employees and your community via a 'bounce back' campaign
- **Advocate** for tools that help businesses recover: freeze property taxes, waive fees & taxes, ease licensure requirements, establish a Crisis Recovery Loan Fund
- Refocus **Workforce Development** efforts to retrain people to fill more critical and higher skilled jobs



### *Remember Corporate Stewardship*

Your revenue will undoubtedly be impacted during this crisis. Consider the following to position and prepare for the future: Adjust Chamber renewals and payment plans to support members facing financial challenges.

- Change to 'soft touch sales' method.
- Plan for a membership campaign after COVID-19 recedes.
- Apply for a line-of-credit.
- Develop a new mid-year budget for approval by your board that reflects lost event revenue and membership declines.
- Apply for SBA Emergency Loans.
- Be honest with your board about your financial position.
- Plan for furloughs, part time or contract changes.
- Cancel all non-essential contracts.
- Ask for lease deferments.

## Post COVID-19

*Jayson Johnston  
Executive Director  
Development Authority of Washington County  
Sandersville, Georgia*

Focus in, contact active and old/inactive projects, especially those in the manufacturing space. I feel with the sunset of this crisis we will begin to see a true renaissance of American manufacturing simply based on access to goods we have seen can be held up off-shore during times of crisis. Use this time to retool marketing and messaging. Ensure site and available building materials are up to date. And be in touch with your municipal finance advisors (bond brokers) and attempt to stay on top of the market so you can speak in an educated manner to the market.



## Post COVID-19

*Andy Williams, CMP, TMP  
Executive Director  
Visit Roswell  
Roswell, Georgia*

With the events surrounding COVID-19, you can imagine that our roles in our communities have changed drastically. At Visit Roswell, we're enacting an immediate plan that allows for us to support our hospitality partners in the present, as well as allows us to focus on the recovery of tourism months from now.

First, we've immediately become a boosted communicator of information. While much of our marketing efforts take place out-of-market, we've shifted into a partner organization that's keeping the community informed about opportunities to support the hospitality community. This is particularly visible within our restaurant sector.

Second, we're beginning to work with clients pertaining to group business on re-booking business at a future date. Detrimental to local economies would be the decision for groups to cancel. It also affects the hundreds of local businesses throughout our community. Our team is taking a proactive approach in guiding the conversation between the client and the vendor.

Third, we're refocusing (and redirecting) our strategy for the upcoming year. With the impacts of COVID-19, we know that our messaging, along with the ways that we sell and market the destination, will need to change.



## Post COVID-19

This is the first of a two-part series.

The second part will be distributed in the next few days.

*Please share your thoughts on this series at  
[tchason@thechasongroup.com](mailto:tchason@thechasongroup.com).*

<http://www.thechasongroup.com/>