



COVID-19 INDUSTRY DISCUSSION FORUM MEETING NOTES

MARCH 24, 2020

MEMBERS

INDUSTRY & PARTNERS:

David Adelsheim, Ross Allen, Jessica Blauert, Terry Brandborg, Ellen Brittan, Julia Burke, Kevin Chambers, Ariel Eberle, Bertony Faustin, Denise Flora, Bob Hackett, Robert Hanson, Anna Hatcher, Dan Jarman, Ken Johnston, Hilda Jones, Eugenia Keegan, Joel Kiff, Ed King, Jodee King, Justin King, Jean Kurtz, Nora Lancaster, Laurie Lewis, Cathy Martin, Jana McKamey, Morgen McLaughlin, Mike McNally, Elin Miller, Donna Morris, Bob Morus, Scott Neal, Ximena Orrego, Bruce Sonnen, Barb Steele, Andy Steinman, Jessica Thomas, Steve Thomson, Jason Tosch, Dan Warnshuis

STAFF:

Margaret Bray, Marie Chambers, Tom Danowski, Christina DeArment, Stacey Kohler, Kai McMurtry, Sally Murdoch, Bree Stock, Jess Willey

OBJECTIVES

Follow-up on outstanding items from March 19 meeting, share statewide updates and announcements as well as news about regional activities related to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, clarify policy issues, and to discuss the Governor's latest Executive Order.

BACKGROUND

This Oregon wine industry forum offers an opportunity for business leaders from around the state to come together periodically during the COVID-19 crisis to share what is known and to identify gaps in our understanding of key issues that deserve continued attention.

SUMMARY OF DISCUSSION

Follow-ups from last meeting:

- Davis Wright Tremaine has put together an update on OLCC pick-up and delivery rules, which were put in place since the last meeting. These can be found on the [OWA's website](#).
- Regarding updated adult signature verification protocols adopted by common carriers: Jana McKamey (OWA) reported that FedEx customers need to show valid ID but that no customer signature is required since drivers can confirm on their touch pads that a valid ID has been presented. Others on the call reported hearing that a wide range of protocols is being implemented by other carriers.

Announcements:

- Tom Danowski (OWB) asked that wineries and growers who are looking for ways to support healthcare providers with N95 masks and other personal protective equipment (PPE) can donate through local fire stations. ODA has not responded to a request for information about a statewide ag. community appeal.
- Various emergency financing and assistance packages are being offered through the federal government, commercial financial institutions, and other organizations. Wineries are cautioned about making a commitment while possibilities exist for additional federal emergency assistance.
 - U.S. Senate is in discussion about a third federal action to benefit businesses and individuals.
 - This is expected to include an estimated \$350B in Small Business assistance, however details about interest, payment terms and loan forgiveness are still under discussion.
 - SBA published details March 23 about emergency financing for non-profits at a 2.75% interest rate versus more than 3% for privately owned businesses.
 - SBA site states businesses need to first exhaust all other credit options, but unclear if that stipulation will be waived.



- Federal income tax returns for 2019 now due July 15, 2020.
- The WorkShare program, which enables employers who have reduced their employee's hours to access partial unemployment benefits, was discussed.
 - The program is currently designed for hourly workers, and 3 or more workers must be impacted. Employees are only eligible if they have been with the company 6 months or more. It's unclear whether these stipulations will be suspended to allow greater access.
 - Anecdotally, Sokol Blosser has been using this and has reported it has worked well for them.
 - **ACTION:** Add WorkShare link to OWB Toolkit (it is already on OWA page).
- Dan Jarman (Crosswater Strategies) gave an update on the Special Joint Committee on Coronavirus Response and upcoming special legislative session. He reminded the group that the state is more limited than the federal government in its ability to assist.
 - State action depends on what the federal government offers and how much flexibility the states will have.
 - Oregon's upcoming Special Legislative Session will focus on immediate worker relief and the healthcare response. Lawmakers will likely extend unemployment benefits to independent contractors and sole proprietors who wouldn't normally be able to access those funds.
 - The Special Joint Committee has a 12-page letter from the Oregon business community outlining 45 issues to consider with 3 main principles for the special session: All new policy should be temporary, do no harm to businesses, and help people do their jobs to support that state's economic recovery as much as possible.
 - Major topics include unemployment insurance (no penalties to businesses, address claim filing issues); a response to labor organizer requests regarding workers comp claims; the desire to coordinate changes to Oregon's family or sick leave policies with any new rules passed at the federal level.
 - Other topics for legislative consideration include suspension of overtime caps; delayed implementation of the corporate activities tax; temporary relaxation of the 2-week advance scheduling rules; possible changes to tax credits for enterprises with COVID-19 related increased costs, and the credits for unemployment insurance.
 - Wine industry members on the call voiced support of overtime cap suspension and advance scheduling, in particular.
- OWA has circulated the Oregon Wine Industry [letter](#) to the Special Joint Commission, which includes suggestions for action at both the federal and state levels. The letter addresses the wine industry's priorities, which include support for business liquidity and stabilization of unemployment funds so workers are taken care of and employers aren't penalized.
- The Governor's Executive Order 20-12 was discussed along with its implications for the wine industry:
 - Winery operations & vineyard activities are allowed to continue so long as they are compliant with social distancing requirements.
 - Tasting rooms can be open for delivery and take-away sales only (no on-site tastings / consumption)
 - It's critical that every wine business identify a designee who is responsible for implementing and adhering to those guidelines and document that you have done so.
 - OWA and OWB will try to identify the guidelines a business owner should follow to support the designee responsible for monitoring social distancing rules at work.
 - OHA can recommend to the Governor that other businesses be closed if it believes that is necessary, so it's important that those businesses that are open adhere to the guidelines.
- The current OHA website is not updated with the new guidelines of the Executive order. The OSHA website guidelines offer more specificity and should be consulted in the meantime.
 - **ACTION:** Elin Miller (OWC) has asked Oregon Business Industry if there is a template for guidance on this new Executive Order and will share relevant news coming from OSHA.



- The federal Families First Coronavirus Response Act (HR 6201) takes effect April 2.
 - If giving paid sick leave beyond what Oregon legally mandated, you need to be prepared to also extend employees the provisions of HR 6201. It's important to know that sick leave hours taken prior to April 2 are likely not eligible for tax credit. It's currently being investigated by law firms who are looking into how this meshes with Oregon Leave Law.
 - **ACTION:** DWT to review the relevant sections of HR 6201 and determine how they relate to Oregon state law before March 31.
- OLCC is reported to have been out checking wineries because they have the ability to enforce the provisions of the Executive Order pertaining to serving alcohol on-site.

Regional Round-up:

- WVWA has been actively communicating with consumers on behalf of member wineries
 - [#WVcommunity hub](#) acts as a central resource for DTC promotions; will continue to be built out with additional content and they are putting some PR resources behind the effort.
 - WVWA is considering how to pivot Memorial Day push and starting to plan "Welcome Back to the Valley" communications.
- RVV reports the timing is fluid for an initial advertising push. They have been collaborating with members on DTC opportunities and see some strength remaining in retail sales.
 - Lots of restaurants in the region have closed because they couldn't sustain the business (several are still fulfilling to-go orders).
- UVWA has postponed or cancelled their two fundraisers: Greatest of the Grape and Barrel Tour. This has put a major hole in the association's budget and they are delaying publication of a new touring brochure.
- OWB convened a marketing forum on March 20 ([read notes](#)). Actions resulting are:
 - Determining how best to reallocate some of its funding to amplify awareness of DTC promotions happening around the state currently.
 - Facilitating a statewide discussion group comprised of sales executives to understand current and anticipated changes to the 3-tier distribution system in response to the emergency.
- Group discussed what kind of coordination can happen at the state level.
 - In terms of how we can we assist the restaurant & hospitality community that is so important to us, Tom will reach out to Jason at ORLA and ask if it has a list of foodservice businesses that are doing a good job of highlighting wine so we can message to consumers and the industry .
 - **ACTION:** OWB will work with regions to consolidate industry promotional offers (including those related to related businesses, e.g. restaurants) and consider how to aggregate and amplify. Send all recommendations to Kai McMurtry at kai@oregonwine.org or info@oregonwine.org.
- A request was made to clarify whether the OWB is able to offer money from its budget to assist regional and industry associations with their programs or operating expenses. OWB's Board-approved 2019-20 budget is fully committed to the Education, Media Relations, Research and Marketing programs previously requested by the industry and approved by the Board of Directors. OWB's budget does not include money to fulfill marketing or promotional grant requests. For now please send detailed requests to info@oregonwine.org or tom@oregonwine.org and we will address them when the industry's Strategic MarComm Committee meets.
- Morgen has spoken with travel research firm Destination Analysts about impacts on travelers, likelihood to travel, etc. Initial reports show a likelihood that there will be a focus on "staycations" for the near future even after businesses reopen.
 - **ACTION:** Morgen to share info received from DA with group.
- Sally provided an update on a collection of story threads and trends that she has been collating for interested media. Media are eager to promote stories about how various industry sectors are responding and how they are creatively innovating to help people endure all of the shelter in place restrictions while generating income.

- We are continuing to invite your thoughts and ideas about what you are hearing locally that allows us to put our industry's innovative thinking on display as we get through this emergency.

Industry Events & Activities:

- OWB invites you to check the [industry calendar](#) for conflicts as you reschedule events and to **post** your updated events. If you have edits on an already published event please send your changes to Jess Willey at jessica@oregonwine.org or info@oregonwine.org.
 - **ACTION:** OWB will circulate a link with instructions on how to post an event to the Industry website.
- Jess Willey (OWB) will be contacting regional association heads to discuss postponing OWB's discussion of its strategic plan and statewide branding with regional boards.
- OWA was to do an in-person statewide roadshow regarding draft bylaws changes in April to get feedback from members, however given the circumstances will be moving to virtual meetings. Stay tuned for more information.
- Efforts of some regional groups to get their members on OWB's contact list were fruitful.
 - **ACTION:** All regional organizations should remind their constituents to make sure they are receiving OWB communications (submit [this form](#) if not).
 - **ACTION:** Tom to contact OLCC to ask again about getting their winery contact list since we are not a trade association.

NEXT STEPS

- The OWB's Finance Committee will sort through the financial assistance offers for wineries and report back to the group
- OWB to circulate / add to toolkit:
 - WorkShare program information and requirements
 - OWB will forward the Industry Priorities letter crafted by OWA
- OWC to update group on OSHA guidelines and OBI template if it becomes available
- OWA to enlist DWT to help all navigate details of HR 6201 and its intersection with current state policy as it relates to sick leave
- Reconvene on March 31 at 10 a.m.

Meeting adjourned at 10:42 a.m.