



NORTH COUNTRY FORWARD

A Plan for Supporting Business Reopening in the North Country

INTRODUCTION:

As the largest business and economic development organization in northern New York, linking more than 4,200 employers across Clinton, Franklin, Essex, Hamilton and northern Warren Counties and Akwesasne, including a network of Partnership Agreements with thirteen community Chambers within that area, the North Country Chamber of Commerce has been playing an active role in assisting the regional business community through the current pandemic.

Our activities have centered on the following key roles:

- **COMMUNICATION AND OUTREACH**
- **INFORMATION AND TRAINING**
- **ADVOCACY**
- **FACILITATION OF CONNECTIONS AND COLLABORATIONS**
- **DIRECT ASSISTANCE AND PROBLEM SOLVING**

As we move towards and then through the anticipated re-opening of business activity in the North Country -- which will be largely defined by the State on the basis of established health performance measurements and is expected to begin after May 15 -- the North Country Chamber of Commerce will continue its commitment to these essential activities and our singular capacity and capability in terms of connectivity with the regional business community.

At the same time, we will be bringing the needs of the North Country business community and its unique economy to all regional, state, federal and U.S.-Canadian processes and conversations where plans are being formulated.

The following outline is a basic Plan of Action by the Chamber as we move through this upcoming period. It will be reviewed and appropriately adjusted and updated on at least a weekly basis.

STEP ONE: CONTINUATION

The North Country Chamber will continue its active communications and programming for the regional business community including:

- Our Daily Dose e-newsletter which has become a "go to" source of timely and consolidated information relevant to employers and our regional economy, distributed M-F to some 5,000 regional recipients.
- Webinars and Conference Calls: Continuing timely and informative programming as well as interaction with officials and leaders.
- Website: Continuing to maintain and build our website as one of the North Country's most robust collections of relevant information, guidance, news and links.

- Direct Assistance: Continuing on a daily basis to interact with and assist individual businesses with questions, needs and challenges.

STEP TWO: DIALOGUE AND INPUT

The North Country Chamber has already begun what will be extensive conversations and contacts with our regional business community over the next few weeks to identify updated needs and issues that can guide various planning efforts. This process will be by sector, including group outreach and conversations with such business categories as Hospitality/Tourism; Restaurants; Manufacturing; Retail; Services and others.

We will also be initiating a regular planning dialogue with our thirteen Partner Chambers in our service region: Adirondack Speculator, Akwesasne, Indian Lake, Inlet, Malone, North Warren, ROOST, Saranac Lake, Schroon Lake, Stony Creek, Ticonderoga Area, Tupper Lake and Whiteface Regional Visitors Bureau. This will enhance both input and the delivery of information and support services.

Similarly, our Economic Development Division will conduct a dialogue with our Economic Development Partners in the North Country, not only for general input and coordination but to begin a regular sharing process regarding economic development activities through the remainder of the year.

Our Adirondack Coast Visitors Bureau team will stay in active communication with local, regional and statewide partners, including I LOVE NY, the Adirondack Regional Tourism Council (which includes ROOST and tourism leaders in Clinton, Essex, Franklin, Warren, Hamilton, St. Lawrence and Lewis Counties) and the New York State Tourism Industry Association.

As previously noted, direct conversations and sharing will also continue with our Quebec/Canadian partners, turning to shared messaging and activity in support of reinvigorated cross border travel, commerce and investment ahead of eventual relaxation of travel restrictions at the shared border.

STEP THREE: SAFETY RESOURCE OFFICERS

In alignment with federal CDC recommended practices, every business/employer should designate a Safety Resource Officer who will be their main point person/contact related to appropriate planning and the implementation of standards for such things as social distancing, PPE, sanitation/disinfecting, etc. This will position employment sites for eventual reopening standards and requirements, and facilitate training initiatives which have begun. These individuals will be offered programming to basically inform and train them on the basics to start with and then offer further guidance and training as standards and requirements for various sectors are defined by the state and others.

STEP FOUR: TRAINING AND GUIDANCE

We will expand and comprehensively plan, for May and beyond, specific information and training programs and opportunities related to COVID-19 prevention, preparedness, new standards, mandates and practices at various types of worksites, and responses over time. A first such general program is set for May 4. In addition to general programming, sectoral outreach will help to identify sector-specific programs (i.e. food service, manufacturing, offices, lodging and attractions, construction, etc.).

We will also provide Human Resource information and guidance with regard to employment law compliance, the recalling of laid off employees and their return to the worksite, and workforce recruitment and training related to renewed business operations. This will include continuation of the

intensive assistance we continue to provide through our Health Insurance Program to small employers and the self-employed related to health insurance changes, reenrollment and general guidance.

STEP FIVE: PROMOTION/MARKETING/INFORMATION

As our regional businesses begin to re-open, we will in coordination with regional partners commit to assisting with the dissemination of information to the consumer community regarding businesses that are now open and on what basis. We will also (already underway) create a fresh Marketing Plan for our Adirondack Coast Visitors Bureau, including the 2020 Bass Fishing Tournaments, and for Economic Development in the context of our Quebec-New York economic dynamic.

CONCLUSION

This Action Agenda will be regularly reevaluated, updated and adjusted in response to changing policies, directives, input and situations, but provides a framework for our commitment to the North Country business community to assist it in the re-opening and recovery process.

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