April 10, 2020

Equipment manufacturers have been stepping up in a big way to support the national response to the COVID-19 pandemic, and AEM has been encouraging I Make America supporters to share their stories. Today’s story comes from GS Global Resources in Mukwonago, Wisconsin, and show how engineers are putting their skills to use to support local healthcare workers.

AEM continues to team up with other associations and business organizations to advocate on behalf of our member companies. As part of the Highway Materials Group, AEM and 10 other trade groups sent a letter to Congressional leadership calling on more funds for infrastructure investment in future coronavirus relief bills.

We also have details on U.S. Education Secretary Betsey DeVos latest announcement on funding to institutions of higher education to provide cash grants to students impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. At the urging of AEM, and of note for both equipment manufacturers and future manufacturing employees, many career and technical education schools are included on the list.

Here are the latest developments:

**GS Global Resources Steps Up to Help Those on the Front Line**

AEM member company GS Global Resources’ team of engineers put their skills and equipment to use to help local first responders. The Mukwonago-based company has 3D printed over 500 face shields to donate to first responders and healthcare workers. Another 500 3D printed face shields are in the works. Brand Marketing Supervisor Erin Ochnikowski tells us their “primary goal is to help fill that pressing need in our community while mask manufacturers catch up to the current historic demand for their product.”

Please help us keep track of what you are doing to support the COVID-19 relief efforts by emailing AEM Advisor Editor Mike Schmidt at mschmidt@aem.org. We will be highlighting member companies’ efforts and sharing stories about the industry’s collective efforts in the coming weeks.

**Update from Washington**

On Thursday, AEM and several members of the Highway Materials Group sent a letter to congressional leadership, urging them to include additional funds for states and localities to offset revenue shortfalls in state transportation budgets in future relief packages. With the COVID-19 pandemic, fewer people are utilizing transportation infrastructure, exacerbating deficits in infrastructure trust funds. Plugging the deficit caused by the pandemic will ensure that important infrastructure projects will not be delayed or cancelled, and that operations and maintenance work continues.
Secretary of Education Betsy DeVos announced the distribution of more than $6 billion to institutions of higher education to provide cash grants to students for expenses related to education disruptions as a result of the COVID-19 crisis. Uses for the cash grants include course materials, technology, food, housing, health care, and childcare. The funding for these grants was made available by the CARES Act, Section 18004, the Higher Education Emergency Relief Fund. At the suggestion of AEM, many career and technical education schools are included in the distribution list. Institutions receiving funds have a significant amount of discretion for distribution, though Secretary DeVos did suggest in a letter to schools that they prioritize aid based on student need and use the Pell grant maximum of $6,195 as the maximum individual grant threshold.

State Activities
AEM has been monitoring activities taken by Governors as they continue to issue closure orders and other guidance, and we are in close contact with their staff to make the case that our industry should be deemed “essential.”

Notable for today’s update is that the Governor of Connecticut extended the duration of the previous stay at home order. The map below summarizes each state’s status. For all of the latest information, please visit our dedicated state by state tracker.

Map as of April 10

Canada Activities
AEM is supporting member companies in Canada as they are navigating the COVID-19 pandemic, including ongoing engagement with federal and provincial lawmakers to make sure that our industry is deemed “essential.”
A $25 billion federal loan program for small business is ready to launch, but the government and opposition parties are at odds over legislative plans to pass separate wage subsidies for businesses affected by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Figures from the federal government this morning show that 5.08 million people are receiving the Canada Emergency Response Benefit. So far this week, 3.08 million people have filed claims for the benefit, including just over 615,000 claims alone on Thursday. The $2,000-a-month benefit is available for up to 16 weeks for eligible workers affected by COVID-19.

The Premier of Alberta announced the government is fast-tracking infrastructure projects across the province in an effort to get some Albertans back to work. Alberta is allocating $1.9 billion from the Capital Plan to be distributed among 114 projects, including 27 schools and nine major bridge and road projects.

We continue to update our resources on Canadian activities on AEM’s COVID-19 resources page. You can also click here for the latest updates from Ottawa and all the provinces.

Do you have questions or need to get a hold of AEM’s Advocacy Team? E-mail our Response Team at responseteam@aem.org with any questions or feedback.

As always, if you have any questions about AEM’s ongoing efforts, need assistance with a specific issue, or would like to share how the unfolding COVID-19 pandemic is impacting your business, please do not hesitate to reach out to me at keideberg@aem.org.

Best,
-Kip

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