April 17, 2020

Yesterday, the Trump administration issued new federal guidelines for opening up the country. The guidelines, which include a three-phased approach based on the advice of public health experts, are intended to help state and local officials when reopening their economies, getting people back to work, and continuing to protect lives.

AEM is working with the U.S. Congress and the White House on the immediate authorization of additional funding for the Paycheck Protection Program. It is important that they hear directly from equipment manufacturers that have benefited from this much-needed program. If you are willing to lend your voice to our efforts, and share your story with us, please reach out to me as soon as possible at keideberg@aem.org.

*** COVID-19 SURVEY: Yesterday AEM deployed a survey to help us better understand how the COVID-19 pandemic is impacting member companies, identify challenges facing executives, and understand the outlook for the next three to six months. ***

U.S. Secretary of Agriculture Sonny Perdue unveiled a resource guide for rural communities to navigate COVID-19 and the many federal resources available.

The U.S. Department of Labor’s Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) issued interim guidance to advise safety and health officers on how to evaluate an employer’s good faith efforts related to safety and health standards during the coronavirus pandemic.

Here are some of the other recent developments:

**SBA Releases Paycheck Protection Program Loan Report**
The Small Business Administration (SBA) today released an updated report on the Paycheck Protection Program (PPP). The report is an overview of the approved loans through 12 PM EST on April 16, 2020. The SBA approved 1,661,367 loans through 4,975 lenders for a total of $342,277,999,103. California and Texas are home to the highest number of total loans approved. The overall average loan size was $206,000, with 74% of loans falling at $150,000 and under. The manufacturing sector received the third highest number of loans – 108,863 loans were approved for a total of $40,922,240,021.
As we reported in yesterday's update, the PPP ran out of funding this week. AEM is urging lawmakers to expand and streamline loan programs like the PPP for small businesses with fewer than 500 employees experiencing revenue loss as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic; this includes authorizing additional funds for the Paycheck Protection Program.

**White House Issues Guidelines for Reopening America**

The White House issued its guidelines (*Guidelines for Opening Up America Again*) for reopening the American economy yesterday. Under the guidelines put forward by the president, states will reopen one step at a time, rather than all at once and will empower Governors to tailor the phased reopening to address the situation in their state. The recommendations also include benchmarks on new cases, testing, and hospital resources for States to meet to proceed toward a phased reopening and criteria outlining a downward trajectory in cases presenting coronavirus-like symptoms or positive tests. The guidelines also consider whether hospitals have the resources to treat all patients without crisis care and a robust testing program for healthcare workers.

AEM staff will be working with lawmakers assigned to the bipartisan task force who will be advising on when and how the country should re-open its economy to ensure equipment manufacturers and their employees are considered.

*You can find the full guidelines, including details on the three phases, here.*

**Governors Begin to Explore Opening up States**

In recent days, Governors have begun to turn their attention towards how to reopen their states for residents and businesses. Governors are working together in various coalitions to present joint reopening plans and coordinate across state lines to ensure harmony for businesses. Governors' number one priority remains the health and safety of their residents, and continue to stress the need for expanded testing, and sustained or reduced rates of infections, before any relaxation of their stay at home orders. AEM is working closely with many Governors as they pivot towards crafting strategic and well-planned reopening approaches, and will provide you with more updates in the weeks ahead.

**Department of Agriculture Releases COVID-19 Federal Rural Resource Guide**

U.S. Secretary of Agriculture Sonny Perdue unveiled the COVID-19 Federal Rural Resource Guide. Businesses, farmers, and other rural stakeholders will find answers to technical training and management practices, financial assistance, and local and state resources. This guide is the first-of-its-kind “for rural leaders looking for federal funding and partnership opportunities to help address this pandemic.”

**U.S. Department of Labor Considers Employer’s Good Faith Efforts When Enforcing Compliance During Coronavirus Pandemic**

Today, the U.S. Department of Labor’s Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) issued interim guidance to advise safety and health officers on how to evaluate an employer’s
good faith efforts related to safety and health standards during the coronavirus pandemic. The U.S. Department of Labor stated that during an inspection, compliance safety and health officers should assess an employer’s efforts to comply with standards that require annual or recurring audits, reviews, training or assessments. This includes if an employer has: explored all options to comply with applicable standards (e.g., use of virtual training or remote communication strategies), implemented interim alternative protections, such as engineering or administrative controls; and rescheduled required annual activity as soon as possible. Read OSHA’s guidance for more information.

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 Governors of Mississippi and Missouri have extended the duration of their previous stay at home orders, and the Governor of Iowa extended the duration of the previous Public Health Emergency declaration. The Governor of Pennsylvania announced the indicators needed before reopening the state.

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 17
Canada Activities

Today, Prime Minister Justin Trudeau announced $1.7 billion to clean up orphan wells in Alberta, Saskatchewan, and British Columbia. He also announced the government will establish a $750 million emissions reduction fund, with a focus on methane, to create jobs through efforts to cut pollution.

The government announced $962 million to regional development agencies and the Community Futures Network, which will focus on businesses in rural areas who do not have access to traditional financial institutions. The government also announced $270 million to Futurpreneur Canada and the Industrial Research Assistance Program, which support early-stage businesses.

The Canadian Centre for Occupational Health and Safety (CCOHS) has developed a series of pandemic guidance tip sheets for essential workplaces, including manufacturing. These pandemic (COVID-19) tip sheets offer guidance and good practices for specific occupations, industries, and services, for both employers and workers.

The Alberta government, in conjunction with the federal government, has announced a plan to respond to confirmed cases of COVID-19 in food processing plants.
We continue to update our resources on Canadian activities on [AEM’s COVID-19 resources page](https://example.com). You can also click here for the latest updates from [Ottawa and all the provinces](https://example.com).

Do you have questions or need to get a hold of AEM’s Advocacy Team? E-mail our Response Ream at [responseteam@aem.org](mailto: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](mailto:keideberg@aem.org).

Best,
-Kip

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