

Transcript of Economic Recovery Task Force Meeting via Zoom, February 4th, 2021
Participants on Zoom Call:

Jim Siplon
John Wheatley
Mark Behan
Matt Simpson
Kathy Muncil
Chandler Atkins
Jeff Flagg
Andrea Hogan
Joanne Conley
Liza Oschendorf
Amy Collins
Laura Kohls
Mike Wild
Rachel Seeber
Wayne LeMothe
Lynn Rutnik
Don Lehman
Linda Oldenburg
Jacob Miller
James Griffith
Frank Dittrich

Chandler Atkins ([00:00:00](#)):

How are you Mark?

Mark Behan ([00:00:02](#)):

Hey Chandler.

Chandler A. ([00:00:02](#)):

Hey, Mark.

Jim Siplon ([00:00:04](#)):

Hey, Chandler. Hey, John. Nice to see everybody. Wow.

Chandler A. ([00:00:09](#)):

Hello, Mark.

John Wheatley ([00:00:10](#)):

Good seeing you, Mark.

Chandler A. ([00:00:12](#)):

How are you doing?

Jim S. ([00:00:13](#)):

Good. It's good to see you. How are you?

Chandler A. ([00:00:16](#)):

Good seeing you. I just thought I'd pop on. I've got another Zoom here in a little while, and it was like, I just wanted to see some old friends here.

Jim S. ([00:00:23](#)):

Oh. It's like old home week.

Mark B. ([00:00:24](#)):

Yeah.

Chandler A. ([00:00:25](#)):

Well, it's an Albany for three days, so I'm feeling homesick and-

Jim S. ([00:00:32](#)):

Well, good.

Chandler A. ([00:00:33](#)):

I've been missing my friends.

Mark B. ([00:00:34](#)):

I'm sure Matt told you, but we did invite Matt, and you and he are always welcomed, but Matt particular. I felt like it might be good for him to be able to see everybody and hear some of what was going on.

Jim S. ([00:00:48](#)):

Absolutely. Absolutely.

Chandler A. ([00:00:49](#)):

I had a few minutes. I just wanted to listen in and see what I can glean, and retain for talking points when I'm in Albany.

Jim S. ([00:00:59](#)):

Good, good.

Mark B. ([00:01:02](#)):

Morning, Andrea.

Jim S. ([00:01:04](#)):

Hey, Andrea. How are you? Hi, Liza.

Liza Ochsendorf ([00:01:08](#)):

Good morning.

Jim S. ([00:01:08](#)):

Liza, I owe you a huge apology for failing to recognize you? I'm so sorry.

Liza O. ([00:01:13](#)):

No, you don't. I will make it up to you.

Jim S. ([00:01:15](#)):

Good morning, Lynn.

Lynn Rutnik ([00:01:21](#)):

Good morning. I'm driving. So I just wanted to say hi, and then I'm going to put my phone down, and I'm going to listen and my audio will be on.

Jim S. ([00:01:27](#)):

Yeah, that's kind of like the Elon Musk view we got going to be there.

Lynn R. ([00:01:29](#)):

I love it. Thanks for the invite. I'm excited to be here.

Jim S. ([00:01:37](#)):

We're glad you're joining. Morning, Wayne. And Jeff.

Jeff Flagg ([00:01:47](#)):

Morning.

Jim S. ([00:01:48](#)):

Welcome.

Jeff Flagg ([00:01:48](#)):

Can you hear me okay?

Jim S. ([00:01:50](#)):

We hear you great.

Jeff Flagg ([00:01:51](#)):

Oh good. I wish was sitting somewhere like you're in, Jim. That looks really nice there, your background. Office is full boxes.

Mark B. ([00:02:03](#)):

Hey, Jeff. Nice to meet you. Congratulations-

Jeff Flagg ([00:02:05](#)):

Thank you very much. I appreciate it, Mark. It's nice to meet you too. Even if it's only virtual and all these meetings...

Chandler A. ([00:02:15](#)):

Great.

Liza O. ([00:02:18](#)):

So I've had twice now the moment in time where I have had employees that I've only met virtually, working in the office. I had one, I didn't even know what she looked like for two months. I never met her. We hired her in April.

Chandler A. ([00:02:39](#)):

Wow.

Liza O. ([00:02:41](#)):

Yeah, kind of crazy.

Chandler A. ([00:02:43](#)):

The way the world now.

Jeff Flagg ([00:02:44](#)):

Yeah. The brave new world.

Jim S. ([00:02:46](#)):

Morning, Mike.

Mike Wild ([00:02:46](#)):

Good morning everyone.

Jeff Flagg ([00:02:46](#)):

Morning, Mike.

Jim S. ([00:02:54](#)):

I was teasing Don, but I was just wasn't sure whether we would have participation from the County, whether you guys had recovered from that meeting you had last night that went into the early hours of the morning.

Mike W. ([00:03:05](#)):

Well, it wasn't quite that bad.

Chandler A. ([00:03:07](#)):

Mark did a fantastic job by the way.

Mike W. ([00:03:14](#)):

Yeah, he did.

Jeff Flagg ([00:03:14](#)):

And i think that's some positive feedback from a few of the supervisors that I talked to. So we will see how quickly we can move.

Mike W. ([00:03:23](#)):

Good.

Jim S. ([00:03:26](#)):

Well, it sounds like we certainly got a good group ready to go. Maybe we fire it up here. Good morning, everybody. It's glad to see you again. We have a couple of new members that I wanted to recognize, some of which are are with us and some of whom unfortunately are not able to join us, but Jeff Flagg, you can see on your screen the new economic development director for the city of Glens Falls. We're glad to have you Jeff. Welcome.

Jeff Flagg ([00:03:55](#)):

Thank you, sir. I appreciate it.

Jim S. ([00:03:58](#)):

We have an old friend, Matt Simpson here. We'd actually invited his office through Matt McDonald to join, and then we got the man himself. So that was like a triumph. And then Lynn, we're watching Lynn as she's driving in from the confines of her car. Thank you, Lynn, for joining us.

Lynn R. ([00:04:21](#)):

Thanks.

Jim S. ([00:04:24](#)):

And then Rebecca Wood from the Great Escape had asked to join, but unfortunately was not able to join us this morning, but she will be a regular participant in everything we have going. And then I see Laura who we haven't seen in a while. Welcome, Laura.

Laura Kohls ([00:04:42](#)):

Yeah. Sorry, it's been a little bit.

Jim S. ([00:04:42](#)):

But we're certainly glad to see you. And of course, we've got so many of our old guard here. As we kind of evolve, I wanted to try to make sure everyone understood that one thing we will always try to do every week is provide any new updates on economic development, either programs or resources that are available. So sometimes we have good news and sometimes we have bad news there. Let's maybe

start with the bad news. John, we checked in with ESD about the restaurant specific program that they had announced several weeks ago to see whether or not there was any continued access to that. What did we learn?

Chandler A. ([00:05:24](#)):

Well, unfortunately they're no longer taking applications for the program. I think they'll run out of money, obviously. The program is filled up now. I'm trying to find out too, if anybody who did file for one of these grants was successful in our area. I don't know. So I'll try and find it out. So, [crosstalk 00:05:45].

Jim S. ([00:05:47](#)):

Amy, you could help us. We kind of tried to cover the waterfront together with you on all of the Glens Falls area restaurants. And we don't know whether any of them were in securing that. I know Tyler in particular was sitting there with his hand hovered over the keyboard, ready to throw his application in as quickly as possible. But any word that you find, please share with us? And if anyone-

Amy Collins ([00:06:10](#)):

Yes, I will. I haven't heard anybody that's been able to obtain that entire into that funding.

Jim S. ([00:06:18](#)):

Well, I think even if that's what we find out, is that no one was able. Several entities applied and no one was able to get it. I think that feedback is important to share because what it'd really like to do is demonstrate whether or not these programs are being effectively administered across the geography. So it's helpful even if what we find out is that people were not successful.

Amy C. ([00:06:41](#)):

Okay. I'm actually meeting with a dual restaurant owners after the Zoom call, so I'll ask them what they filed and what results they heard about or how they got the notice that the program's no longer taking any registrations.

Jim S. ([00:07:03](#)):

Also, there had been some question about two things, or at least some dialogue in this meeting about two things previously. I wanted to make sure Jeff knew that there was some discussion before he got here of the city's launch of their drive program, which is a component of the downtown revitalization initiative.

Amy C. ([00:07:23](#)):

Right.

Jim S. ([00:07:23](#)):

They've set money aside, that couldn't be used for economic development for Glens Falls' city center oriented businesses. And there may continue to be inquiry from this forum into that, Jeff. And obviously we will share that with you as we get it.

Jeff Flagg ([00:07:39](#)):

Thank you.

Jim S. ([00:07:41](#)):

And any updates you guys have about that program, feel free to bring here to this forum and we'll help you get that word out, whatever helps you.

Jeff Flagg ([00:07:50](#)):

Sure. Actually, [inaudible 00:07:53] of course. I just got started, so I'm just acclimating myself to all these things. I know, Amy, you've been working on this for a while. Did you want to briefly say where the programs stands?

Amy C. ([00:08:01](#)):

Yeah, sure. This is a competitive loan program to derive new small business development for traffic and job creation within the downtown Glen Falls. So this is a DIR initiative. We have had lots of inquiries. Many people, they see something in the paper and it might not fit that particular inquiry. We might say, "Well, you might be eligible for a small business recovery fund." They're not really pitching the idea of a new startup, but they need assistance. So I've had probably 20 inquiries from different businesses around the capital region as well, looking at what Glens Falls is doing. So we've also had professional assistance offered by SUNY Adirondack, which is a wonderful connector, and we'll be utilizing...

Amy C. ([00:09:07](#)):

They teach a small business startup course curriculum, Brendan Aldis. We also have gotten some offers for services, assistance resource help for small businesses. And certainly press inquiries. Mark Mulholland did a nice piece the other day. And it was kind of interesting because the picture really shows there wasn't one person on South Street. So it's exciting to start there and see that development move forward. So I'll keep you updated, Jim. And Dr. Flagg certainly will be getting up to speed as soon as I can get them up to speed.

Jim S. ([00:10:01](#)):

Thank you, Amy. And thank you, Jeff. It's great to have that in the portfolio of efforts. There's two other things I wanted to make sure everyone knew about, at least in terms of the current status. One is, we had had some discussion on Mark's call on Monday. The state through ESD reached out to see whether or not there were potential sites for supplementary vaccine clinics in high foot traffic areas. Both the outlets in downtown Glens Falls were cited as potential locations. We've reached out to the outlets and they've actually provided some of the information that we can share so that we can see whether or not there's interest on both sides there. We also reached out to Jeff Mid at the Civic Center, to see whether or not that could be a site for downtown Glens Falls.

Jim S. ([00:10:54](#)):

He's in the process of evaluating that with his leadership team and his board to see whether or not they could see that happening. I shared the specifics that we have from the program. I have to be honest, I'm not convinced that this is actually going to happen in upstate. I think this is largely designed to supplement New York city, and very urban locations. But if they are serious about doing that, I want to make sure that we have at least one or two facilities that are in the queue. Laura, it looked like you had your hand up.

Laura K. (00:11:27):

Yeah. Andrew Miller did reach out to me with regard to the outlets and he and I have been going back and forth on a couple of potential sites. I will say that for any of the outlets that might say, "Yes, we could be available." We're also always trying from [inaudible 00:11:41]. It's much more beneficial. I can [inaudible 00:11:44] I should leased those spaces to tenants. So, he hadn't told me that there was language in the proposals that said, "Should any location get a real lease, that with a certain number of days notice, the testing site could vacate." Which we would need in order to offer up those currently vacant spaces, because clearly we can sign on one, five, 10 year lease term with a regular tenant paying full rent, we're all going to need to do that.

Jim S. (00:12:14):

Yeah. In fact, I'm looking at the notice that came from empire state development, and it says, "There will be language in any agreement stating the site would be vacated if a paying tenant is secured."

Laura K. (00:12:25):

Yes.

Jim S. (00:12:25):

So I think what we need to do is provide them specifics about what kind of notice would be customary for you. Is that 60 days notice, 90 days notice, whatever that is, and make sure that we're communicating that.

Laura K. (00:12:36):

Right.

Jeff Flagg (00:12:37):

These are rapid testing sites, right?

Jim S. (00:12:40):

Yeah. The idea is to create a supplemental series of sites that could allow for surge once the supply is more readily available. I do like the idea of positioning ourselves here, in addition to the clinic that the state's already constructed near the County facilities up off the North way. If we can make this happen, it would be wonderful. And to have a location in both Glens Falls, and in further away in the County, would also be excellent. And if there are other sites that you think that we should consider, feel free to continue to contact us. The other program I wanted to mention is, it's not really a program yet, but it's an effort that is at least in dialogue. And that is that at the last Warren County LDC meeting, we continue to discuss the idea of the potential of the LDC, putting some funds to work in the community to meet gaps that are not being met by either other recovery programs or traditional loan programs.

Jim S. (00:13:44):

And I don't have the specifics on that yet, because one of the things I'm really trying to get a fix on, is where are those gaps? We have found for instance, that there are businesses that have utilized all of the recovery related aid, that is available to them. And then they experienced a natural disaster. Like the dome did with the snowfall. And it's put them in a position where they can't tap the recovery related funds because they've already done it. So that's one possibility. But if you become aware of other gaps

associated with both new and existing businesses, that are not being met by the many programs that are out there, I would love to know it, so that we can bring that into the discussion about how most readily to make any changes in the LDCs approach, capture as much of that as possible.

Jim S. ([00:14:41](#)):

And Mike, in particular, I saw with interest the discussion that the Warren Washington County IDA is having. Of course continue to want to work as closely as we possibly can with them, but if there are things that you guys become aware of when people are making inquiries into you, that you can't solve, but you still could share with us so that we could try to figure out if there are other ways we could help, that would also be particularly helpful.

Mike W. ([00:15:11](#)):

Of course, Jim. We'll have to talk offline on that. I think that we need to figure out a way for everybody to communicate like we're doing here on this call. So, that's kind of the goal. So we'll see how that goes, but I'll reach out later today or tomorrow.

Jim S. ([00:15:26](#)):

I actually think it might be better than the public realizes. For instance, the article talked about the fact that one of the wins for the Warren Washington County IDA was the gas company that's setting up shop in that park. That inquiry actually came into us, and we were able to share it effectively with the IDA because it seemed like a better fit for not only that particular parcel, but for that particular program. So I think it actually does work relatively well, but I think sometimes the public... It's a juicier story to talk about how maybe we're all working on the same thing from different places.

Mark B. ([00:16:06](#)):

Jim, to add to the vaccination conversation. I think that as we talked about on the tourism call earlier this week, we need to think about how we attract workers this summer, and whether we might be able to offer vaccination especially to teenagers as we seek to bring them into the workplace. So that's going to be an obvious concern of parents, and very likely a concern of visitors and customers. So, positioning ourselves I think to be able to offer. I have a mass vaccination site that offered the opportunity for vaccination to young people in the workplace, I think would be really helpful to us.

Gina Mintzer ([00:16:42](#)):

Hey Mark, this is Gina. I'm dialing in today.

Mark B. ([00:16:46](#)):

Hello, Gina.

Gina M. ([00:16:47](#)):

Hi. Good morning, everyone. On that same vein, I know that there's a push by Nishta, to see from a political standpoint, to get it so that our hotels are considered the frontline are essential, to get them higher on the food chain of where they are able to get vaccinated. So there's a push already underway, so to speak for that, just so you know.

Mark B. ([00:17:14](#)):

Right.

Jim S. ([00:17:17](#)):

That's an excellent point, Mark. I'm glad Matt's here to hear as well. He can bring that back into some of the conversations that are going on down in Albany. But, one of the things that was interesting when I spoke with ESD yesterday, and I talked to them about the possibility of how that mass vaccination site might be utilized once supply is more readily available. And he said, "Let me be really clear, Jim. That is designed to be a place that would not only vaccinate people in Warren County, but that would act as a relief valve for other places where they just have a throughput problem of getting people through. In the same way that people are traveling today, from here to places like Utica to get vaccinated, or from here to Plattsburgh or things like that...."

Jim S. ([00:18:05](#)):

He said that we're setting these things up geographically to act as kind of a force relief, so that people have multiple places they could go to get vaccinated. So then the question really becomes, who is eligible to be vaccinated at any given time? But that wasn't clear to me at least... And I'm not sure he meant to make a policy statement on the phone, but he said, "This is not just designed to meet the needs of the locals. It's designed to meet the needs of the state. And they're looking for geographic locations that cover as much ground as they possibly can."

Jeff Flagg ([00:18:42](#)):

New York news day had an interesting article over the weekend about people from all over the Metro area, traveling to Plattsburgh, Potsdam, and they're making weekend trips of it. They're staying in Lake Placid, they're staying in other places to make those... It's obviously a long day trip from Nassau County to Potsdamer Plattsburg, but they are building their weekends around traveling to get the vaccine right now.

Jim S. ([00:19:09](#)):

Well, what was interesting is we've thought about this as a way of trying to drive potential visitors. What I was told is they already thought of that, which is one of the reasons it's here because they believe the visitors are coming, and it's one of the reasons they chose the site. Andrea, I see your hand up.

Andrea Hogan ([00:19:23](#)):

Yeah. It's funny because I've been having another conversation about this. Where we need to be really, really careful with this though, is we're running into problems with equity and access. So yeah. Who can afford to drive and stay overnight? Right? Well, here in Warren County, we have people who cannot get a shot. We have lots and lots of seniors who cannot get a shot, because they can't get an appointment, and they can't drive two hours to Potsdamer Plattsburgh. So I feel like I understand what you're saying, Jim, in terms of, let's accommodate people while they're traveling around the state, but we have to be very careful with the messaging in that.

Jim S. ([00:20:08](#)):

Well, I'm not messaging anything. I'm simply telling you what the state told me. And the state told me that they're not going to adjudicate who comes into that tent. That anybody who is eligible is going to receive a shot at any facility. So I'm sharing that with you because that's guidance that we've gotten. I

think we have two problems to work here. One is how to make sure that the priorities that we feel like we need are being addressed in terms of eligibility. And the other is, making sure that the parts of our community that need additional resources in order to be able to get vaccinated are getting that. But what is definitely clear, is that it was designed to vaccinate people beyond just our local limits. And that's what I want to make sure everyone knows.

Mark B. (00:20:57):

What we're also being told about that site is there will be local access to appointments before it goes public statewide. So, whether it works that way remains to be seen, but that's what we've been told that we will be able to share locally to those secure links to get appointments for our local residents before it becomes like Jim said, a relief valve for other places in the state.

Jim S. (00:21:24):

Yeah. I don't want to beat this to death, but he said, "Listen, supply is limiting everything right now. So right now, none of this is working the way that we're talking about, because they just don't have enough supply. But assuming that the supply gets better, then there's a hierarchy that says that we're going to meet all of the local needs first, and then we're going to keep the facility open longer than it would take to meet the local needs because we're looking to meet other needs within the state with that same facility." I saw your hand up, Laura.

Laura K. (00:21:48):

Yeah. Any idea when they think that facility will be running? I know from other areas that they had hoped to have it up sooner, they brought staff up to the area, that staff is now being redeployed elsewhere. And then we'll start trickling back in next week. And then my second question is, right now as I understand it, the folks who are traveling elsewhere because they can get shots elsewhere, have to go back to that same location three weeks later, to get their second round. I'm assuming someone's thinking through, maybe they can get their two shots at two different locations, one closer to home and one someplace else, or are they all going to be traveling three weeks twice.

Jim S. (00:22:34):

Well, none of that was part of the conversation I had yesterday, but I can tell you that it was clear that in the conversation I had, that they recognized that supply was not meeting the needs right now. And that was affecting not just this facility, but multiple facilities across the state. There was no clarity as for when that would get resolved. In terms of the second shot thing. The way I understand the process today is that you are scheduled for your second shot when you get your first shot. And there is no attempt to transfer that from facility to facility. That that right now is a linear situation. That means you are backed into having to go to that facility for a second shot. If that changes, we'll certainly share that with you, but that's the last thing we were told when all of this was put in place several weeks ago.

Mark B. (00:23:22):

And that's correct. When they make an appointment, you show up for your shot. You do agree to go back three, four weeks later, depending on which vaccine you get. The latest intel we have on this site here is possibly next week, but they also said that last week, possibly this week. So, we don't know, nobody knows.

Jim S. (00:23:38):

I think what I wanted to do... We are a strategic planning group here that is designed around both communicating good information as quickly as we have it, and then developing solutions for problems that maybe others aren't thinking about. So what I'd really like all of us to do is to think about this, not just from what's going to happen in the next two weeks, but say what's going to happen two months from now, as we're starting to gear up for a summer season. Now is the time for us, for instance, to advocate for those frontline workers in hotels to be in the proper place in the hierarchy, so that we can get them vaccinated maybe before they would buy an age group only.

Jim S. ([00:24:15](#)):

That kind of thing is important for us to get into the queue now. We got to believe that the supply is going to get better over time, which means that there will be many more people being vaccinated several months from now than they are today. And our eyes are on trying to make sure that not only the tourism industry, but all of our economic sectors, are able to recover as quickly as possible. And we have an asset here, which is that clinic. So we want to make sure that we're thinking about how to advocate for its use in the best possible way. So, a lot about shots. Thank you everybody. Are there any other thoughts about programs or resources before we move on? Yes, Rachel.

Rachel Seeber ([00:24:54](#)):

Good morning, Jim. Thank you. Just to your point, you just talked about advocacy of this group, and I saw that the chief of staff for Assemblyman Simpson, was scheduled to be on the call, Matt McDonald. And I know you usually have Elisa's staff here as well. That Jacob is usually here.

Jim S. ([00:25:10](#)):

Yeah, Jacob's on.

Rachel S. ([00:25:11](#)):

Okay. Hi, Jacob.

Jacob Miller ([00:25:13](#)):

Hi.

Rachel S. ([00:25:14](#)):

Good. Thank you. Just from an advocacy perspective, to your point, Jim, about a regional approach, not just what happens next week or two weeks from now, but months down the road clearly. And I don't want to believe or the conversation you're having about vaccinations and shots and notice and how this works, but that regional aspect of it, we could really use that state and local advocacy effort, at a local level. I mean, we're just obviously getting buried. And so what we want to be able to do is continue to support all of our public health, but also ask for a fierce advocacy level for our communities, for our County.

Rachel S. ([00:25:51](#)):

And I'm not so convinced we're actually going to see an opportunity where, "Hey, Warren County, you're going to get opportunity for a week or even a day to hurry in and get your shots before everyone else." Most of what we're finding out doesn't ever end up happening. I mean, we've been weeks waiting for supply. So I don't know if I'm just coming in a little late, Jacob. And you guys already talked about the

advocacy piece of it, but it's premature, in my opinion, to be planning what's going to happen three months from now from a travel or tourism and economic perspective, certainly we want to plan and prepare, but without hearing what's happening at the state and federal level, in terms of that demand. We have the demand, but in terms of the supply, I'm really leery about any types of false hope. And I think it's really important that the government be accurate, and not provide any type of false hope. Did you already do an update on that state and federal advocacy piece Jim or no?

Jim S. ([00:26:55](#)):

No, no. We typically do that towards the end, although Matt is on, and I'm sure he's listening with interest to all of this.

Rachel S. ([00:26:59](#)):

Great.

Matt Simpson ([00:27:02](#)):

Well, I can add. I mean, the one thing that we're being told before this latest expansion of the one ABs and CS, with the restaurant workers and also the taxi workers, that there were seven and a half million people that were eligible for vaccinations, and according to the governor, we're receiving about 250,000 vaccinations a week. So the demand far surpasses the supply. Now, we are hearing that that supply is going to increase here in the short term. We're on a call with our state, with the governor's reps, Tuesdays and Thursdays. So we've got a call today 2:00, and those questions will be asked. We're not getting anything more, any other information that isn't out there. It seems to me, the information that we hear is directly from the executive on when there's an increase in vaccinations. So, as far as [inaudible 00:28:06]. Excuse me. I didn't know if somebody said something there.

Rachel S. ([00:28:16](#)):

Oh, I think I said thank you.

Matt S. ([00:28:17](#)):

Oh, I couldn't hear. So that's the only information I'm going to get on the call again at 2:00 today. I've got a list of questions. I would assume that if we were eligible for more vaccinations, that we're going to receive them. I know that our Congresswoman is advocating, and is aware of the amount of vaccines that were allocated. And I'm not sure if Jacob has any information on that, but we're all desperately waiting.

Jacob M. ([00:28:49](#)):

Sorry, our phones go off here. Yeah. So we are absolutely advocating on that. I don't have that information right now. I know that we are gathering it because the congresswoman's planning on calling all the County Health Departments and making sure that they're aware of the most up-to-date information that we have. So we're gathering that. And once we get that information, I can make sure to send this to the group as well, but I don't have anything specific right now on kind of our supply. I know that she has been navigating for it on the federal level. And I know it's kind of one of those top down things where I think everyone's having this issue and we just want to make sure that we have our voice heard, and we want to make sure that the North country isn't left out when those vaccines do come into the state. So I [inaudible 00:29:33] update on that,

Rachel S. ([00:29:36](#)):

Thank you to both of you. I appreciate you addressing that. And I hate to take time to ask those questions, but I didn't want to leave that opportunity on the table. But I also want to be really careful about false hope. And I think your ideas are really good, Jim, and looking longterm is smart, and I know our federal and state representatives will come through with us. But in the short term, we just need to be careful about those expectations.

Jim S. ([00:30:02](#)):

Well, so I want to be clear. Our job right now is to communicate amongst ourselves what we know, so that anything we know, you know. In terms of advocating, I think we're well-served right now by the process that Ryan is on in terms of the interaction he has with the state, and with our other elected officials. But it's always helpful, Matt, for you and your office to be hearing what's actually happening day by day and week by week here. So we will certainly continue to funnel that to you. I think what we need to do is recognize that we have a similar problem as we did last year, in that we have to plan for economic impact associated with whatever the situation is. I'm not sure what the situation is right now. I know what it is today, but I don't know what it will be in May and June when we're attempting to, for instance, stand up the workforce that will meet another tourism economy.

Jim S. ([00:30:57](#)):

And so, that's all I want us to do is to think together about how we would organize and advocate in a similar way to the way we did last year, which I think was highly successful. And with that, it's a good segue because I wanted to give... Mark, I wanted to give you an opportunity to update everyone on your conversation yesterday, but I felt like it was really productive step forward in terms of all the tourism related work, and the linkage to the larger board of supervisors, in terms of some of the dialogue that you had last night with the board, would you like to share any of that?

Mark B. ([00:31:32](#)):

Sure. I'd be glad to, Jim. I thought it was productive, many good questions. This was an invitation by supervisor of CBRE, chairwoman of CBRE to address... pardon me. A workshop meeting of the Warren County Board, and to talk about the work of the hospitality communications group. It was the first time we'd done that. We talked about what we did last year and the focus this year on more long-term strategy, with a focus around collecting competitive information, against which we can benchmark our performance, competitive information from other destinations with which we compete for visitors, so we can look at the best performers and see what they're doing and to see if there are things we could learn from that.

Mark B. ([00:32:14](#)):

And then secondly, building a longterm database, if you will. Sort of a data mindset about how we can pivot and meet the needs of visitors in a very quick way, so that we're more competitive going forward. That traditionally had been used to justify decisions. Retrospectively, did we buy ads in the right place? But we can use it I think more powerfully looking forward to plan. And so what I discussed last night with the board of supervisors, was kind of an ongoing joint collaborative working relationship to see if together we can build a really good system of data on which the County could rely, and the private sector could rely. A real public private partnership. So it's the next step in that relationship. I thought that the questions and the reaction were generally good. And I'd be interested to hear in several

supervisors around the call. You were in the room or hearing from other people, but I really appreciated the opportunity.

Jim S. ([00:33:14](#)):

Mike, Andrea, either of you. Rachel, any of you. Your thoughts.

Mike W. ([00:33:21](#)):

Well, I don't mind going. I just thought it was a great opportunity like you mentioned Mark, to be able to present what the hospitality group is looking for. I did ask one question about strategy, because a lot of the supervisors had some trepidation about moving forward with any kind of additional study, because we had some additional studies already. So this focus on data, and then deciding the best course after we understand that data, I think is important for the supervisors to understand and I think it was well received. So [[crosstalk 00:33:56](#)]. I think we're looking forward to the next occupancy tax and tourism meeting. And hopefully Kevin, our chairman, will be able to put it on the agenda and we'll have some more conversations about how to move forward.

Rachel S. ([00:34:10](#)):

I agree with supervisor Wild. I think his assessment of that is very much on par. And I know that supervisor Garrity has put it on the agenda for our next meeting. He assured me about last night. So I think we'll definitely be looking at taking some action. Hopefully we'll have some hard numbers, Mark, from your group, before then too. I appreciate the time, I think it was good dialogue, and you really highlighted the fact that this is different data and why that data is needed. And then also taking into account those previous studies so that they don't just sit there unused. And I think that was definitely very important and nice to hear that they're being read, parts of it are being studied, and how can we better implement them? So that forward thinking I know was really, really appreciated. And Andrea, what was your take?

Andrea H. ([00:35:01](#)):

I agree with both of you. It was a very, very clear presentation. I think the most important part of that was that you really broke out for everyone what it was you're looking to do with this information, and how it's different from previous studies. I think it was also really important that you pointed out that the previous studies are not going to be shelved and ignored, that there's still useful information in there and that together again, we're going to work on gleaning that information. You weren't just saying, "Somebody's got to do it." You were there offering the help, and I thought that was great. So thank you for doing that.

Mark B. ([00:35:52](#)):

Absolutely. My fondest hope here is that we can establish some small collaborative working group that can sort of plow through the minutia of this work and tee it up so that we can bring it back to the committees and to everybody to take a look at it. We need everybody's input. I don't mean the full board or the full tourism and our tax committee, but we need input from supervisors, from the tourism department staff and from the industry, kind of a small working group that just kind of gets this work done and brings it back to everybody else for discussion and decisions. But I think we're making progress. I really do. I think it was a big step forward.

Jim S. ([00:36:33](#)):

Thank you, Mark. And thank you for that team's continued efforts. I've enjoyed working with it. It's part of our role here at the EDC to continue to provide the strategic framework for this place to grow. This is a big part of it, continuing to grow that part of the economy, especially growing it into a 365 day a year. More even part of the economy is a strategic intent for all of us, and not just for your group alone. So we will continue to do whatever we can to support you, and that's an important element of the overall fabric. There's a couple of other areas that I want to update everybody on. There's a broadband effort as many of you know, underway to survey our region or our County. And John, what can you tell us quickly about where we stand on that?

John W. ([00:37:29](#)):

Well, I'm pleased to report that we're up over 800 responses now, just the short time that we've been up and running with it. It's great. Thank you all for spreading the word for it. I'm getting a lot of feedback directly from folks in the North country. I've had really interesting conversations with people about issues that they have and the appreciation they have that this is being done. So in a nutshell, it's moving ahead very well. [Warrencountybroadband.org](#), I think you guys have all probably seen it. It's all positive right now. And the next phase is going to be teed up, which is kind of the follow-up phase to this survey. But the survey runs through March 31st, so...

Jim S. ([00:38:14](#)):

Thank you, John. Important for everyone to know that not only are we getting great data, but it apparently has become the best practice for pretty much the entire Northern part of the state. Not only the approach that we're using, but the firm that we're using, has now been chosen by multiple counties, including Washington County, and now several other counties, with the support of the Lake George, Lake Champlain regional planning board, who's helping to fund that effort. The reason this is important is two-fold. One, that data is going to be easily aggregate-able between what we have, and what our surrounding counties have, which will immediately make us more nimble in our ability to provide for a regional solution. We'll be able to say without extraordinary efforts to try to coordinate data, what the situation is on a multi County regional level.

Jim S. ([00:39:09](#)):

The second thing is, its leadership. Its leadership that is showing that Warren County is on the same problems that everyone else is having, but it's stepping out aggressively and solving them. And as we do, others are looking to see how we're doing this, and to join us. I think we can all be proud of that. It came from groups like this, that this public and private coming together to step into this terrible time and figure out solutions that are going to work for everybody. And sometimes we miss it. We miss what's happening around us, but I'd never seen something happens so quickly. Literally seven counties in New York have essentially taken the process that we laid out, and have now said, "We want to do that too, exactly how Warren County is doing it." We got to be proud of this. And it also puts us right at the big person's table, as we're trying to solve the problem with the data that we're collecting. So, I'm proud of our group for that.

Mark B. ([00:40:14](#)):

[inaudible 00:40:14]. Thank you Don Lehman and Sarah in the planning department. They've done an unbelievable job all along to this, and they're great partners in this too.

Jim S. ([00:40:26](#)):

So to that end, we are now in the process of drafting an RFP here at the EDC, to put together a process as to how would we aggregate this data collectively with other municipalities and counties across the state for maximum benefit? What would a group like that work look like? How would it work? Hopefully, when the next few weeks we will actually be in the process of finding a partner who will help us build that process. And again, this is the kind of leadership that I think we can all be proud of for Warren County. Another effort that's been underway as this effort that came out of surveying visitors to determine their interest in relocating here. I haven't yet seen the data, but the survey closed last week with many thousands of responses. And soon I'm hopeful in the next two weeks, we will start to get that data that shows us exactly people who have come to our region, how many of them are considering moving here? And when they consider moving here, what are the reasons or criteria by which they make that choice? That will all be helpful data for us all. All right. So that's everything I've got in terms of data collection and key areas of activity. I wanted to kind of go around the horn. Chandler, I know you've got to leave the teacher class in a minute, so maybe we start with you.

Chandler A. ([00:41:47](#)):

Well, thanks, Jim. We're still grappling with the conversion issues with motels and homes, and I'm still working with the college to try to get some clarification on what their multiplier effects are. And when I get that information, I'll get back to you, Jim, and then we can sort through what avenues we want to take to try to build a program, or build a case for our study.

Jim S. ([00:42:16](#)):

Wonderful. Thank you, Chandler. I appreciate all the work that you and Kelly and others are doing out there to start to build a data underpinning to the economic impact of the questions that we're addressing. It's really, really an important asset that not a lot of places have and you guys have been wonderful.

Chandler A. ([00:42:32](#)):

Thanks a lot. I'm going to jump now.

Jim S. ([00:42:34](#)):

Go ahead and Chandler. Kathy, how are you?

Kathy Muncil ([00:42:38](#)):

Wonderful. Thank you, Jim. A quick comment is, we had a quick meeting on Winterfest this morning, just out of some open ended questions, and some great data will be coming forth from Christian Dutcher as the organizer on behalf of the local's group, in terms of contact and where the people are coming from and the interest, et cetera. It's one of the areas everybody's keeping in mind, the collection of data. And I know Joanne, they're going to be in contact with you in terms of comparisons, et cetera. So, all the small businesses are now coming together to share the data for everyone's benefit. The main thing that came out of it is, 94% of the people that bought the 750 wristbands are outside of the 128 area code.

Kathy M. ([00:43:30](#)):

So it worked, and we can see it in our reservations, that a lot of cancellations when the word came that the carnival was canceled. And since this activity has taken place, this investment of dollars into

activities, we have seen a big uptick. We do not expect it to be the same as last year. Last year was an extraordinarily successful winter carnival timeframe. We believe it will be enough business. And Frank may be able to tell you as well from his hotels, that we'll keep a lot of the businesses busy. So the restaurants, and the gas stations and the stewards and all those. So, we feel that it'll have a good, solid effect.

Jim S. ([00:44:11](#)):

Wonderful. Thank you, Kathy. I see Frank, you jumped on. How are you this morning?

Frank Dittrich ([00:44:17](#)):

Good. Sorry I was late. No, just to follow up Kathy's comments and Laura's on the line, for the Courtyard Marriott. It's like the work that's going to start with Winter Festivals outstanding, rallying, a fairly big adventure here with a few weeks of effort, with the response that we're getting very good. It's certainly going to fill the hole at least in part for what February would have been for us. So all good stuff there. And again, it's a great example of the partnership. So, good news there. On the flip side, a little disappointing to see Thurman Maple Syrup days cancel. Again, both of those, Winter Festival and Thurman Maple Syrup are great opportunities to take town events, if you will, and make them regional. So Winter Festival's not Lake George thing, it's winter everywhere.

Frank D. ([00:45:13](#)):

Let's do it everywhere. We need the entire County to make it work. Same thing for Maple Syrup. The month of March, which is especially slow in the area. So, all that progress, very good. For yesterday, just to comment on Mark's, Sam and Sarah's work with the County yesterday, just outstanding. To me, it was a very energizing meeting, to be honest. The presentation was good, but the response from the supervisors in interest and support was terrific to hear and see. So I really appreciate everybody working so hard on this to try to make this a better area.

Jim S. ([00:45:55](#)):

Thank you, Frank. And I agree. The work that went into that yesterday was evident, not only from the three that were part of the presentation for us, but so much from that group at large. Laura, I think we saw you earlier, but share with us a little bit from your perspective, anything you'd like.

Laura K. ([00:46:19](#)):

First of all, on Winterfest, I do know of at least one restaurant that normally was open in the off season, closed this year due to circumstances, has now decided to reopen for at least weekends in February due to Winterfest, that'll be great for the Lake George area, both for the local residents, as well as the visitors who are coming into town. So that's good anecdotal positive evidence. What I'm hearing from talking to the multiple properties that I've talked to regularly, that they are seeing at the same levels of advanced booking reservations for this upcoming summer season as compared to last year, which they're really excited about because we didn't know what the advanced bookings would look like. Typically when you have major problems in the economy, your booking window's shorten.

Laura K. ([00:47:11](#)):

So for those properties to be seeing on pace with last year's January bookings [inaudible 00:47:17] from the year that's I think really good news. And we're particularly seeing that with the properties that are

on or near the waterfront, are seeing their bookings actually come in faster, which we believe is related to the influx of new and different visitors we had last summer, are now choosing to return again. So we believe it's going to be a strong season for the resorts, assuming we can keep everybody safe, get people vaccinated, keep guest staffing, that is becoming a... Very quickly, going to be a very large concern.

Laura K. ([00:47:53](#)):

How do we staff all facilities? last year, to be perfectly honest, at the hotels, we got by without the normal levels of staff, because we were not servicing the rooms during the course of the guests' stay. It was only upon departure. If we need to go into every room this year, as typical, we are going to need significant help identifying staff to do it. And if the unemployment that's being touted out there, benefits get extended through September, that is going to make it that much harder to do so. I hope that there's some work that we can all do to help identify getting people to actually work, both this upcoming spring and through the whole season. So that's my comment.

Jim S. ([00:48:47](#)):

Thank you, Laura. Yeah. We're going to talk a little bit about the workforce stuff. Obviously we've got Liza and Linda. I specifically want to address some of this too, but before we do, Joanne, we've been kind of covering a little bit of the tourism waterfront. We don't need to cover as much of it as we might in Monday, but I would love for you to share any highlights or new information you have. And I also want to thank you for sharing some of the insights as far as the migration data on cell phones that you might become party to. And we are eager to work with you to figure out how that data might be able to feed some of the efforts we're learning about it in terms of professional relocation. So what news do you have for us, Joanne?

Joanne Conley ([00:49:27](#)):

Well, a lot of that data collection is yes, things that we've talked about and that are in the works. One question about Winterfest, couple of people have inquired with us that they haven't gotten the wristbands yet. So maybe this is an offline conversation, and hopefully it's isolated, that wristbands are not getting to the people that need to get them right for the coming weekend. Relative to maple season coming up, there won't be a maple days, but we are working on a content piece that will just highlight, you can still buy these maple products. It can still be maple season, and buy them online, to help that industry. Gina is driving in the car right now, and she's headed over to New Hampshire to visit with the Ice Castles folks. There was supposed to be a contingent of us, but we had some travel restriction concerns.

Joanne C. ([00:50:15](#)):

So Gina is representing today and tomorrow over New Hampshire. And we're hoping to have the team here soon. They were supposed to be here next week, but the whole travel restriction thing is kind of thrown a wrench into that. But, thank you. We have some nice cold weather. So, we're still on the docket for Ice Castles consideration. And a quick thank you to Don Lehman, whose idea it was to have this ice fishing challenge. That's gotten a lot of PR and traction lately. I think it was in The Post-Star and the Front Page local yesterday, and we've had some people catch their fish, post them on social media., and it's just all good PR for the region.

Jim S. ([00:50:56](#)):

Wonderful.

Joanne C. ([00:50:57](#)):

[inaudible 00:50:57].

Jim S. ([00:50:58](#)):

Yeah, it's amazing the amount of work that Don and so many at the County do. I'm not sure if they sleep at all. Well, speaking of County people, Liza, I apologize for missing your meeting yesterday, or the other day. We will talk about that offline, but what can you share with us? And I specifically want to also make sure that everyone knows that Lynn's here from Lake George to talk about some of these workforce issues and how we might develop some creative solutions towards that.

Liza O. ([00:51:33](#)):

No problem. Thank you, Jim. Good morning, everyone. We are pushing out the PUSH training program really next week. PUSH is Pathways Up for Success in Hospitality. That is from the workforce subcommittee that we've been working on. Those marketing materials will be reviewed by our subcommittee next week, and I'll draft a press release that Don will help me with, and we'll push that out next week. What I need everybody's help with, is identifying some business partners. People who are willing to say that they are PUSH partners, meaning that they would give preferential interviewing to people who complete our training program. Once all the materials are done and approved by my subcommittee, I'll share them with everybody, so that you can get the word out as well. But in the meantime, if your business, or you know a business who wants to partner with us, please let me know.

Liza O. ([00:52:31](#)):

And certainly, we'll probably have them use our logo as well on job postings that they're a PUSH partner. So that's one of the things that we're working on. And Roger, former chamber and I will definitely be recruiting a lot of high school students. We think it's really critical that high school students are working this summer, for a number of reasons. And so we're targeting them. We're targeting people who are in between careers, and also people who just didn't think of hospitality as an option. We'll be sharing with them all the different options for promotion and advancement within food and beverage, retail and accommodations. So we're very excited about this work that we've done in partnership with Kelly at SUNY, and the hospitality leaders, some of you are on this call. And we're excited about that.

Liza O. ([00:53:19](#)):

Regarding unemployment, there's a bill proposed right now about continuing to make sure that people are encouraged to do part-time work while they seek full-time work, and that they're able to get part-time unemployment benefits. And I've talked to my DOL colleagues about that, and they're a little apprehensive. I guess we need to get through those details about what that would look like, but they feel like it would be a challenge for processing, as well as clarity for public around what that means. But, if we can work through those details, that's something I am in support of, to make sure that people are working. We still don't have enough workers here and we know that, and so that's why it's critical that we are seeking folks from our surrounding counties as well, and not just Warren County. But I'm happy to answer any questions anyone may have.

Jim S. ([00:54:16](#)):

Yeah, I think, go ahead.

Kathy M. ([00:54:19](#)):

I want to comment that Liza is going to meet with us tomorrow to talk about that transportation, that she found a company that could provide transportation from different areas. And the result of it would be that if there were 20 businesses that needed people to come from... I don't know. Liza, you might note where. Greenwich or Olmstedville. That maybe we could find where these employees that dropped out of the workforce even, because of transportation issues. And we're hoping to pull together a group of people that might be able to bring these employees to work through this transportation system. So thank you Liza for keeping on it. And hopefully we tell you what jobs are available. Once that's out, the people that are out in these areas, if they know there's transportation, then we can find where the bodies are.

Liza O. ([00:55:12](#)):

Absolutely. And the outside transportation company who would love to expand to our County, really that's just an option. Certainly my preference is that we work with greater Glens Falls transit, that we keep business local. But first we have to identify the need and the numbers, and so that we can share that information with any transportation company or organization who's willing to help.

Jim S. ([00:55:34](#)):

Excellent. Well, we've talked a lot about the need for workforce. And Lynn, I think you're getting an earful here of, lots of people with demand. I don't want to put you on the spot, but how positioned do you feel like you guys are, and how do we best cooperate and engage you guys as we kind of develop this need to try to figure out what might be able to come out of the school system, and what's the best way to encourage that?

Lynn R. ([00:56:02](#)):

So first, thank you. Kathy and I have been in touch, and this gives me the larger picture. And as you know, a superintendent is looking at the larger picture. What I want to do is partner with you. And I think looking forward, it's probably a good idea for Liza and I to meet with Kathy, who has reached out. We're having a meeting with the principal. The school district's partnering with you guys, which is a great idea, but also knowing that there are certain structures in place, and building principals or teachers, aren't really looking at the big picture like we are. And so this is exciting. It's an opportunity to kind of look more system-wide instead of, "Hey, every April we have a job fair." We kind of need to look past that structure to bring a sense of urgency towards this.

Lynn R. ([00:56:59](#)):

So I'm thinking, as I was listening to all of this, it might be a good idea for Liza, Kathy and I to meet, and anybody else. And then really pulled together John Goreski, the superintendent in Warrensburg. Probably Mr. Grainy from Bolton and Jenkins from Glens Falls, with a smaller group and say, "How do we get our boards involved in understanding?" And once we know the why of what we're doing, quickly, because school districts don't ever usually move quickly. And also Laura Colls. Maybe she could join us too, as somebody who knows the school system and knows that sometimes change takes a little bit longer. And right now, I'm very aware of that. We'll probably won't have the J1 students, and that's an opportunity for our students. And I could not agree more with what Liza said.

Lynn R. ([00:57:51](#)):

We need students working. The students that I know who are working, they have a sense of purpose, when there's athletics or shut down, or school goes remote. And I just think it's a great opportunity and I'm all in. But knowing that, you're going to hear a little bit. And it's not pushback, but it's schools right now, and the infrastructures of schools have so much on their plate. They think, "Oh, we can't add another thing." And this isn't adding another thing, this is creating an opportunity that I think is exciting. Maybe having a local place like at the Marriott where we could really push out some opportunities to do some social distancing or the Fort bringing in the students and saying, "Hey, this is what's happening."

Lynn R. ([00:58:36](#)):

Creating a data system so we can be pushing out, like a Google classroom. These jobs are opening up. In a simpler way, I have future business leader, teachers here who are amazing. These are real life opportunities that we could be bringing to our students. So I'm excited to help. Really, I'm all in. I think it's great. I also wonder too if after we get those superintendents together, and kind of have a little brain pot of how we could move forward. If we also don't bring in Jim Dexter from BOCES, because he has those connections to those students even farther reaching, that are looking for jobs in this area. And that piece about transportation could really so get us some quicker results with kids that are like, "I want a job right now."

Jim S. ([00:59:32](#)):

That's wonderful.

Lynn R. ([00:59:32](#)):

Go ahead.

Jim S. ([00:59:32](#)):

Well, I just wanted to make sure how glad we are that you join. And we've got this task force on workforce related issues that Liza has been helping us with. I think that might be the right place for us to try to get the smaller group together. But one that's really important is for this larger group, to share the sense of purposes as Lynn is intimating. I think all of us that have young people in either our families or close to them, understand that purpose is one of the greatest motivators for young people, period. And I think we have missed an opportunity to communicate to young people that there is a purpose for them coming out of COVID, which is to participate in the recovery.

Jim S. ([01:00:09](#)):

They have a role to play. It's not just about a job. It's not just about job, skills. Those are important things. It's their role in the community. We got to all figure out how to dig ourselves back out of the hole, and make ourselves better than we were before. And we need them. And I think the more that we can talk about how we need them, and they're an critical part of this, I think the more successful we will be. I'm not sure how best to do that, but we will keep working with you, Lynn, Liza, and others, to try to figure that out.

Lynn R. ([01:00:40](#)):

I also believe that we have to get this message to our boards. So our boards are the people who will partner with the superintendents to support action and movement when we get the kind of... As school districts, we try to insulate our children a little bit from this, and this is about real life and problem

solving. We've had such a spike in students with anxiety, because they feel such a lack of control. And to know that they can control something, moving forward, something to look forward to. And like you said, I mean, they have older siblings that are home from college that... A lot of people are struggling with this sense of purpose. And what better to give back to the place that you love, this region. Again, if I haven't said it, I just love it, and I'll do anything we can to move this forward in a way that makes sense. That's purpose focused, that's goal focused, and that gets things moving in a way that makes sense to access our students to help.

Jim S. ([01:01:40](#)):

Well, we're excited to go explore this piece of it. I apologize right now, because I know that we're starting to break into being here for a little more than an hour, but there's two or three places that I still want to make sure that we touch base with. One is, Chris Duffy was not able to join us today. Of course, she's obviously a standing member of this group, and last week I didn't call on her. And so I wanted to talk about the fact that she shared with me the fact that... and I'm sure you read it in the paper if you've been following it, but they did consolidate some programs at SUNY. I mean, obviously, it's never a great news to hear that you're having to consolidate anything. It affects students, it affects professionals, but it's also the kind of adaptive behavior that all businesses and all organizations are having to go through, as we deal with the pandemic.

Jim S. ([01:02:26](#)):

And one thing that she pointed out to me, which I think is a really important thing, there was a misconception that they eliminated the IT program. They did not eliminate the IT program, they eliminated specific, low attending components of the IT program. There's still an IT program and there are still a instructors in it, and there are still skills being brought to it. But the things that were the least attended, it's just the right way to approach it from a business perspective, so they consolidated some of those. I'm actually encouraged by all the work that the college has done. I think feeling the same pressures the business does, creates a sense of kinship between us and them. And I think they've always been a remarkably adaptive partner, for this community, and we're well-served to have them. So next week, Chris will be back with us and hopefully she will be more articulate than me in expressing the take on SUNY Adirondack. I'm looking quickly across the spectrum of people that we haven't called on. Particularly Jacob, if there's more for you to share with us, I want to make sure we get that in.

Jacob M. ([01:03:33](#)):

Honestly, we're monitoring what's going on down in DC in regards to the relief package that president Biden's proposed. It seems right now that Democrats are sticking with the 1.9. But obviously, everything's subject to change at some point. So we will keep you guys all updated as those things become more clear, but as for right now, we're just monitoring it. Also with the vaccines, like I mentioned earlier, the Congressman was planning on calling health departments in [inaudible 01:04:02] County. So, we're kind of trying to compile all data we do have right now on vaccine production and making sure the state gets more. And I know right now, like what I've said earlier, when it's top-down, it really is, because I know president Biden's trying to get vaccines, then make sure it's [inaudible 01:04:17] down to all the States. So, we'll make sure to keep monitoring that. And then on top of that, really not too much outside of that. A lot of politics going on down there right now. So, I will keep you all updated with the actual substance [inaudible 01:04:30].

Jim S. ([01:04:31](#)):

Well, thank you. Not surprised that there's politics going on down there. Seems to be standard practice.

Jacob M. ([01:04:39](#)):

Exactly.

Jim S. ([01:04:41](#)):

I don't know that you have an answer for us now, but I did want to highlight another issue, which is just the problems that are associated with SBA loan processing. Now, I'm not sure what can be done about it. And I haven't quite been able to ascertain the full impact to the business community, but we've had a number of inquiries to us about what is being done about it. I need to educate myself on the issue, Jacob. Maybe we can talk separately to see if there's any advocacy here that we can engage in.

Jacob M. ([01:05:11](#)):

Yes. I was actually drafting an email back to Frank. So what we're going to do immediately, we are going to let our congressional liaison node SBA, as well as the regional director. His name's Jeffrey Boys. So I'll give you guys all of their information. We're going to elevate that up to them to see if they can give a more general response pretty quickly. And then on top of that, I was going to ask for the names of the businesses, and we could try to do an individual casework situation where I could start casework for all of those businesses and make sure that they're going individually to the congressional liaison. That's how we do kind of normal stuff if we're having businesses that reach out to us with issues with the SBA. But since there's so many, we'd be happy to try to spread it out across the district even, and make sure that they're all being represented, and getting advocacy on their behalf.

Jim S. ([01:06:03](#)):

Oh, wonderful. You guys do such a remarkable job of being responsive to our needs and I can't thank you enough for that. One last thing I wanted to mention that didn't come up, but it's important to remind everybody. There was a subtle change in the guidance associated with events that particularly affects weddings, in the past week. I think that should have a positive effect, particularly in terms of planning, for the coming year, but obviously we'll put more pressures on some of the other issues we're talking about, but things like labor and workforce overall. I don't have any specific guidance beyond that which you probably have already seen. At the County, Don, are you aware of any specific guidance we've provided anybody on venue changes or any lifts and restrictions?

Don Lehman ([01:06:53](#)):

I'm sorry, I'm on another call real quick. What was that related to?

Jim S. ([01:06:55](#)):

The change in weddings that's allowed larger gatherings for weddings. Has the County issued any additional guidance beyond what has come from the state?

Don L. ([01:07:04](#)):

No, we've gotten a lot of questions about that, and we're still waiting to hear more from the state. Again, it's typical. What's happened every single step of the way here is that they... Coldwell drops something on a Friday afternoon. His people don't know about it. We find out about it and get the calls.

We got a few weeks until that really kind of kicks in, but we've got nothing, not a single word from the state as to how any of that's going to work right now.

Jim S. ([01:07:29](#)):

Okay. Well...

Frank D. ([01:07:31](#)):

I'm sorry, Jim. It's Frank. I did get some feedback from New York State Hospitality and Tourism. They're on a call. Well, it started at 10:00. I assume it's over with the governor's office, the department of state and somebody else, trying to get clarity on that. And also the attraction question. If you're at a great escape today, can you sell us season tickets for 2021? And who knows? Because if they haven't told you if it can open. So the weddings is closely followed by attractions, is the two things that are being pursued in Albany right now, with some better details to how to implement once the governor decides what he wants to do.

Jim S. ([01:08:09](#)):

Okay. Well, thank you everyone. Is there anyone that I didn't call on? James. James, I'm sorry. Are you there?

James Griffith ([01:08:23](#)):

Yeah, I'm here, Jim. Thank you very much. Now, just continue to give you more information about just the traffic patterns. We did see a slight downturn in traffic last week. Again, the movie theater closure, and then the expanded closure of the Canadian border is still affecting shoppers. So, those two things. And I keep reaching out to Ryan and Don to see if there's any more feedback on that from the state level. But thank you for including me, Jim. Appreciate.

Jim S. ([01:08:49](#)):

Appreciate that. Wayne, I don't know if you're still there. You were also somebody I hadn't called on, but your team, particularly Sarah, has just done remarkable work in support of so many of those things that we've been talking about. And so we can't thank you enough. Anything else you can think to share with us, Wayne?

Wayne LeMothe ([01:09:06](#)):

No. Not a lot to add. I know Sarah is busy. We're going through some staffing changes here. I had someone leave. Trying to find a seasoned planner to fill a position is always a challenge. So I just wanted to say that, the only thing that's coming up that can affect some long-term economic development activities is, the end of next month they will start releasing the census data. And that will drive a lot of the... about set asides at the state and federal level for funding availability for the area. So that's something we're going to look at very closely, to look at the changes from 2010 to 2020. But beyond that, again, we're just trying to keep plugging along. And I know Sarah... I see her time sheets. I see what she's doing. It's a lot of work and I just hope that she doesn't get burned out here, so...

Jim S. ([01:10:11](#)):

Well, all right. Whatever we need to do, if we got it all, figure out ways to send food to her house and help her with childcare, walk her dog, whatever we got to do, she's a gem. We got to jump in and support her.

Wayne L. ([01:10:25](#)):

I think we just need to figure out how to keep her cat off the keyboard. [inaudible 01:10:29]. Yeah.

Mark B. ([01:10:30](#)):

Wayne, I just think I heard Jim say very subtly, "We're not cutting back on the workload."

Wayne L. ([01:10:34](#)):

Yeah. Of course not.

Jim S. ([01:10:38](#)):

Yeah. The times are not changing. Well, thank you, everyone. Is another very productive hour and 10 minutes. I appreciate the commitment on everyone's behalf of the time. I also really welcomed the back and forth. I think we're better for not only sharing information, but also the needs. So, more to come. Obviously, if there are things between now and next week's call that we need to deal with right away, then reach out to John and I at any time. And we continue to emerge stronger. And I think that should be the thing we remember is we're operating from a position of strength. We know how to do this now. We've been doing it very well for the better part of a year. And while we got to continue to do it, it should give us strength to know that we can. I appreciate every one of you. Thank you very much.

John W. ([01:11:33](#)):

Thanks, Jim.