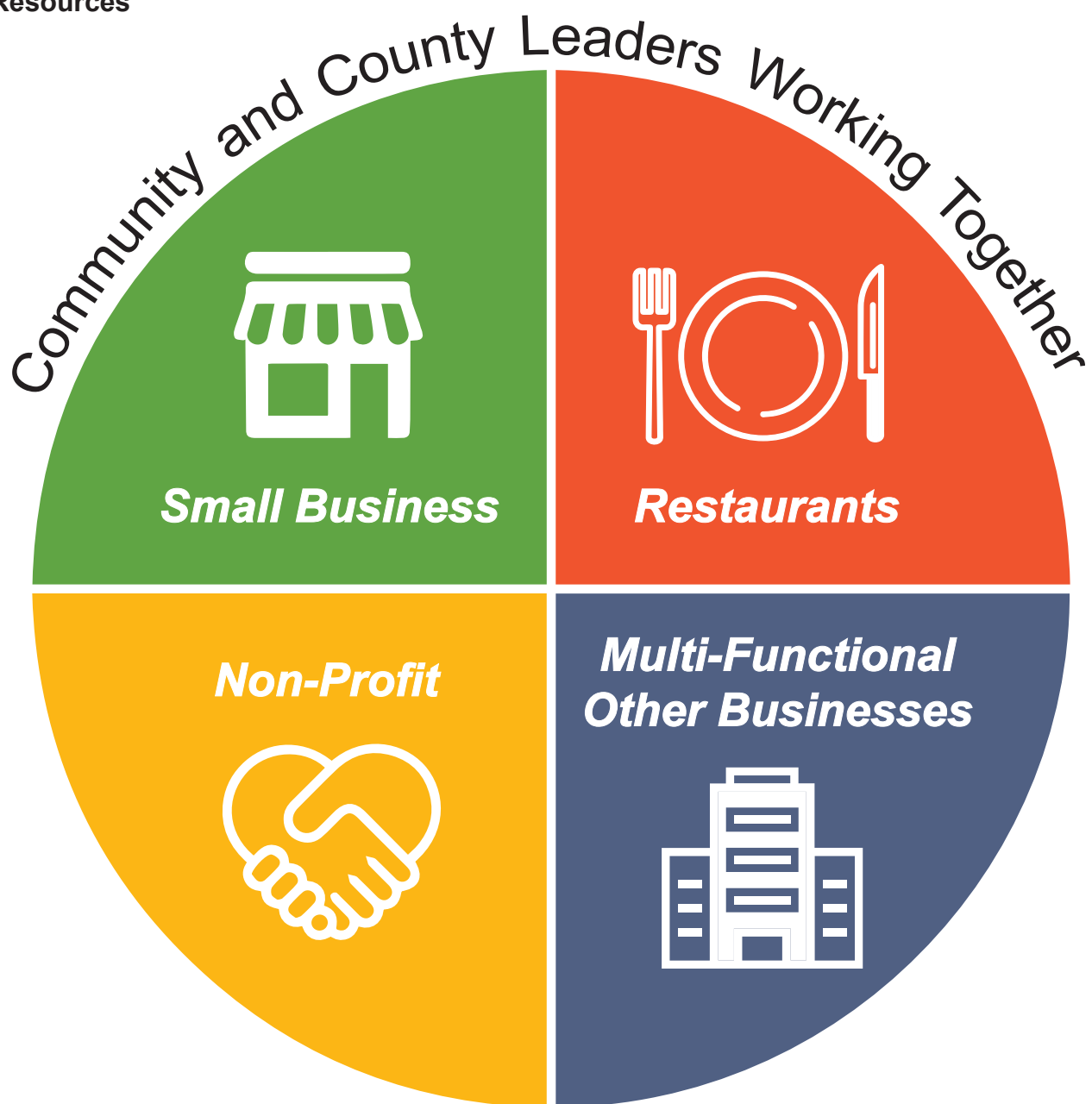


Next Step Task Force

Proposal to Reopen Silver City/County of Grant

Focus:

- Formulation of a plan to safely re-open small businesses with a focus on employee and customer safety
- Commerce and Business Strategy
- Long-term Economic Recovery Strategy
- PR and Messaging
- Resources



Bringing the sectors of business together to form a plan for the benefit of all.



Overview

The Town of Silver City, in collaboration with Grant County government and representatives from the communities of Grant County, continue to work together to create actionable plans. These plans are being or have been formed through careful business and health assessment with the aim of reopening the region in as safe of a manner as possible. A focus on customer and employee safety has been paramount. These plans continue to evolve based on changes occurring with the COVID-19 situation and with changes and new directives offered by the Governor of New Mexico. Additional focuses of the task force include economic recovery, messaging, information distribution, and access to resources needed.



Steering Committee

- **Main Steering Committee Participants:**

Silver City Mayor, Grant County Manager, Silver City Town Manager, Silver City Assistant Town Manager, Grant County Planning and Community Development Director, Silver City Fire Department Chief, SWNM Council of Governments, SkyWest Media Broadcast/Marketing Manager, Silver City Grant County Chamber of Commerce Director, and Silver City Mainstreet Manager.

- **Advisers:**

Gila Regional Medical Center, Hidalgo Medical Services, and Western New Mexico University, Grant County Emergency Management



Purpose

The purpose of this task force has been to gather a comprehensive pool of data derived from business experts across five sectors of business throughout Grant County. The business sectors represented in each subcommittee included Small Business, Restaurant, Non-Profit and Multi-Functional Business (Medium Sized Business.) The final business sector includes the steering committee that is comprised of community leaders and city/county administration.

Note: All recommendations are intended to remain in alignment with COVID Safe Practices (CSPs) and New Mexico Governor's directives

Sub Committees



Small Business Representatives

- Antique Mall
- Curl Up and Dye
- Dr. Rhonda Van Dran, O.D.
- Furniture Gallery/Sears
- Gila Hike and Bike
- No Excuses Gym
- Silver Bowling Center/Ten Pin Room/Restaurant
- SYGYZY Tile
- The Food Co-op
- The Silco Theater



Restaurant Business Representatives

- Adobe Springs
- Diane's Restaurant/
Diane's Bakery
- Duck Creek Café
- Kountry Kitchen
- M&A Bayard Café
- The Patio Restaurant
- Q's/Fry House
- REVEL
- Tranquil Buz



Non-Profit Representatives

- Calvary Chapel Silver City
- Farmer's Market
- Grant County Art Guild
- Grant County Community Foundation
- Southwest Center for Health Innovation
- Southwest NM ACT
- Southwest NM Green Chamber
- St. Vincent's Catholic Church



Multi-Functional/Other Businesses (Medium to Large Scale SME)

- Ace Hardware
- Freeport McMoRan
- Griffin Propane and Other
- Hatch Automotive
- Holiday Inn
- Little Toad Brewery and Distillery
- PNM
- Quality Inn and Comfort Suites
- W&N Enterprises



Town and County Officials will encourage the following CSPs for all employers

- Limit operations to remote work to the greatest extent possible
- Arrange workplace to provide for 6 feet of distance between individuals wherever possible
- Close common areas where personnel are likely to congregate wherever possible, or modify them to minimize contact
- Provide for all meetings to take place remotely whenever possible
- All employees should be provided with appropriate face coverings and should wear them in the workplace
- Train all employees on daily cleaning and disinfecting protocol, hygiene, and respiratory etiquette (e.g., covering coughs)
- Make handwashing, sanitizer, and other hygiene support available to employees
- Screen employees before they enter the workplace each day (verbally or with a written form or app). Send employees home who are experiencing the following COVID-19 symptoms related to COVID-19 and direct them to obtain free testing through Department of Health (DOH) • Fever, cough, shortness of breath, chills, repeated shaking with chills, muscle pain, headache, sore throat and/or loss of taste or smell
- Prohibit employees with known close contact to a person who is lab-confirmed to have COVID-19 to return to work until the end of the 14-day self-isolation period
- Minimize non-essential travel. Adhere to Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) guidelines and state orders regarding isolation following out-of-state travel
- Adhere to all CDC and Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) guidelines



Additional Specifics to Facilitate in Obtaining Best Practices

- With the aid of the Silver City Fire Department, establish varying occupancy levels based on Governor's phases for businesses and help businesses determine best traffic flow processes with proper queuing areas outside of businesses (Silver City Fire Department will visit a Town of Silver City business or a business within a three mile radius to help establish occupancy levels. If a business is outside of this region, the business operator can call the Silver City Fire Department and give square footage and the fire department will help with calculations.)
- Provide guidance of how to limit or count the number of customers in a store at one time to ensure social distancing
- Town of Silver City and County of Grant will establish a "supply bank" of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) supplies in the advent that businesses are not able to obtain them from other sources (This "supply bank" will be for purchase by business operators and, if a business is need of financial assistance to acquire these PPE supplies from the Town/County "supply bank," the business will be allowed to repay the Town/County at a later date.)
- Distribution of literature to business operators on "Best Practices" to include information that can be accessed by employees so they can become more informed about daily cleaning, disinfecting protocol, hygiene, and respiratory etiquette
- Additional information distribution through regional websites on "Best Practices" and "Available Resources" and Public Service Radio campaign across stations serving Grant County (Community Foundation new website page for COVID-19, Town and County websites)
- Provide down loadable graphic(s) for uniform signage and digital marketing optional to businesses with branding such as "Grant County-Safe, Sanitized, and Standing Strong," "Please Wear a Mask," and "Social Distancing-6 feet"
- Provide a contact email for questions or suggestions of businesses and community members so that appropriate community leaders can address as needed (A special email address will be provided for both the County and Town of Silver City on their websites. For questions relating to Gila Regional Medical Center (GRMC), a special micro-webpage has been added to the hospital's website.)
- Provide a news update from leadership on status of Task Force/Plan to reopen



Special Notations

Events

- All events have been/were canceled while “Stay at Home” orders in effect
- Major future events that have been canceled include: Wild Wild West Pro Rodeo, Blues Festival that will now be held as a virtual event, Fiesta Latina, Give Grandly, and others
- Encourage events to be postponed until later in the year and then restricted in size or encouragement of best practices for social distancing
- Currently Town of Silver City is not offering permitting for town property use
- Currently County of Grant has the conference center closed and county properties
- Events will be allowed to resume following Governor guidelines/mandates

Business Sector COVID-19 Plans Implemented

- Freeport McMoRan mining operations
- Gila Regional Medical Center
- Other area medical providers
- County and Municipalities
- Gila National Forest Service



PHASE 1: (Mid-May-- To Be Determined (TBD))

What Opens

- All retailers may operate according to Retail COVID-Safe Practices at 20% fire code occupancy
- Non-essential businesses generally may operate according to CSPs at up to 50% of pre-crisis staffing levels
- Dine-in service at restaurants and bars permitted according to CSPs (in development) at up to 50% occupancy, no barstool or standing service. No live music
- Gyms and salons can operate according to CSPs
- Hotels permitted to operate according to CSPs at up to full capacity
- Houses of worship can operate according to CSPs at capacity to-be-determined

What Remains Closed

- Theaters (Silco and WNMU Theaters)
- Instruction to Stay Home remains in place for Vulnerable Individuals
- Visits to long-term care & other congregate care facilities restricted as per current Public Health Order (PHO)
- Mass Gatherings restricted (includes concerts, events, and social gatherings) (See event section)
- 14-day quarantine order remains in place for out-of-state airport arrivals
- Vacation rentals prohibited to out-of-state

PHASE 2: (Early June--TBD)

What Opens

- Theaters may operate according to CSPs and capacity restrictions (Silco and WNMU theaters)
- Bars may operate according to CSPs and capacity restrictions

What Remains Closed

- Instruction to Stay Home remains in place for vulnerable individuals
- Visits to long-term care and other congregate care facilities restricted as per current PHO
- Mass Gatherings restricted (includes concerts, events, and large social gatherings) (See event section)
- 14-day quarantine order remains in place for out-of-state airport arrivals

PHASE 3: (Early July--TBD)

What Opens

- Vulnerable Individuals(1) instructed to practice social distancing
- Aim to reopen schools in August with modified schedules and procedures to protect students, faculty, and staff

What Remains Closed

- Mass Gatherings larger than 100 people still prohibited. No large festivals or fairs (Consideration of Grant County Fair in late September/October to be considered, as well as other regular fall events)
- Some concerts and spectator sports may be permitted on a modified basis with capacity restrictions (encourage smaller events and local or regional talent for concerts)
- Visits to long-term care and other congregate care facilities restricted to some extent
- Reassess quarantine order for out-of-state airport arrivals

Noted Business Sector Concerns Being Addressed and Recommendations



Small Business Representatives

- Employees earn more with unemployment and workforce availability is an issue
- First round Paycheck Protection Program (PPP) closing date is too close with numerous extensions on “Stay-At-Home” orders
- Need a ramp up period, at least one week notice, to be able to open properly
- Smaller businesses can be just as safe, if not safer, than big box stores, in metering and social distancing - unfair double standard exists
- Disparity between square footage requirements of a small business versus sprawling big box stores
- Small businesses want to cooperate with the Fire Department on customer flow strategies and occupancy
- Employees are fearful of exposure by customers who are not protected
- Proper sanitation information needed with signage for business regarding cleanliness guidelines
- Vacation rentals allowed to out-of-state patrons



Restaurant Business Representatives

- Customer confidence is a concern
- Availability of supplies (food and sanitation) beyond shut down period
50% operation is not sustainable for the long haul
- Need a ramp up period, at least one week notice, to be able to open properly
- Employees are fearful of exposure by customers who are not protected
- Smaller restaurants in Grant County versus those in Albuquerque/Santa fe who can handle a 50% mandate better because their dining rooms are bigger
- Opening too early, with the possibility of having the open for business order reversed if a second wave hits, will create a bigger hardship on businesses in general. Business owners would rather plan for a concrete opening than a possible “soft” opening
- Concerns about the impact of loss of events and drop in tourism
- Ability to sell liquor as part of take-out orders
- Group has been considering many enhanced public safety guidelines such as single use menus, having hand-sanitizer stations at the door, employees always wearing gloves and masks, a greeter with a temperature gauge, handling money, etc.
- Liability, Liability, Liability
- Want tests (COVID-19 and Antibodies)



Non-Profit Representatives

- Believe they are ready to open and operate safely, once given the go ahead to open
- Concerns over loss of tourism and events from a monetary perspective and from a cultural perspective
- The face-to-face interaction between our organizations and the public needs to be ensured
- Questions about governing guidelines during the COVID crisis that are different for some businesses than for others (big box versus small biz)
- Concern about visitors who come to Grant County having different guidelines or restrictions in their home communities which presents a problem for local business operators
- Need for community messaging on safe practices being followed
- Concerns over restrictions on occupancy and willingness to work with Fire Department for determining strategies for customer safety
- Churches working toward following safety protocols, but want most to be able to congregate



Multi-Functional/Other Businesses (Medium to Large Scale SME)

- Well prepared, with plans and processes in place, but have ongoing concerns for employee and customer safety
- Desire for consistent guidelines, which encompass all businesses, that are disseminated by the proper authoritative entities
- Need at least one week notice of when next phase is implemented for proper “ramp-up”
- Clear guidelines needed for filing for unemployment benefits and an extension for filtering false claims--businesses are inundated with false claims from past employees
- Separation of key employees within the same company--discussion on separating employees, who are in key roles, can reduce the chance for cross contamination, which could result in loss of an operation
- Desire for cooperation between businesses, especially when addressing needs such as supplies and meeting to standards
- Liability
- Signage for businesses following best practices (i.e. window sticker with slogan: Grant County-Safe, Sanitized, and Standing Strong)
- Want tests (COVID-19 and Antibodies)



Next Steps

- **Create a messaging campaign and graphics which business owners can participate in/download printed to promote a clean environment and help to instill customer confidence**
- **Establish information packets and digital content for safe practices on website(s) for each of access / location by businesses**
- **Continue to work collaboratively with other business groups to eliminate the “Silo Effect” and create an environment with open lines of communication and a spirit of cooperation**
- **Establish PPE “bank”**
- **Continue to develop plans associated with Governor directives that will facilitate the process to operate Grant County and its businesses as safely as possible**
- **Continue to assess business and community needs for public and employee safety and implement actions based on those needs**
- **Establish email assistance/concern system**
- **Assist businesses with occupancy calculations and customer flow**
- **Continue to locate and disseminate information on resources available**
- **The "Next Step Task Force" will continue as a Chamber initiative**