

# THE NEWPORT MINER

THE VOICE OF PEND OREILLE COUNTY SINCE 1901

www.pendoreillerivervalley.com

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## Area businesses struggling

### Bonner, Pend Oreille county, regional EDC assembling help for businesses

BY DON GRONNING  
OF THE MINER

NEWPORT – Clare Clark, co-owner of Kelly's Bar and Grill in Newport, said she laid off her entire staff, a dozen people, including herself, following Gov. Jay Inslee's order for restaurants to close down except for carry out and deliveries in response to the COVID-19 crisis.

The restaurant stayed open for one last push and regulars turned out to make the St. Patrick's Day take out a success, she said.

Kelly's, like many other businesses in both Pend Oreille and West Bonner counties, are reevaluating regularly. While the restaurant is completely closed now, Clark said they are still considering whether to open back up with just take out.

Rob Owen of Owen Grocery and Deli in Newport says that business has fallen off at Owen's. Owen had to close the soda fountain but the grocery is still open.

"We've been pretty slow, understandably so," Owen said. Still, he says his business is doing better than the ones who have been forced to close.

Owen says he's committed to staying open.

SEE BUSINESS, 2A

COURTESY PHOTO|SOPHIA ALDOUS

**David Lucas washes windows at Owen's Grocery and Deli in Newport last week. Owen's owner Rob Owen says he will stay open, but business is slow. The area economic development agencies are working to provide businesses with information on programs that will help during the COVID crisis.**



## Third Superior Court Judge authorized

COLVILLE – Pend Oreille County Superior Court may have an additional judge by mid summer. Pend Oreille County is part of a three county judicial district, along with Ferry and Stevens counties.

The state legislature authorized a third judge for the district. Pat Monasmith and Jessica Reeves are the two current Superior Court judges for the judicial district. The Governor appoints a judge to fill a vacancy, which the authorization by the legislature creates.

The judicial district is seeking qualified applicants. The position pays \$190,985. That will go up to \$199,675 in July.

The Governor's application for judicial appointment and the Uniform Judicial Evaluation Questionnaire are accepted by the Superior Court Judicial District Bar Association and several minority bar associations for evaluation purposes. It can be downloaded at: [www.governor.wa.gov/office-governor/official-actions/judicial-appointments-0](http://www.governor.wa.gov/office-governor/official-actions/judicial-appointments-0).

To be considered for this vacancy, applicants are strongly encouraged to promptly submit complete applications, along with a short resume and the Waiver and Authorization to Release Information, and schedule judicial evaluations with the judicial district bar association and the statewide minority bar associations.

All applications must be completed and submitted to the Governor's Office by April 22, with all judicial evaluation ratings submitted to the Governor's Office of General Counsel as soon as possible.

The position may be for a full four years, but it may also be until the next election that doesn't have a judge running. Judges in a judicial district don't stand for election at the same time. The original plan was to have a selection made by mid June, but with the COVID crisis, it might be later.

## Community heroes emerge during pandemic

### Both sides of the border step up

NEWPORT – Since the request for personal protective equipment (PPE) went out via social media and newspaper ads on March 20, Newport Hospital and Health Services has received overwhelming support from the community, according to NHHS Public Information Officer Jenny Smith.

Newport resident Jamie Ronan responded to a Facebook thread with, "Would anything like these help? I have a small 3D print farm and can make approximately 18 a day."

Ronan was referring to surgical facemasks, an item NHHS hasn't been able to restock since the COVID-19 outbreak increased global demand for PPE. Now Ronan is working on 50 reusable, washable standard surgical masks and 100 face shield frames that can be fitted with clear plastic cut with a standard 3-hole punch.

According to Buzz Price, NHHS Director of Materials Management and Information Technology, "This is such a great example of both community involvement and Pend Oreille County problem-solving ingenuity. Mr. Ronan saw our request for donated supplies and found a way to apply his specialized technical capability

ity to addressing our PPE shortage in a totally new way.

"Before we had even spoken with Mr. Ronan he had on his own initiative downloaded freeware 3D print files and mocked up masks and face shields. Because his 3D masks and shield are washable and reusable, we will be much less dependent upon the traditional supply chain and still have what we need. It's a blessing."

Other community members have stepped up to help too. Suzanne Schafer Brooks of Top Frog Brewery has been making cloth face masks for the last two weeks,

SEE KINDNESS, 2A

COURTESY PHOTO|MICKEY BROOKS

**Suzanne Schafer Brooks of Top Frog Brewery sews surgical masks for area healthcare providers. Newport Hospital Health and Services is looking for donations of N95 masks, disposable surgical masks and disposable isolation gowns. Sewn masks as well as disposable will be accepted. Sewn masks should be double layer tightly woven quilter's cotton with either ties or elastic. Call Purchasing at 509-447-9300 for more information or to schedule a delivery.**



#### BRIEFLY

##### Job search optional to get unemployment

OLYMPIA – The job search requirement to receive Washington Unemployment Insurance benefits was made optional March 24, another in a series of measures to increase access to unemployment benefits for workers affected by the COVID-19 pandemic.

This measure will be retroactive to March 8, 2020, and will continue until further notice.

More information can be found on the Employment Security website: [www.esd.wa.gov](http://www.esd.wa.gov).

##### First diagnosis of COVID-19 in Bonner County

SANDPOINT – The first case of confirmed COVID-19 in Bonner County was diagnosed in a male in his 60s, according to Bonner County Emergency Management on Sunday, March 29. The case was confirmed by the Panhandle Health District 1, and appears to be acquired through community transmission, meaning the patient has not traveled. He is self-isolating at home. Contact tracing is ongoing by PHD1.

Meanwhile, a fourth positive case of COVID-19 was reported in Stevens County, west of Pend Oreille County.

Ferry County has one confirmed case.

Pend Oreille County has no confirmed bases of COVID-19, as of Tuesday afternoon March 31.

As of Tuesday, Ferry County has had 62 negative test results, Pend Oreille County 102 negative test results and Stevens County 216 negatives.

Within Washington State, there have been a total of 5,380 cases of COVID-19 and 202 deaths.

In Idaho, 513 confirmed cases have been diagnosed, with nine of those resulting in death as of Tuesday afternoon.



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OBITUARIES	5B	PUBLIC NOTICES	7B-8B	SENIOR CALENDAR	4B

**STAY SAFE  
AND WASH YOUR HANDS  
STAY HOME**

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### LETTERS POLICY

We welcome letters to the editor. Letters should be typed and submitted to The Miner and Gem State Miner office no later than 5 p.m. Friday for publication the following Wednesday. No letter will be published unless it is signed by at least one individual, even if the letter represents the view of a group. The letter must include a telephone number and address for confirmation of authenticity. Letters should be no longer than 300 words. The Miner reserves the right to edit to conform to our publication style, policy and libel laws. Political letters will not be published the last issue prior an election. Letters will be printed as space allows.

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## BUSINESS

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“We’re staying open and keeping employees on the payroll,” he said. Owen has six employees. “They’re getting extremely tired of deep cleaning,” he said.

There are three tax supported local economic development agencies working to assist businesses with information and in one case, micro grants. The Pend Oreille Economic Development Council, the Bonner County Economic Development Corporation and the Tri County Economic Development District are all working to provide information and in one case, micro grants, to area businesses.

### Micro grants coming

Jamie Wyrobek, executive director of the Pend Oreille Economic Development Council in Newport says the EDC is working with the Washington State Department of Commerce on a grant program to assist small businesses in the county impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. The micro grants can pay up to \$10,000 to affected businesses.

“At this time, the state has given us the primary task of administering a micro grant program to small businesses in this county,” Wyrobek said in a news release.

The micro grant program is still being developed, she said, but will provide grants up to \$10,000 that can be used for several basic needs that include rent and utilities.

Eligible businesses do not have to have conventional storefronts, she said.

Wyrobek said she has been in contact with many businesses in the county impacted but would like to hear from others. They can email her at JWyrobek@pendoreille.org or call 509-447-5569.

The Bonner County EDC has a survey on their website www.bonnercountyledc.com seeking information from businesses affected by the COVID shutdown, with questions such as, “How do you feel the COVID-19 crisis will most immediately impact your business?” and “What are the specific worries you have as this crisis unfolds (for instance, making payroll? accessing essential supplies?).”

Andrea Marcoccio is executive director of the Bonner County EDC. She says the people who complete an online survey are contacted by email by the EDC within 48 hours. The Bonner County EDC was contacted by 50 businesses in the first week of the survey, she said. The EDC intends to follow up with phone calls as needed.

“Some say they don’t need a phone call,” Marcoccio said. Others are appreciative of someone to talk to about their business concerns.

Marcoccio said Idaho doesn’t yet have the microgrants Pend Oreille County EDC has, but that the Bonner County EDC is in touch with the state Department of Commerce. She advises people to check the Bonner County EDC website daily for updates.

### Federal help going through SBA

Much of the federal help for businesses will go through the Small Business Administration. Eamon Javers, Wash-

ington correspondent for CNBC, talked about the SBA program expansion on “Washington Week,” a Public Broadcasting System show Friday, March 27. He said business owners need to know about the program.

“It’s an expansion of the Small Business Administration 7(a) loan program,” Javers said on the show. “And what it does is something radical and new in American legislation and in the economy. It’s, in essence, free money for small businesses if they agree not to lay anybody off over a period of time. So you get an eight-week loan of up to \$10 million for companies that are 500 employees or less. And if at the end of the period of time in the bill, if you haven’t laid anybody off you get to keep the money. So that’s free money.”

“We’ve never seen anything like that before in American economics,” he continued. “So it’s going to be a fascinating moment. There are some particulars to the bill that small businesses are going to need to pay attention to, but this is potentially huge. It’s authorized as up to \$350 billion or more in the bill. My suspicion is it will go much, much higher than that, because a lot more small businesses are going to apply once they realize this is out there.”

“The way to get this if you’re a small business owner is to go to your regular banker, your regular lender you’re used to dealing with, and ask them about a 7(a) loan,” Javers said. “They’ll go and deal with the Small Business Administration. Small business owners don’t have to deal with the government on this. Just deal with your regular banker.”

### Bonner County EDC has loan info on website

The Bonner County EDC website has information about the emergency loans on its website, with information supplied by the U.S. Chamber of Commerce. According to the chamber, the legislation passed by Congress is called the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act. It allocated \$350 billion to help small businesses keep workers employed amid the pandemic and economic downturn.

Known as the Paycheck Protection Program, the initiative provides 100 percent federally guaranteed loans to small businesses.

Marcoccio says businesses should work through their regular lenders to access the various loan programs. One of the questions she gets is from people who don’t have conventional lenders. The Bonner County EDC will help people get in touch with lenders, she

said.

Wyrobek said she has also been briefed via conference calls and emails on assistance programs offered, such as Small Business Administration Loans, tax deferrals for businesses and expanded unemployment benefits. The Pend Oreille EDC will provide contact information for small business emergency state and federal assistance programs on the EDC website as they are made available.

“We understand how hard the social distancing order is on our small rural businesses,” Wyrobek said. “We also know that it is essential to get the help to those that need it as quickly as possible but we don’t want to release incomplete or inaccurate information.”

### TEDD also supplies information

The Tri County Economic Development District provides economic development help for Pend Oreille, Stevens and Ferry counties in Washington. It is headquartered in Colville.

The TEDD office is closed during the shutdown, but sent out a list of contacts for potential resources. Like all the economic development groups, TEDD is active on social media and with its website. Although the TEDD offices are closed, staff who can be working from home, sending out press releases and updating social media.

“We are only at the beginning of this crisis and we should expect and be prepared for the situation to worsen before we see improvement,” Jeff Koffel, TEDD executive director said. “Our immediate focus to provide what support and relief we can to our regional businesses.”

TEDD sent out a press release March 25 urging private property owners of commercial and residential property to extend extraordinary leniency to tenants during the COVID crisis.

Extending repayment times, halting payments during enforced closure times, waiving penalty clauses, and offering rent forgiveness during this time are all ways to ensure that tenants will be able to weather the financial downturn and will be able to make better decisions regarding community health, according to the TEDD release. This will enable property owners to have continued income when an economic recovery begins, as it is typically more difficult to find tenants after an economic downturn, the release says.

“An empty building doesn’t generate any income,” Koffel said.

The TEDD office can be reached by calling 509-684-4571, messaging via Facebook, or e-mail droberts@teddonline.com.

## Idaho primary goes all mail to combat pandemic

All voters will use absentee voting process

BY SOPHIA ALDOUS  
OF THE MINER

SANDPOINT – In an unprecedented move for the state of Idaho, the primary election is still slated for Tuesday, May 19, but now all voting will be done by mail, the state announced the afternoon of Monday, March 30.

Officials said the change for mail-in voting was done out of concerns of the growing coronavirus pandemic. Governor Brad Little said in a press release that the decision was made after it was obvious that the state could not guarantee the safety of polling places and poll workers for the election. Secretary of State Lawrence Denney had requested to postpone the election until June 16, but Little decided against it.

The election will be done essentially via the absentee voting process that is already in place, according to Teresa “T.J.” Eigler, elections coordinator for Bonner County Elections. Voters will need to request an absentee ballot. Bonner County currently has 27,639 registered voters.

“For our elections staff, it will mean processing and mailing out many more absentee requests than usual,” Eigler said. “We anticipated and planned for this possibility, and believe we have sufficient supplies and staff to handle the increase in mail out requests.”

Bonner County will mail out two to three dozen UOCAVA (Uniformed and Overseas Citizens Absentee Voting Act) ballots this Friday, April 3, according to Bonner County Elections Supervisor Charlie Wurm. Typically for a primary the county mails out 2,000 absentee ballots. This time around it will be more like 25,000, Wurm said.

“It’s definitely a first,” Wurm said.

Voters should go to [www.IdahoVotes.gov](http://www.IdahoVotes.gov) to reg-

SEE IDAHO, 8A

## KINDNESS

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sewing 156 as of Tuesday, March 31. She’s given seven to individuals, 40 to a friend that works at Multicare Deaconess Hospital in Spokane and 109 to the new long term care facility in Newport.

Before the COVID-19 outbreak Schafer Brooks was already sewing sanitary napkins for Days for Girls, a global effort that creates and distributes sustainable menstrual health resources to girls who would otherwise miss school during their monthly periods. Making health masks just seemed like the logical thing to do.

“It helps me to know that I can help others while I’m at home,” Schafer Brooks said. “I have the skills and the material and the time. So I sew.”

Donations of N95 masks, disposable lab coats, dust mask, and nitrile gloves are just some of the items received from individual donors and community partners like the Kalispel Tribe of Indians, Newport School District, and Pend Oreille Public Utility District.

Community members are also donating whimsical handmade cloth masks that will soon outfit all of the district’s 300 employees.

Last week Columbia Bank of Priest River sent Nomad coffees to the NHHS Laboratory staff, and this week a steady stream of coffees were delivered daily by Union Street Perk after a one-day “pay-it-forward” campaign for NHHS staff that resulted in 190 free drinks.

Owen’s Grocery has also surprised different departments twice with sandwiches, wraps and salads.

“The community response is absolutely overwhelming,” said Smith. “Everyone wants to help, and it’s creating a positive impact across our campus, especially during such a stressful and unprecedented time.”

## Ham or Lamb Winners

CALL THE MINER AT 509-447-2433 TO ARRANGE PICKUP OF YOUR GIFT CERTIFICATE.

Denise Pontius – Aerocet  
Stephen Hodges – Selkirk Ace Hardware  
Rose Boyd – Rival Roofing  
Mary Fredrick – Bliss Chiropractic Health Center  
Ellen Alford – Northern Lakes Dock & Barge  
Janet Spring – Durham School Services  
Marilynn Hiebert – Mary’s Feed & Farm  
Sheryl Newmman – Kelly’s Bar & Grill  
Cathy Wagner – NAPA Auto Parts  
Rick Ross – Vaagen’s Lumber  
Ed Zupich – Idaho Forest Group  
West Bonner Food Bank – City of Priest River  
Vesta Roth – Priest River Animal Rescue & Critters Thrift Store  
Kim Parsley – Treasures A-Z  
Mike Newton – ABC Heating & Electric  
Lisa Rowden – Safeway  
Jenny Byrd – The Miner Newspapers

## Easter Church Directory postponed



Due to the COVID-19 Pandemic, church services are canceled for the foreseeable future. Because of this, The Miner is postponing our Easter Church Directory indefinitely. Please check our ‘Where to Worship’ Directory on page 1B for contact information from your place of worship.