



**FLORIDA
FORESTRY
ASSOCIATION**

PINES & NEEDLES

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COVID-19 Special Edition

A MESSAGE FROM EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT ALAN SHELBY RE: COVID-19



As COVID-19 continues to take center stage, the well-being of our Association members, staff, families, and communities remain our highest concern.

In keeping with guidance offered by the Centers of Disease Control and the Executive Office of the Governor, Association staff will be working from home until such time as it is deemed advisable to return to normal operations.

As always, we are available during normal business hours (M-F 8 AM-5 PM) by cell or email. The office phone (850.222.5646) has been forwarded to our office coordinator, Krista Harvard. You can expect the same prompt attention you receive under normal conditions.

We believe that commitment, communication and resourcefulness will be the keys to maneuvering successfully through this current landscape. We are 100% committed to continuing to move Florida forestry forward in these challenging times. I encourage you to visit the COVID-19 Resource page on our website www.FLForestry.org for up-to-date information to assist with the economic effects of the pandemic.

Stay safe. Stay well. We will weather this storm together.

Alan Shelby
Executive Vice President

GOVERNOR ISSUES SAFER AT HOME ORDER FOR FLORIDA

On April 1, 2020, Governor Ron DeSantis issued a Safer at Home order for all of Florida. The order went into effect April 3 at 12:01 AM and will last for at least thirty days.

In sum, the order states that all persons in Florida shall limit their movements and interactions outside of their home to only those necessary to obtain or provide essential services or conduct essential activities.

The Florida Forestry Association worked with the Governor's Office before the order was put in place to ensure that forestry would be included as an essential service. As requested, the order refers to the listing of essential services provided by the Department of Homeland Security's Guidance on the Essential Critical Infrastructure Workforce, v. 2 (March 28, 2020), which includes forestry as follows:

"Workers who support sawmills and the manufacture and distribution of fiber and forest products, including, but not limited to timber, paper, and other wood and fiber products."

Ag Commissioner Nikki Fried provided a suggested letter that can be personalized and given to employees for use in facilitating their travel to and from work and other duties as assigned. Please see sidebar for letter.

DATE

Reference: COVID-19 Executive Order 20-91

To Whom It May Concern:

Employee Name: _____

Employee Address: _____

The individual named above is an employee of [COMPANY NAME] that provides essential services as declared by the State of Florida's Governor in Executive Order 20-91. This employee was provided this letter by their employer as proof of employment for travel to and from work and other duties as assigned for the purposes of their employment as an essential critical infrastructure worker. This individual is engaged in [work type - (Suggest using one of the categories from the Homeland Security list)].

On March 28, 2020, the U.S. Department of Homeland Security, Cyber Security and Infrastructure Security Agency issued updated "Guidance on the Essential Critical Infrastructure Workforce". It is therefore the policy of the United States government that these industries continue to function with minimal disruption in the event of an emergency. On April 1, 2020, the Governor of Florida issued Executive Order 20-91 adopting in total the Department of Homeland Security's list of Essential Critical Infrastructure Workers exempt from the same Order's limitation of movements outside their homes to those necessary to obtain or provide necessary essential services or conduct essential activities.

As such, the individual in possession of this letter is a "critical infrastructure industry employee" and should be considered exempt from any state or local restrictions such as curfews, shelter-in-place orders, and other mobility restrictions when reporting to, returning from, or performing his or her work functions, and the critical materials conveyed in this shipment should be permitted to proceed. We ask that you allow this individual to continue with his or her job in the interest of providing essential food deliveries to service essential businesses and promoting public health.

We appreciate your assistance. Please reach out with questions or concerns.

Thank you,

INSERT SIGNATURE
NAME
TITLE
EMAIL
PHONE

SMALL BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS



Paycheck Protection Program

On the federal level, the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act allocated \$350 billion to help small businesses keep

workers employed amid the pandemic and economic downturn. Known as the Paycheck Protection Program (PPP), the initiative provides 100% federally guaranteed loans to small businesses. The program is administered by the Small Business Administration.

Importantly, these loans may be forgiven if borrowers maintain their payrolls during the crisis or restore their payrolls afterward.

The application process for small businesses and sole proprietors opened on April 3 and for independent contractors and self-employed individuals April 10. The program is open through June 30, but potential applicants are encouraged to act quickly because of the program's loan cap.

PPP is a loan designed to provide a direct incentive for small businesses to keep their workers on the payroll. SBA will forgive loans if all employees are kept on the payroll for eight weeks and the money is used for payroll, rent, mortgage interest, or utilities.

You can apply through any existing SBA 7(a) lender or through any federally insured depository institution, federally insured credit union, and Farm Credit System institution that is participating. Other regulated lenders will be available to make these loans once they are approved and enrolled in the program. You should consult with your local lender as to whether it is participating in the program.

Learn more on the SBA website:
www.bit.ly/3b7cdfA

Economic Injury Disaster Loan

Small business owners are also eligible to apply for an Economic Injury Disaster Loan advance of up to \$10,000.

This advance will provide economic relief to businesses that are currently experiencing a temporary loss of revenue. Funds will be made available within three days of a successful application. This loan advance will not have to be repaid.

Apply for the Loan Advance:
www.bit.ly/2yX6kna

Debt Relief Program

The SBA Debt Relief program will provide a reprieve to small businesses as they overcome the challenges created by this health crisis. Under this program the SBA will pay the principal and interest of new 7(a) loans issued prior to September 27, 2020. The SBA will also pay the principal and interest of current 7(a) loans for a period of six months.

The Short Time Compensation Program

The Short Time Compensation Program helps employers retain their workforce in times of temporary slowdown by encouraging work sharing as an alternative to layoff. To avoid total layoff of some employees, the Short Time Compensation program permits prorated Reemployment Assistance benefits to employees whose work hours and earnings are reduced as part of a Short Time Compensation plan.

DOT EXPANDS, EXTENDS TRUCK WEIGHT ORDER



On March 13, the Florida Department of Transportation announced the suspension of truck weights up to 95,000 pounds for divisible loads on any vehicles transporting emergency equipment, services, supplies, and necessary agricultural commodities for the purpose of COVID-19 Public Health emergency response. Our efforts to expand the order successfully saw the inclusion of timber as a necessary ag commodity.

The order, which originally expired April 12, has been extended through May 8.

Each vehicle carrying this additional weight **MUST** carry a copy of the **updated FDOT Emergency Road Use Permit letter** and a Bridge Restriction Map in the cab of the truck at all times or be able to access them electronically upon request.

The permit letter, emergency order, executive order and applicable map based on your configuration may be obtained here via the FDOT website at www.fdot.gov/maintenance/owod-permit-documents or by contacting the FDOT Permit Office at 850.410.5777.

Many thanks to Governor DeSantis and Commissioner Fried for their support of extending the order.

DHSMV ISSUES EMERGENCY ORDER

Florida's Department of Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles issued an emergency order on April 13. Among other things, the order extends renewal deadlines for expiring driver licenses (CDL) and apportion tags for motor carriers, due to COVID 19.

DOT EXTENDS NATIONWIDE EMERGENCY HOURS-OF-SERVICE WAIVER TO INCLUDE PAPER PRODUCTS AND MANUFACTURING INPUTS



The Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA) also released an extended waiver to the Hours of Service Rule for commercial vehicle drivers transporting materials related to the COVID-19 outbreak in all 50-states and the District of Columbia.

The revised declaration is much more amenable to paper products than the original waiver:“(1) medical supplies and equipment related to the testing, diagnosis and treatment of COVID-19; (2) supplies and equipment necessary for community safety, sanitation, and prevention of community transmission of COVID-19 such as masks, gloves, hand sanitizer, soap and disinfectants; (3) food, paper products and other groceries for emergency restocking of distribution centers or stores; (4) immediate precursor raw materials-such as paper, plastic or alcohol-that are required and to be used for the manufacture of items in categories (1), (2) or (3).”

The waiver, which originally expired April 12, has been extended through May 15.

MEMBERS HELPING MEMBERS

The Association is excited to announce the launch of our Members Helping Members initiative! We are asking our members to share valuable information from their field of expertise to help other members navigate these uncharted waters we're facing with the COVID-19 pandemic and its economic repercussions. You can submit videos, trainings, helpful resources, promotions, incentives and more!

All resources that are shared will be available on a new “Members Helping Members” page on our website. Submitted materials will keep their original branding so everyone will know the source. PDFs are best for written materials and graphics. Videos will be posted on our YouTube channel and linked to on the new MHM webpage. To begin, we will limit it to two submissions per week per contributor.

Please email your contributions or questions to LeeAnn@FLForestry.org

We are looking forward to seeing many positive results from this initiative! We will get through this together!

HOW THE FOREST INDUSTRY SURVIVES DOWN MARKETS, COVID-19 CRISIS

By **Pete Stewart**, CEO, Forest2 Market
Originally Published March 23, 2020
Reprinted with permission

Just two months ago, Americans watched cautiously from a distance as the COVID-19 contagion caused a nearly unimaginable scenario by upending China's entire economy and social structure. It seemed like a situation right out of a dystopian movie set; something both fantastical and horrifying at the same time.

The news that leaked out during early 1Q2020 left plenty of room for misinterpretation, but the global economy forged ahead with a watchful eye on China.

At the same time on the home front, the DJIA was at record levels and unemployment, GDP and nearly every other indicator of economic fitness suggested we were on solid footing. But as a reminder to just how quickly things can change in a global economy, the first cracks in the West appeared in late February when the DJIA lost roughly 2,000 points during a week of trading amid fears of a pandemic.

The cascading reactions that ensued in the wake of that trading week – both economic and otherwise – have truly been unprecedented. The situation has been so dramatic, in fact, that it has resulted in measures that seemed previously inconceivable:

- Global supply chains are fraying under tremendous stress.
- The Dow Jones Industrial Average has shed 35 percent of its value as of this writing amid wildly volatile trading sessions that demonstrated 3,000-point swings.
- Oil prices plummeted to their lowest levels in over 20 years to \$22.80/barrel.
- NCAA and professional sports seasons have been postponed indefinitely or canceled altogether.
- International travel has ceased, and professional conferences and trade shows have been terminated.
- Americans are being asked to “**shelter in place**” to avoid contact with others.
- Millions of workplaces are facing closures that will spawn a massive wave of new unemployment claims in the coming months; **Treasury Secretary Mnuchin** said unemployment could rise to 20 percent without government intervention.
- The FED took its most dramatic step since the Great Recession of 2008 by cutting its target interest rate to near zero.
- The FED has also injected over a trillion dollars into the credit markets to temporarily preserve liquidity; more emergency funds are on the way.
- General anxiety is high and gun/ammunition sales are through the roof as a result. FBI background checks were up 34 percent in February alone, and March numbers will likely be much higher.

The 50-year expansion of globalism has come to a grinding halt in less than a month. As Americans attempt to draw some historical correlations for guidance in such a stressful time, there simply aren't any in recent history from which to glean prudence. We are truly in uncharted waters.

Where Do We Go From Here?

Despite the high-flying economic times we have experienced since 2016, we have all been cautiously awaiting an event that would trigger a change of that good fortune. Maybe not a true bear market or bona fide recession, but a prolonged pullback and moderated contraction that is a natural part of economic cycles.

Many economists have also warned us to pump the brakes over the last several months as the numbers just seemed too unbelievable to sustain. Rather than taking our foot off the gas to meet the caution sign, COVID-19 has now forced us to slam on the brakes.

We can't, however, control what spurs an economic contraction or when it strikes. COVID-19 seemed an unlikely hazard to derail the strongest economy in history, yet we're reeling from its effects after just a few weeks.

There is a silver lining here, however, and it will benefit the forest industry in the long term.

Near-Term Forest Industry Outlook

As a country, America has demonstrated extraordinary levels of resolve throughout its history, and we will emerge on the other side of this pandemic perhaps scathed, but stronger, wiser and better prepared for the future. Of this, I have no doubt.

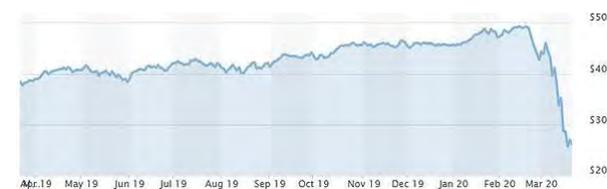
As an industry, the forest sector very much mirrors the steadfast fortitude of American culture. Yes, the sector is subject to some of the vulnerabilities that come with being global in nature, but its supply chains are stable, its markets are entrenched and demand for forest raw materials is strong.

While the current fear is palpable and the adjustments will be temporarily painful, the situation has been a catalyst for the forest industry to rationalize production in the current market. And this is a sign of industry health! Many other industries will not be so fortunate.

Is the forest sector prepared to react to such a cataclysmic event as the COVID-19 pandemic, and is it equipped to scale for new demand when we reach the other side of this unique situation? I would resoundingly answer “YES!” to both questions.

To wit: Homebuilding is on a hiatus for the foreseeable future, per CNBC: “The SPDR S&P Homebuilders ETF (XHB) has seen an outsized decline relative to the S&P 500 year to date as investor worries about a possible economic slowdown tied to the global spread of the coronavirus multiply, with the group falling nearly 24.5% versus the S&P's more than 20.5% loss.”

SPDR S&P Homebuilders ETF: XHB



As a result of the sudden tumble in building activity, many lumber and panel producers recently announced significant near-term curtailments as a reaction to dramatically shifting market signals. **West Fraser** and **Interfor**, for example, are both trimming production amid high levels of uncertainty.

On the other side, however, tissue and towel demand is through the roof, and manufacturers are able to react to entirely different market signals and scale production to meet what surely must be historic levels of demand.

As we continue to navigate through the uncertainty associated with the current pandemic, the U.S. Department of Homeland Security has also identified the wood products industry as an “essential critical infrastructure workforce” in the nation's response to solving the crisis. **Homeland Security** designated “Workers who support the manufacture and distribution of forest products, including, but not limited to timber, paper, and other wood products” as essential.

Again, these are signs of industry vitality and health, not indicators of an industry in a state of structural decline.

We know how this is likely to unfold across the forest supply chain based on demand patterns we saw in 2008: Log consumption will decrease as curtailments take effect, prices will creep down as a reaction to that drop in demand, and the industry will rationalize production in the current market and make adjustments as needed over the next several months.

While there remains a high level of uncertainty surrounding the containment of COVID-19 and a potential vaccine, we are also just months away from a highly contentious presidential election generating plenty of uncertainty on its own. As an industry, we are well prepared to deal with these challenges in the near term, and we are positioned to take advantage of tremendous upside opportunities once we make it through the valley.

As I write this, volatility is moderating across global markets – a good indication that some of the reactionary panic is subsiding. Look for a return to normalcy as a real marker of improvement and entry point for growth prospects.

When Americans return to their ballgames and favorite restaurants, share excitement over The Masters, return to work by the millions and head out of town for summer vacations, we will have returned to the that sense of normalcy – that unwavering dedication to progress that so defines the American spirit.

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