

## Business Advice During COVID-19

TCOG facilitates economic webinar for local businesses and cities

SHERMAN, MAY 15, 2020 – The Community and Economic Development program at Texoma Council of Governments (TCOG) hosted an informative presentation earlier this week for area cities and businesses on ways to help our communities recover from the economic impacts of COVID-19. Guest speakers included statewide and regional economic development experts who offered suggestions for cities on ways to create opportunity for small businesses and industries reeling from the COVID-19 shutdowns. This was the second COVID-19 webinar in TCOG's 2020 City Series.

"The economic vitality of our region is critical in recovering from the setbacks of the COVID-19 crisis," stated Sean Norton, TCOG's Public Information & Media Manager. "It certainly isn't going to be easy, but by providing a venue for cities and businesses to directly communicate with and hear from economic development experts we hope to mitigate the length of time it takes for full recovery."

Featured speaker was Jeff Moseley, former head of Economic Development and Tourism for the State of Texas, advisor to the Governor's office, and current CEO of Texas Association of Business, Texas' largest business association. Moseley spoke on funding updates, health concerns about returning to work, statewide economic recovery projections and, more broadly, investing in Texas. He also highlighted legislation from the past and proposed measures that could help the efforts of recovery.

Moseley offered one real glimmer of hope in his prognosis for the future: some experts believe our recovery could be a V-curve bounce back. This V-curve would represent a quick and strong recovery once we get through the pandemic due to the strong business environment Texas has cultivated for many years.

Regional experts also spoke during the webinar including Audrey Schroyer of the Gainesville Economic Development Corporation (GEDC), William Myers of Denison Development Alliance (DDA), and Stephen Filipowicz of Bonham Economic Development Corporation (BEDCO). These speakers discussed initiatives introduced in their own communities, as well as how they are helping in recovery.

Schroyer shared community efforts put in place for communicating up-to-date information to citizens and the business community, as well as best Business Retention and Expansion (BRE) program practices during these difficult times. Schroyer also shared her perspective on how economic development corporations (EDCs) and communities must be proactive, creative and flexible in moving forward with respect to programming, strategic planning and budgeting.

Myers spoke of Denison Mayor Janet Gott's effort to maintain communication with state and federal officials in addition to keeping area residents and businesses informed. Additionally, Myers shared information about the Denison Development Foundation Small Business Emergency Loan program ([www.denisontx.org/apply](http://www.denisontx.org/apply)) and the City of Denison's "*Reopening Denison*" information campaign. For more information on this information campaign, visit [www.discoverdenison.com](http://www.discoverdenison.com). Myers also urged communities to increase Business Recruitment & Expansion Program efforts as well as encouraging businesses to establish online presence and e-commerce capabilities.

Filipowicz spoke of business grants and loans created specifically for businesses within the City of Bonham. BEDCO Emergency Assistance (EA) Round #1 grants, now finished, issued \$1,600 grants to 31 eligible Bonham businesses totaling \$49,600. Filipowicz also introduced the EA Round #2. This second round of funding sets aside \$150,000 in funds for loans at a 0% APR for eligible, creditworthy Bonham businesses. Individual loans may not exceed \$10,000 per applicant and must be repaid

within forty-eight (48) months. Fact sheets and application information is now available on BEDCO's Facebook page at [www.facebook.com/bonecodev](https://www.facebook.com/bonecodev).

Catherine Krantz, TCOG's Community & Economic Development planner, also took an opportunity during the webinar to announce that the Texoma Economic Development District will soon be launching a new website replete with comprehensive datasets designed for small businesses and entrepreneurs.

"This new software platform will provide business owners access to a vast wealth of data and very specialized and individualized market research to help them identify opportunities and insights about their business and the region," stated Krantz.

On May 6, TCOG hosted a webinar on COVID-19 & funding opportunities presented by Antero Group and Tai Ginsberg and Associates in which a comprehensive review of additional funding available to individuals and businesses through government emergency funds and COVID-19 stimulus initiatives was presented. Recordings of these webinars will soon be available on TCOG's website ([www.tcog.com](http://www.tcog.com)).

"The presenters of these webinars facilitated by TCOG were helpful, informative and, ultimately, optimistic about prospects within the Texoma region," remarked Krantz. "There are plenty of opportunities available to make best of our current economic situation locally in order to recover from the pandemic."

Business owners wanting additional resources on funding opportunities or technical assistance are encouraged to reach out to the Grayson Small Business Development Center (SBDC) at [www.graysonsbdc.org](http://www.graysonsbdc.org). For more information about the presenters and programs, please contact Catherine Krantz by email at [ckrantz@tcog.com](mailto:ckrantz@tcog.com).

The Texoma Council of Governments is a voluntary association of the local governments in Cooke, Fannin, and Grayson Counties. Established in 1968, the Texoma Council of Governments promotes economy and efficiency in the coordinated planning and development of the tri-county region through its community and economic development activities. Either directly, or through contractors, the Council provides housing, utility assistance, and weatherization services for low-income citizens in the region and assists the elderly through a variety of Area Agency on Aging programs. The Council also facilitates the delivery of grant funding for homeland security and criminal justice.

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**For Additional Information Contact:**

Molly Guard  
(903) 893-2161 ext. 3527  
[mguard@tcog.com](mailto:mguard@tcog.com)

**For Statements or Interviews Contact:**

Eric M. Bridges  
(903) 813-3514  
[ebridges@tcog.com](mailto:ebridges@tcog.com)

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Texoma Council of Governments | Eric M. Bridges, *Executive Director* | Honorable Jason Brinkley, *President, Governing Board*