



ABILENE CHAMBER

DAILY BUSINESS BRIEF

Skimming the daily updates for your business so you don't have to.

ABILENE LETTER REQUESTING MORE COVID-19 AUTHORITY GATHERS SUPPORT

Abilene officials' plan to send Governor Abbott a letter requesting that local authorities be given greater control over implementing COVID-19 restrictions is gathering broader support. Work is set to resume this week on a letter to Governor Greg Abbott requesting that Abilene be given the authority to determine how to enforce his most recent COVID-19 Executive Order, known as GA 29. It's the order that requires Texans in counties with more than 20 active coronavirus cases to wear face coverings in public. It also closed establishments that make at least 51% of their profits from alcohol sales.

Abilene Chamber of Commerce President Doug Peters says while he understands the Governor's concern that the alcohol reduced inhibitions and helped the virus spread at bars, he wants all local businesses to have a chance of surviving the effects of COVID-19. "We still think that for bars to be singled out, restaurants to still be able to function, there needs to be a level playing field," Peters said. "We go back to personal responsibility and individual choice."

During his visit last week, U.S. Congressman Jodey Arrington said he thinks statewide mandates should be reserved for the most extreme scenarios, and that he thinks the communities he represents, from Abilene to Lubbock, are managing their capacity well. "The decisions on those protocols should be left up to private citizens, to business owners, and to local leaders," Arrington said.

State Representative Stan Lambert has said he will endorse the letter. In an email Lambert said he's proud of the city council's steps, and that he fully supports local control and the City of Abilene's resolution asking for decision making authority in reopening all local businesses.

The city council approved the plan to draft a letter at their last meeting and hope to have something ready to vote on at this week's meeting. Council members Shane Price, Jack Rentz, Weldon Hurt and Donna Albus have said they will vote in favor of the letter, which needs four votes to pass. Councilman Price says the letter could be ready to send by the end of the week. (Source: KACU)

TEXAS GAS PRICES UP A FRACTION OF A CENT FROM LAST WEEK

AAA on Thursday reported that the average price of a gallon of regular unleaded gasoline in Texas increased 0.3 cents last week, to \$1.874.

The nationwide average increase 0.8 cents from last week, to \$2.183 per gallon.

[Read more.](#)

GOVERNOR ABBOTT DIRECTS TWC TO APPLY FOR FEDERAL LOST WAGE ASSISTANCE FUNDS

Governor Greg Abbott [announced](#) that the Texas Workforce Commission has applied for additional unemployment benefit funding made available through President Trump's [Lost Wage Assistance Executive Order](#). If granted, this funding will provide an additional \$300 per week in benefits for qualifying Texans receiving unemployment benefits. This Executive Order provides \$300 a week in additional unemployment payments to claimants eligible for more than \$100 of certain state unemployment benefits who are experiencing unemployment resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic.

BUSINESS CONFIDENCE REBOUNDS TO PRE-PANDEMIC LEVEL

Business investment is a key factor driving economic growth. Unfortunately, business investment has been declining recently, even before the pandemic. Getting businesses to invest again will be important for recovery from the recession and after.

Business investment had been growing slowly in the second and third quarter of 2019, but then fell in the fourth quarter. It continued declining in the first and second quarter this year—significantly by more than 7% in the second quarter. This was the first time it had fallen three consecutive quarters since late 2007 and early 2008, during the Great Recession.



The drop in investment tracks an overall decline in business confidence since late 2018 and through late 2019. It was improving in early 2020, before the pandemic struck. Business confidence has since rebounded to where it was before the Great Pause of the economy.

Big picture: Businesses crave certainty. It allows them to plan long-term and make investments to make those plans a reality. During the time when confidence was falling sharply, the global trade war was escalating, especially with China. This was causing businesses to be uncertain about the future. Confidence only rebounded when the U.S. and China paused the trade war in late 2019.

What's needed: Businesses will invest more when their confidence is strong. The end of the pandemic will help with that, of course. But so too will a stable policy environment on

the trade front. A stable policy environment in other areas, such as tax and spending, would also help.

—Curtis Dubay, Senior Economist, U.S. Chamber of Commerce

WHAT WE'RE READING

Abilene's Premiere, Cinemark at mall, Paramount movie theaters reopening

Premiere Lux Cine 10 at the Mall of Abilene and Cinemark Abilene and XD reopened Friday, and the downtown Paramount Theatre followed on Saturday.

[Read more.](#)

Abilene Christian University breaks ground on new residence hall

Abilene Christian University students began a new school year, and a new residence hall project has launched as well, with a groundbreaking Saturday on East North 16th Street.

[Read more.](#)

You don't want to miss these upcoming event for your business.

8/26 OPERATING A SOCIALLY DISTANT BUSINESS Join us this Wednesday, August 26 at 2:00 pm ET for the next episode of our virtual series from CO—, an audience-driven discussion designed specifically for the small business community, hosted in partnership with Chase for Business and the Jefferson Chamber of Commerce. [Register here.](#)

AUG 26: WOMAN OWNED SMALL BUSINESS (WOSB) & EDWOSB TOO

Join Northwest Texas PTAC, Program Manager Rich Lyles as he provides you with a general understanding of how the WOSB & the EDWOSB Program works. You'll learn about the benefits of being certified and the eligibility criteria required for certification. We'll also cover the recent (very significant) changes to the program, and we'll discuss the current free certification system that went online July 15th, 2020. [Register here.](#)

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