

WSU-Pullman Town Hall – April 16

ADAM LINCOLN: Well, good morning. My name's Adam Lincoln. I'm the city administrator for the city of Pullman. We're here today to present a town gown town hall, which is a little bit different from the previous town halls that you've all been participating in with Washington State University. Really grateful to the university for helping facilitate this for us this morning.

The way this will work is-- the way this will work is we'll ask some questions about what's going on in the community and get the city's perspective as well as the university's perspective. And we've got three panelists today who I'll give brief intros, and then they can go ahead and talk a little bit about what their role has been in the COVID updates so far.

First, I'd like to introduce President Schulz. Kirk Schulz is nearing the end of his fourth year as president of WSU. President Schulz's leadership has made a remarkable impact on WSU statewide system. The milestones that he's achieved under his leadership include record student enrollment, record research and development expenditures, and continued growth of the College of Medicine, which admitted its third class of first year students this fall.

Next up will be Mayor Glenn Johnson, who's in his fifth term as mayor. He's the CEO for the city of Pullman and is well known as the voice of the Cougs.

And third up, we'll have Chief of Police Gary Jenkins, who's also the city's emergency manager. He's been a career police officer who spent his first part of his career in California, and then decided that he wanted to spend more time in beautiful Pullman, and come up and work with us up here. So we're very fortunate that he's spent over a decade now with the City of Pullman Police Department.

So with that, I'll send it over to Kirk Schulz for brief remarks to introduce.

KIRK SCHULZ: Well, good morning, everybody, and thank you for joining us today for our community town hall. I've had the opportunity to do other town halls with WSU faculty, staff, students, parents, anybody who is interested in kind of joining in. And just a couple of things-- first, I continue to be proud of our faculty and staff and students at WSU. It's unprecedented to think about going from in-person to online in such a short period of time.

And as I visit with our faculty, with our staff, with some of our students, with leadership across the system, it's amazing how smooth it's gone. And we just want to continue to make sure that our students, WSU students, regardless of location, have that opportunity to finish up their classwork in a timely fashion and either graduate or stay on track to graduate. And that's really been of paramount importance.

The other part of this, though, that I think we're all thinking about is, at first, when we all stayed at home, practiced social distancing, did all those things that we needed to for a few weeks, I

think everybody was very unified that that's an important thing to do. My most recent conversations, both internally at WSU, with Governor Inslee, and others, have been, how do we get things restarted?

How do we go back to more in-person types of gatherings? How do we get our restaurants back open, our construction back going? How do we kind of restart our economy, but do it in a way that means that we don't have another lapse come in six weeks, that we practice and use the expertise of our health care and community health experts to make sure we do it in a reasonable way?

But I know our business community in Pullman is hurting. We're used to seeing students, faculty, and staff around and in our businesses. And I'm committed to do everything we can as a university to assist the business community in recovering and getting back into business, but doing it in a way that's healthy for our patrons, healthy for our faculty, staff, and students, healthy for our citizens, and committed to doing that as rapidly as practically possible.

So I look forward, Adam, to responding to the multitude of questions that you got, and we're here together. We're Pullman proud, and we want to make sure we're doing everything we can as a university to help our community not just recover, but thrive and continue to be one of the best small college towns in the nation.

ADAM LINCOLN: Thank you, President Schulz, and thank you for those really great remarks. Next up, Mayor Johnson.

GLENN JOHNSON: And Kirk, thank you so much for trying to help our business community as well. And we definitely appreciate that so much. This was the week that we were actually going to give our state of the city address, and I know next month, you would have given your state of the university address. But that was a time for us to tell everybody how great things were going. That was the plan. And obviously, things got changed.

Yes, we've had some good things going on. SEL is going to build their event center even larger than before. Lincoln Middle School is going ahead. We're going to have a new Hampton Inn coming in right next to Holiday Inn Express, and that's the same management company working there. Our recreation staff is now in their building, our new city hall complex, our campus. We're hoping to be at City Hall maybe in July, our new city hall. So we've had a lot of positives going around.

And then, of course, COVID-19 hit. And that hit all our businesses, which then hit all of our revenue as far as retail sales tax is concerned. And then you're working right now is just, as Kirk mentioned earlier, we're trying to help our business community as well get going. And I've been on the phone and on emails with the governor's staff trying to encourage retail construction to go-- I mean with any kind of commercial construction, residential construction. I sent off a note last night about the RPM car wash here in town.

I mean you talk about social distancing. You're in your truck when you're going through that. You're certainly not meeting with people. And I said, you know, I said that seems logical. And I'm thinking that, perhaps, they'll get to the point where we'll see stratified entry back into the business community, and we're hoping for that, any kind of sign, because every one of us need to have the businesses going again.

And so I think one of the jobs we have as mayor, the same way as president of the university, is to be an advocate and try and get those words out to the governor's staff. Same thing with the hospital-- we should be doing elective surgeries right now. I know they did it originally to save all the PPEs, the personal protective equipment. But we don't have any COVID cases at the hospital. And I think elective surgeries would be something that they could help for the revenue point, because they're already looking at maybe a \$10 million hit with what's going on and how they're trying to operate their hospital.

As far as the city is concerned, as soon as this was hitting, long before the federal government took some kind of steps, we were already taking a look at our budget very hard. And we're still looking at it. We've got about eight meetings tomorrow and some more meetings again next week. We've already had meetings with our department staff, looking at the capital improvement budget, what can we save, what we don't need right now. We've had to lay off, obviously, some people in the recreation staff. It affects the aquatic center. The library is closed down right now. We're hoping to get that back. I'm actually reading to kids right now, storytime with Mayor Johnson. We're doing those kinds of things.

Our transit is now down on the summer schedule. I'll tell you how responsive the city is right now. I sent a note. I had a complaint from a resident who said, you know, I'm hearing buses going by late at night, , I'm not seeing anybody on board. And so I sent a note off to Wayne Thompson, our transit manager. And he said, well, here's this case. We only have two buses running late at night, and they happen to go by the grocery stores, which is needed. They actually go by the hospital, so I had a chance to communicate that back to the residents who complained.

And Wayne was so nice to say, well, I can start-- as of tomorrow, we can run our hybrid buses at night, and that'll be quieter. I'm going like, boy, that talk about really meeting residential demands-- we did it. So these are the kinds of things that are going on with the city right now. And Kirk, I've just got to compliment you again for the work that you did. I know you weren't even told you had a deficit when you came here, and you immediately addressed that issue. You had it under the-- you had it done, and then all this COVID-19 hit.

But the fact that you've got people on board taking 5% cuts on their salary, and it's really great to see our two new coaches, our highest paid coaches in terms of Kyle Smith and Nick Rolovich actually taking a cut and being part of the team. That was really important to see.

This is the time for us-- we are optimists, Kirk, you and I. You can only be a leader being an optimist. You know it's going to get better. I mean I'd hate to be a pessimist and be a leader

right now, because they're going to be down the tubes. So we are optimists. We know things will get better. And it's just a joy working with you.

ADAM LINCOLN: Thank you, Mayor Johnson, for those remarks as well. Next, we'll have our city's emergency manager and police chief, Gary Jenkins.

GARY JENKINS: Thank you, Adam, and good morning, everyone. You know operating under this current COVID-19 environment is really unprecedented in my 40-m plus law enforcement career. But what I have to say is what I've seen so far, I've been impressed with the response and flexibility of our community, as well as our first responders, police and fire, and our health care community.

We're seeing that the Pullman community is doing their part to flatten the COVID-19 curve by complying with the governor's proclamations. And we certainly understand the impact that it's had on all of our daily lives and even livelihoods here in the community. So our approach has been-- to proclamation enforcement has been education and in warning. And that approach, we've found, has been very successful in our community in achieving voluntary compliance.

I think the main message I want to get out right now is Pullman police officers are still out there patrolling. We are there for our community, and we'll continue to be there for our community. So back to you, Adam.

ADAM LINCOLN: Thank you, Chief Jenkins. So the way this will work is we've got a few questions that were submitted in advance, and we'll start with those. But we've also got the chat panel available for anyone who's watching on the YouTube channel to be able to submit questions. So we'd encourage anybody who has a question to go ahead and submit it there. We're monitoring that, and we'll try and get those questions in throughout the hour.

So the first question's for Mayor Johnson. What have been the primary impacts to the city, and what operations have been impacted specifically? What would need to happen for residents to be able to safely access things like the playgrounds and the aquatic center and the library?

GLENN JOHNSON: Well, the playground was one of the ones that we were really worried about right at the beginning, because you're out there in the outdoors. We are trying to encourage that a little bit, just not grouping together. And yet trying to keep all your playground equipment safe, away from the virus, is very, very tough. We just can't-- we just don't have a staff that can do that, that can wipe down everything with Lysol every 30 minutes or something like that.

So we had to put, basically, tape around the playground area, because we can't use that. We have some people out playing Frisbee golf, and they're certainly socially distanced. There's no issue there. The rec staff was hit right away because of the aquatic center and some of the things that came down from the governor's staff.

And again, what we're doing is we're following the governor's staff. The governor's staff has been working very hard with the Department of Health. I know most of us are on calls with the governor's staff and Department of Health at least couple of times a week. I've got another meeting with the governor's staff tomorrow at 4 o'clock. That's when we have some Eastern Washington mayors get on.

And, again, it's a chance for us to try and advocate to see if we can get some other things going. But transit was obviously hit hard, because normally we would have a full schedule of students. We don't have that right now, so we had to lay off some of our transit workers. So that was impacted.

We have-- parks was closed down a little bit. They're busy, because they also have government buildings that they do. But anyone that could work from home, we immediately went to that mode. There's a lot of things we have to do at City Hall. There's some paperwork there. There's some documents that you cannot take out of City Hall. It has to be in a secure area, just like WSU has the same thing. So there are some things that have to be done there.

But our police and fire have really stepped up. We've had emergency meetings with Gary one time every day during the week, and we went to three days a week, and we're now on it as needed. Just hearing about some of the issues they have-- I mean we had to step up and make sure that we had hotels secured. So if any of our firefighters or police officers were exposed to the virus, again, the testing is taking two to three days to get back. They didn't want to make sure they expose their family to it, so we had to put them up in a hotel. And so we had officers that were in quarantine. We had definitely a couple of firefighters that way.

Fortunately, there's no one in quarantine right now. But these are some of the things that we've been dealing with as a city, knowing full well that the revenue stream is really down in the dumps right now. So we're trying to do the best we can to operate a city, making sure that we have everything people need, at the same time, knowing you don't have a revenue to cover it.

ADAM LINCOLN: Thank you, Mayor. I think there's certainly a lot of uncertainty right now, and trying to have some normalcy with how we operate and having people work from home has been a great example of how we've been nimble and trying to make things happen. President Schulz, I think one of the big things that came up recently has been sort of the uncertainty about fall semester. And people are really wondering about, what's that going to look like? And I know you don't have a crystal ball, and if you do, please share it with us.

But I think that's one of the areas where we're just really trying to find some information out is, what do you think fall semester is going to look like? What might be some things that we should be looking for? And just kind of what are you seeing out there for coming up in the school year that'll be happening in just a few short months?

KIRK SCHULZ: Yeah, I think if I had that wonderful crystal ball, boy, I'd be looking at it every day. None of us know exactly what things are going to look like. We already made the decision, as many of our colleagues in the community are aware, that our summer school classes were going to be online.

Now, in addition to summer school classes, we also have a lot of other types of things that we do on campus and in the community during the summer and including live sessions and some of those things. And we're going to do a kind of a rolling, month by month analysis of what we can do, when we can get in-person things going. And I think most people can appreciate there's no switch that you just flip where you go from online experiences to, all of a sudden, back into the classroom type of things. We have to ramp back up and make sure that we're doing that in a safe way.

Some universities out there have already-- are starting to make these decisions about fall semester. And I just want to tell the community, right now, we are planning on in-person classes for the fall semester. Now does that mean we have to put some social distancing in place and use some online experiences to supplement in-person instruction and things like that? We don't know what that's going to look like, and we're going to have a group planning on that. But we fully expect to have students in the dorms and apartments, be back around.

And there are just some things that we can do really well online. There are some things-- for example, one on one music instruction. Some of our fine arts-related types of classes, some of the research that we're doing is inherently in person, and we need to find good ways to continue to be able to do that. So will it look like everything looked like in November? I don't think so. And I'm not referring to snow on the ground.

I do think that we will have students, faculty, and staff back around, interacting, and I think a lot of it is going to be that as we reopen things, there will be probably some mandates put in place. If people are sick, they need to stay at home and self-quarantine and these types of things. And a lot of it is going to depend on all of us and our colleagues abiding by those things. And if all of a sudden, people just start grouping together in massive groups and ignoring some of the kind of possible solutions, I think we could put ourselves back in a hurtful situation. So it's going to be important for our citizens, for our students, for faculty and staff to really be mindful in the fall moving ahead.

But the last thing I'll mention on this, Adam, is we did postpone our in-person graduation until August. And we looked at the calendar very carefully. We did not want to put that over the Lentil Festival or something else. And I realized that our hotels, our restaurants, so many of our businesses-- those weekends, like moms weekend and graduation weekend, are high revenue weekends. So we wanted to find a weekend that maybe was-- you know, we thought would be good for our families, but also was one that probably was a little slower in Pullman so that, hopefully, by having an influx of people into our restaurants and businesses and in town, we can give people a little shot in the arm.

And so we want to continue to be smart in the way we do things, but in-person instruction in some format is what we're planning on. And we're going to aggressively work to do that in a way that's healthy for our faculty, staff, and students.

ADAM LINCOLN: Thanks, Kirk. All right, Chief Jenkins, I think one of the things that's on people's mind is, what's enforcement kind of looking like right now? And you keep a lot of statistics, so maybe you can sort of talk about what March in 2019 looked like for your folks versus what 2020 is looking like so far now that we're moving beyond into April. You've had some stats.

GARY JENKINS: Sure, well, obviously, the governor's proclamation has had an impact on activity in the community. And so it's impacted our calls as well. Looking at just the past three weeks since the stay home, stay healthy proclamation was issued, our calls are down about 43% compared to the same time last year. We had, last year, during this last three-week period, we had 890 calls, and this past three weeks, we've had about 503 calls. So those are down.

You know, I think one issue that I've heard regularly come up nationwide is the impact on domestic violence. And what we're seeing is, compared to last year at this time, we're a little bit up. But when we compare it to 2017 and 2018, we're actually down. So I don't think we've seen really any type of change in our domestic violence calls as a result of the governor's proclamation. So that's good news.

Looking at our top 10 calls for service, again, the past three weeks compared to the same time last year, really not a lot of change. Our top calls are typically domestic and dispute, disorderly type calls, animal-related, noise complaints, suspicious activity, and welfare checks-- those are typically our top calls, and those remain our top calls. The only real change we've seen is parking problems were being reported, which is probably anticipated. So that's where we are as far as our calls for service.

ADAM LINCOLN: Thanks, Gary.

GLENN JOHNSON: Amazing you've had parking issues when I can drive down the street at 3 o'clock in the afternoon and see hardly any cars there, unfortunately. And the other thing that you're doing, too, Gary, is that the shifts at one time used to always overlap. And because of COVID-19, you've actually split that where they're not overlapping anymore.

GARY JENKINS: Right, sure, internally, we're doing a lot of things to try to keep our staff healthy and safe. And Mayor, that's one of the things that we have done is we've gone to 12-hour schedules in our patrol and code enforcement shifts so that we don't have overlap. You know, typically, it's good to have that overlap and have that interchange and exchange of information. We're still exchanging information but in a different way to try to avoid personal contact between our staff as much as possible, so we can keep them healthy.

ADAM LINCOLN: Thank you. Some of the questions that are coming in have to do with the authority that the governor has versus the authority that the city has. I'll just weigh in really

quickly and just say that we work really closely with the governor's office, and we don't have the ability to override a statewide declaration of emergency. We work really closely with them. And keep an eye on how things are going. We certainly encourage them to take a look at Eastern Washington. And when it's safe, be able to open up.

Another question that had come in had to do with what's going on with Idaho, and how are we coordinating with them? It's really critical that we work with Idaho, and that's why the two governors, I think, stay in touch really well and make sure that they're kind of coordinating with us and here in Eastern Washington so that we have a better idea of when we can get things back open again.

One of the other questions that had been out there, Mayor Johnson, was there haven't been that many cases that have actually been confirmed in Whitman County. I think we're at 13 right now to date. In light of this, the city-- what has the city been doing the kind of work with the governor's office and the state level to try and make sure that we can move on from stay safe and stay healthy in a-- or stay home and stay healthy in an effective manner.

GLENN JOHNSON: Going back to one of your original points, Mayor Bill Lambert, the mayor of Moscow, and I talk on at least a weekly basis several times a week. So we can communicate what each city is doing, too. And I commended Bill when he actually did the state of emergency before Idaho did, because a number of Pullman people were going over to Moscow restaurants and eating there, just trying to defeat the purpose of what we were doing and stay home and stay healthy here. And I commended him for doing that. And we worked together very closely on our airport, the Pullman-Moscow Regional Airport.

And one of the things of good news, before we answer the other part, the part of the good news was we got \$18 million from the feds on the CARES program. The FAA knows how to move money quickly. We wish the other parts of federal government could move money as quickly as the FAA does. But the best part about that for Kirk and us and all of our budgets, we don't have local match. And that's going to help us get that terminal done. That's really the good news, because we can start working on that. We've got some other federal money coming in, and we don't have to do a local match, thanks to the CARES Act.

As far as communicating with the governor's staff, we're doing with emails. I've sent messages directly to-- matter of fact, Senator Mark Schoesler called me the other day and says, why can't car dealers be on an appointment basis the same way real estate is? So we've made that message. So we are communicating quite a bit, and I could really compliment Adam up in Spokane, who's the governor's Eastern Washington representative. I think, on a daily basis, we're communicating, this giving additional suggestions of what businesses need to be released right now. Let's get going a little bit.

And that's one of the things that we have to worry about as well, because the same thing what Kirk mentioned-- we can't let it go too quickly, because we could have another bounce. And we're concerned about that. And just in case you're wondering where this great virtual

background came from, it came from the WSU Alumni Association. It was on an event. You could actually download it. And thank you for being a great member of the WSU Alumni Association. Look what you get-- the virtual background. Now Kirk, that was a free commercial, OK?

KIRK SCHULZ: Yeah. Thank you. Adam, if I could just also comment. I think during this time, it's been amazing to me and within higher education across the state, all of us are kind of talking back and forth. People are going in and not worrying about state boundaries, community boundaries, on communicating and trying to work together to solve this. If our community thinks that somehow the governor is just simply sitting there going, hey, we just got to stay locked down forever.

Every conversation I have with Governor Inslee and with his team is focused on, hey, we want to get people back to work. We want to get our communities back open as soon as practically possible. And if we think the critique, I might get, a mayor might get, you might get, Glenn-- I mean Gary gets, it's nothing compared to what the governor's getting from citizens across the state.

So I do feel people are really trying to work together. And it's not that-- are we being advocates and trying to beat down some wall? Trust me, everybody is ready to get us back to work. We have one of the most robust economies in the nation in the state of Washington, and we-- the best thing to do to recover is get people back out there and get them working again and allow them to do the things they would like to do.

So as people worry about, what are we doing across the border? What are we doing in Olympia? That communication is going, but boy, I think pretty much everybody's focused around the same thing. And that's getting us back out there in a safe manner as quickly as practically possible.

GLENN JOHNSON: And I was happy to see that the governors from California, Oregon, and Washington are working together, because one size does not fit all. It's the same thing we're trying to talk about with the state of Washington. What's going on on the west side is not necessarily what's going on on the east side. I think we need to make decisions on the basis of what we see over here.

ADAM LINCOLN: I think one of the other key questions that we're getting, Kirk, is surrounding another big event this fall-- well, football. What are we thinking for the football season? It's a big driver for the economy, but we're also very mindful of the fact that it's not really the best for social distancing. At least the tailgating's not. So what do you think there?

KIRK SCHULZ: Yeah, I-- this tends to be something that a lot of folks are spending a lot of time speculating around. We have a great number of our media colleagues that work in the sports area, and this is about the number one thing that people are asking about.

I believe it's really important that we find a way to play football this fall, if at all possible. Now does that mean that you start the season a little bit later or that you have a few games that aren't in front of a full crowd? There are things like that that I think are floating out there, and trust me, people who are concerned about football, you can find an opinion that meets what you would hope to hear from somewhere and Facebook or Twitter or those other places, we are going to continue to work with the Pac-12. We're going to continue to work with other conferences across the country. You can't have the Southeastern Conference playing on a regular schedule and a Pac-12 deciding not to do that or something like that. So we're talking there.

Safety of our student athletes and safety of our fans and our community is going to have to be prevalent. The entire way, intercollegiate athletics, not just a W issue, across the country is budgeted and maintained and funded is really around football. Football is the big driver, so when people just say, well, I think you should just cancel it, and we'll worry about that in '21, that carries with it significant fiscal implications, not just at WSU, but everywhere. And so we want to balance the economic realities, if that's how we fund our athletic programs, with safety for student athletes, our fans, the community members, tailgating, things like that.

So I'm an optimist, unlike Glenn. I think leaders have to be-- I believe we played football this fall. What exactly it's going to look like in terms of crowds and all those things, I'm not sure. But there's a lot of dialogue and discussion. And I would just urge anybody listening to this, like I said, there are people on the extremes, that everything will be fantastic by that time. We'll do it exactly the way we did last season to we're not going to be able to do any organized intercollegiate athletics until '21 or '22. I've read both those extremes, and it's something in the middle.

And I also am very aware of how important those football weekends are to our business community. There's a lot of the people that come in-- parents, friends. They revolve their fall social schedules around how they can be back for Cougar football. So we realize this is not just about the university. It is also about our business community and Pullman-Moscow, the Palouse, all those areas that benefit strongly from successful Cougar football.

Finally, I just want to take this opportunity to compliment Coach Nick Rolovich. Talk about a guy that if you did not know he was a new coach, you would have probably sworn he'd been here for 10 years. He had just been in the community. He's down to earth. He is really focused around building outstanding young men and representing the university incredibly well. And we are fortunate to have attracted him to WSU at this point in time.

And I know our citizens and friends out there have seen a lot of what he's done, but he hadn't even coached a game, and I volunteered to give up some of his salary, give up all his bonuses, which probably guarantees we'll go to the Rose Bowl. But I'm optimistic that we're going to have football in some form or fashion.

GLENN JOHNSON: I'm just hoping the PA announcer doesn't have to wear a mask to do, and that's another. You know, it'd be a little tough. OK. [LAUGHS]

ADAM LINCOLN: Chief Jenkins, one of the questions that's come up has to do with the potential for a resurgence this is fall or this winter. What are you hearing? What are you seeing? And what would be the plan if that does take place?

GARY JENKINS: Well, I haven't heard a lot of information about that. We are meeting regularly with emergency management regionally and throughout the state. I think, really, what we're hearing is there is always the potential for that. I think we've learned a lot these past few weeks, and not just in emergency management and police and fire but city-wide. And so I think we're in a very good position to address issues that come up in any kind of resurgence, and we're well positioned to deal with it.

ADAM LINCOLN: Absolutely. Yeah, I think--

KIRK SCHULZ: Adam, if I could--

ADAM LINCOLN: Go ahead.

KIRK SCHULZ: I was just going to say, one of the things that I, like a lot of my colleagues here, and almost everybody who works at the university works a ton of hours, right? And I just think of the number of times I've not felt good. And I'm like, I'm going to go in there. I'm going to plow through it.

And so many of us kind of adopt that mentality is that I probably shouldn't be at work, but I'm going to be there, because those meetings today are super important. I mentioned this not as much tongue in cheek as people would think is part of us avoiding a resurgence is going to mean if people aren't feeling well, you stay at home, and you stay away from people. And that means if you have that big dinner or you got that big data that evening, you're going to have to say, I just am not going to be able to do that.

And I think we can worry about models. We can worry about testing. We can worry about all that. We're going to have to also, as individuals in the workplace, be disciplined enough that if you're not feeling well, we're going to have to say, you've got to stay home. And that means, as a supervisor, when somebody I work with says, hey, I'm not feeling well. I've got to be home-- I can't be hassling them. I've got to say, hey, that's exactly what you ought to be able to do, and let's make sure we facilitate doing that.

So to me, it's not just what the models look like and what's the curve look like. Are we willing and do we have the self-discipline to change some of our inherent behavior patterns that, to date, have been inconvenient that are going to be a lot more than just inconvenient moving ahead, certainly for the next 12 to 18 months?

ADAM LINCOLN: That's a very good point. I think it's really important to keep up the practices that we're using right now. And it is easy to show up to work, and, oh, I've got the sniffles or a small cough. It is a new day. It is a very unsavory reminder of how we should be handling ourselves, and, thus, we will continue to practice that going forward.

Mayor Johnson, you know, one of the topics that we've been hitting on a lot here has to do with the economy and businesses. Can you talk to some of the supports that are out there for businesses both from the federal level and the state level, please?

GLENN JOHNSON: Well, we'll start with the city level, too, because we have Jennifer Hackman, who's our economic development manager. And part of that job is 50% trying to get businesses in, and the other part is to keep people retained in our area. And I think she's been doing about 95% trying to retain businesses, because one of the things that she's posting on a regular basis every day and sometimes twice a day, and also the chamber of commerce is doing this as well, and that is these are all the different programs that are available to you right now.

We've got them through the federal. We got them through the state level. We're making sure the public knows these are the different instruments you have to stay in business, be able to make payroll, be able to take care of those insurance payments that you have, making sure they know that federal tax deadlines are certainly-- been postponed a little bit-- not property tax, but the other thing.

So anyway, she's really been doing a lot of work in that respect. We just got a good message this morning from John Colton, who is Senator Murray's Eastern Washington representative. And again, working closely with him with the airport, and mentioned that this gave us examples of the new proposals from the federal government that help cities and help communities, because the previous ones basically dealt with very large cities over 500,000. And I kept mentioning-- I said, that money hasn't come down to us. That money isn't helping us right now.

However, there is some federal loan money that's available, and some of the loan presentations. And I know, with all of us, we've gone on all kinds of Zoom presentations at least three or four times a week or more, listening to the federal government, the state government, making sure that our public knows all the different programs that are out there. And again, we're making that available through the city, through our economic development manager. And we're also doing that with the chamber of commerce, letting people know these are the things that are out there to help you stay, obviously, not as good as you've been.

And I mean this is the tough part. I mean I look at-- as mayor in 2008, when we had a recession, OK, we were cutting back. We were not spending money. However, we had a full university at that time. We had businesses running. We had all these things going for us. Even with that, we still had to cut back. Now we have the university down to all virtual. And then we have all these businesses that-- the restaurants that were doing well. The Zeppoz that had a bowling alley and gambling. We had this movie theater going. Those are all stopped right now.

And so that revenue is not coming in to help us right now. So we're trying to do our best as a city to make sure you, as a business, know that these programs are available to you. And I commend Kirk Schulz and his team for saying-- the decisions they've been making is trying to say, OK, how can we help the Pullman community during this time period? Let's have a virtual graduation. That's great. But let's also have an in-person graduation, so maybe we can get some more business going here. And again, making the decisions when you can on the football season.

I mean these are decisions that really will help our business community. And we're here to help the best way we possibly can. And as I mentioned earlier, one of the things my job is as a mayor is to advocate on behalf of these businesses. And I'm making contacts with our federal constituents and making sure that they know what's going on. With our state legislators, the same thing, and the same thing with the governor's office. Most stuff that's coming out the governor's office, that's where I'm communicating.

So we are trying to do our best to try and help our businesses get back at it.

ADAM LINCOLN: Thanks, Glenn. And you can always find the contact information and more information about those plans by going to the City of Pullman's website. We've got a COVID page. There's a couple links on there for connecting you to Jennifer Hackman, who's the city's economic development manager, and direct links to the resources at the state and federal level. She's been doing an excellent job of keeping us in touch with that.

Kirk, a lot of the questions that are coming up have to do with something that's not necessarily in your wheelhouse, but since you have a medical school under you at some point and a really great relationship with our hospital here in Pullman, questions about testing, availability, and making sure that the community is accurately represented by having the testing done-- can you speak to that? That's something that I think a lot of people have a concern about.

KIRK SCHULZ: Yeah, our Vice President for Health Sciences, Daryll DeWald, that many of you in the Pullman area may remember Daryll was our dean of arts and sciences for a number of years in Pullman. Daryll is in consistent and constant communication with Scott Adams, with Pullman Regional Hospital, as well as the governor's office and Admiral Bono and people like that around this whole area of testing. And one of the opportunities that we have is maybe being able to use a diagnostic laboratory in the College of Veterinary Medicine in Pullman to do some testing there.

Now people, I think, realize that you can't just flip a switch. It's not just you have a wet lab, and that's all you need. You have to have the PPE. We have to have all the things in place to do that safely for the people doing the test, as well as making sure we're using appropriate protocols. So we're pivoting right now to do some of those kind of things. We have a lot of support from the governor's office about being able to do more of that local testing. And I think we're working in collaboration with our colleagues here in Pullman on how we can do that.

I will remind everybody, too, that we have not yet graduated our first class of medical doctors. And while I'm proud of the progress, the fantastic progress we've made over three years, we don't have a fully fledged medical school yet. We're almost there. And so sometimes when people say, well, you've got a medical school. Why can't you do X, Y, and Z?

We will graduate, next year in May, our first set of 60 MDs coming out of that program, but we're still in startup mode. And so some of the suggestions that we've heard are fantastic, but we're still trying to build out what that can look like, unlike the vet school, which has been in place for many, many years and has a really full complement of exceptional faculty and staff and students.

ADAM LINCOLN: Thank you for that, Kirk. Yeah, I think it is important to note that they're not through yet. But I think, also equally important that they're going to-- a lot of them are going to have a focus on rural settings like ours, and we're really excited that once they do get through, that they'll come back to Pullman or other rural communities in our area and support us that way. So we're looking forward to that.

GLENN JOHNSON: That's one of the reasons why the hospital is getting its residency program and trying to run-- get funds going for that, because it'd be fantastic to have these doctors coming to Pullman under some fantastic physicians that we have in the city that actually can tell people how you can relate to individuals, and it's not just a number. You actually know the people. This would be great training for our graduates coming out of the Elson S Floyd Medical College. I'll tell you, it'd be fantastic. So that's one of the reasons why the hospital is doing the fundraising for the residency program right now. And we're working in conjunction with the WSU Foundation on that.

ADAM LINCOLN: Chief Jenkins, one of the things as the emergency manager that you're keeping an eye on is the level of PPE that Kirk spoke to a minute ago. You've got your police officers. We've got firefighters. We've got several other versions of first responders in our community. One would be, what are you seeing with that? And two, can you speak a little bit to the importance of not treating the community being open or shut like a light switch, but rather the gradual-- the need for a gradual reopening so that we can kind of handle the pressure should there be some?

GARY JENKINS: Sure. Well, our PPE, personal protective equipment, which for us, for a police department, is our N95 masks and also some eye protection. For fire, they have more protection, surgical gown type equipment. And also, there is a need in the medical community here in Pullman for those things.

And so we work together with Whitman County Emergency Management. One of those boring things that is really boring until you really need it is a comprehensive emergency management plan. And that plan is really a testament to the cooperation and collaboration between Washington State University, the city of Pullman, and Whitman county. So a few years ago, we

developed a joint plan, which really allows us to be able to work much more easily together and share resources much more easily.

And so as a result of that plan, we've had, I think, an easier time with this very difficult situation, in particular with PPE. And so Whitman county has been obtaining PPE for not only our first responders, but also for our health care community as needed. We were a little bit low on the list, because we weren't having the types of cases or the number of volume of cases here on the Eastern Washington [? side ?] as they did on the west side. But those requests are catching up, and we're getting equipment now for health care and first responders.

And you know, as we start lifting restrictions and getting back to whatever our new normal is going to be, it is important to do that by layer. And that's, too, as President Schulz was talking about, was making sure to keep those-- some personal responsibility with social distancing and wearing masks in public when you can't have that social distance. And that's not going to be an on/off switch, as President Schulz said and the mayor has said. We're going to have to just kind of ease out of this.

And if we go back too quickly, I think we are going to definitely see a resurgence. And so we really want to guard against that and do this in a very measured way.

GLENN JOHNSON: Well, you mentioned the different briefings that we go through all the time. I was on a White House briefing yesterday with about 3,000 others. And again, we're dealing with the different departments for Intergovernmental Affairs. And they've mentioned that the federal government stepped up because of the PPE shortage, and instead of normally going by ship coming over here, they have air flights going. And so far, they have had 50 different flights coming in with PPEs. And they think that they should have the numbers in the stockpile back up at least in a couple of weeks. At least that's the last thing I heard.

ADAM LINCOLN: You know, another great reminder that Jennifer Hackman just sent in was that we can also support a lot of our local businesses by purchasing gift cards from them right now. It's a great way to help with their need for cash flow and making sure that they can at least try to stay afloat right now. I think it's critical that if you can try and patronize a business that way, that's a great way to show your support.

Mayor Johnson, I think one of the other things, as we're getting closer to the end here, that people have been asking about are some of the big summer events that we have here in Pullman-- 4th of July, Lentil Festival. Can you talk a little bit about what's the status for some of those, please?

GLENN JOHNSON: Well, I've been chair of the 4th of July committee for about 22 years, and we're going to have a meeting next week, as a matter of fact, talking about it, because when you start taking a look at your finances, and you take a look at, OK, this is a July 4th event, what we're hearing from the feds and from the state, we don't know if we're going to be out of the

woods yet by July 4th. August is looking pretty good right now as far as Lentil Festival is concerned.

But when you start taking a look at your parks and recreation budget, you start taking a look at - the chamber could not have its cabaret this year, which is this big fundraiser. They're going to have it a little bit later. We used that cabaret money in a way to pay for fireworks. And we also use lodging and tax money to help refund the parks and recreation, police, fire, and that fund has gone down, because there's hardly anyone staying in hotels.

So we're going to take a really hard look at 4th of July next week, and knowing that we work with the local restaurants that don't have a margin right now, because all they're doing is takeout. And again, I've done takeout at the local restaurants. I encourage people to do that. You can stand six feet away. We have really appreciated Kirk and Noel Schulz coming to our town, because they really hit the restaurants in this community. Thank you so much. And I'm sure they're doing takeout right now, and we've all done that.

Any way you can to help businesses. And I've got to commend some of the businesses that have really stepped up, including Dissmore's that delivers food free of charge during this time period. And we have other businesses like that that have actually stepped up and said, OK, let me help you out the best way we possibly can. And Sid's Pharmacy-- they deliver pharmacy items, so you don't really have to go there. We've had a lot of businesses that say, OK, well, this is not normal. Like Dissmore's normally charges for delivery, but they said, no, this is an important time. Let's do it. Let's do a free delivery.

So we really appreciate some of the people that have stepped up, and the service clubs as well that have stepped up to try and help the school pantries. The school districts have stepped up as far as the free and reduced food that's available to them. They've got food going out to the people that need it. A lot of people have stepped up. But for summer events, we'll take a-- we'll probably make that decision next week. And we'll see exactly where we're at. But we know that finances are not there.

And then just from a community standpoint, when we've got people that are hurting, they're out of jobs, that are in unemployment lines, with businesses hurting, I hate to spend money to blow it up in 20 minutes when we could use that for other reasons. So that's just my opinion.

KIRK SCHULZ: Adam, one thing-- if we look at our colleagues on the other side of the state in Seattle, Mayor Durkan and some of those folks just opened up. This weekend, we'll have two farmer's markets for the first time in quite a while. And what they're doing is forcing people to be a certain distance apart, monitoring what people coming in, things like that. I think what we have to do is get creative and say, how do we do these things as a community, and how do we do them in a safe way? And the answer can't always be not doing it. The answer also can't be, we're going to do it just like we did in the past and crowd everybody in there.

So I think what happens is, right now, we're still-- a lot of folks are in this mentality of we got to be at home, and we've got to be safe, and I concur with that. I think as we get into May, and stuff starts to open up a little bit again, it's how can we be creative and find a way to do a 4th of July something for the Pullman community that may not be like we did last year, but feels pretty good? How do we do the Lentil Festival, an important thing for our region, not just Pullman, but the region? How do we do that in a way that we still have it? And maybe it feels a little different than it did in the previous year.

I'm optimistic that the best minds get together. We're a practical set of folks in Eastern Washington. I think people will figure out ways to do this. But right now, it's kind of hard to see that. But I can look ahead a month and say, we're going to be out doing things. It's just going to be a little bit different.

ADAM LINCOLN: So speaking of that, how about orientation or a live session? Is there a plan in place for two of those, that are also pretty highly visible events and well attended?

KIRK SCHULZ: Yeah, some of our live sessions we've already decided will be online, not all of them. But we're going to do a rolling set of monthly decisions on that. And I purposely talked to my leadership team and decided we did not want to make an announcement that All Alive would be online at this particular point, because I'm interested in getting people back on the campus and seeing things and figuring out, using that same creative energy, how can we do it in a live session that uses some online tools, but has got people walking through campus seeing our beautiful community, looking in buildings, meeting with faculty and staff, those types of things?

So if people hear things about a live, the first few sessions will be online, just like with summer school. We decided it's prudent to do that, and we're still building that class coming in this fall here and across the system. But later in the summer, we want to make sure that we do some in-person events, if at all possible, and we can do that safely. So we'll do a kind of a rolling month by month analysis there. And like I said, I want people back in town spending money, supporting our businesses, and the way to do that is to have the safe university type of events that are going to attract people from all over the region coming into Pullman.

ADAM LINCOLN: That's a really good point. I think it's essential that we're remaining optimistic about how things will get back going, and I really personally want to commend the city staff who've done a really great job of being nimble. This is a really unprecedented time. I mean I'm really new in my career, obviously, but I think this is the first time most of us here have seen something anything scaled like this.

And I've been really happy with the response, the ability to handle this. And it impacts people in very different ways. The economy side of things, the just day to day working from home-- I've got two young kids. And working at home with them, it's usually I'm getting Zoom bombed by them jumping into the computer screen here.

So while it's fun and entertaining, it can also add to the stress. So I think another thing that's really critical-- and Chief Jenkins has been a big leader on this within the city staff-- has been a really big emphasis on mental health and making sure that people are taking care of themselves during this time, too. So Gary, can you talk a little bit about some of the resources that might be out there and some of the things that you've offered to city employees to kind of help get through times like this in general?

GARY JENKINS: Well, when the proclamation order first came through, we had-- as police department, we have a lot of training that we have throughout the year. And immediately, we had a lot of our training cut, because they were all in-person classes. And quickly, we had to transition to online formats. And a lot of the training providers have done the same to accommodate that. And so there is-- I know we're regularly monitoring what's available online for resources, training, and information. And we're pushing that out to our staff.

We're also pushing some information out through social media to the community as well. So it's really just doing a little bit of searching and monitoring and finding out what's out there. And really, there's just a lot of information available through online resources. We're doing a lot of meeting, of course, with online with Zoom and our resource. We're figuring out new ways of getting business done.

And as you said, Adam, about being nimble and flexible, I'm really proud of all the city employees and, particularly, police and fire for really rolling with this and figuring out as we go, because it's been really tough. And there's a lot of gray areas involved as well that we're trying to figure out. And so anyway, I'm really proud of our staff in that way.

GLENN JOHNSON: I think all of us from a management standpoint are very pleased the way our city staff has been working so well together. Department heads all pitched in, just like Adam said. I think people have gone to the thesaurus more than they ever had before trying to find other words for "unprecedented," "unparalleled," other kinds of names that they can use, other kinds of adjectives just to describe this time period.

One thing, Kirk, since you're on the line with us, and one of our big concerns, because we've talked about federal and state grants. And it's all tied to that census. And right now, we don't have the students here, when, usually, April is here, and we count them. And the census numbers are so important to the university, so important for the city. I'm hoping that we can get a joint message out to the student body to make sure they fill out their census, to make sure that we get those numbers that we desperately all need.

KIRK SCHULZ: Yeah, Glenn, we're happy to work with you on that. And obviously, we know it's important for our area and our success and all of our campus locations. So anyway, let's figure out a good way to do that, because I think that's important. And hopefully everybody on the call has filled out their census forms and sent those in. And it's not just our students.

It's making sure everybody-- when they get that form, we did the same thing most people did. We stuck it in a pile for a little while, and I remember Noel, one evening, sitting down and saying, we just got to get this done. And so let's all, also, ourselves make sure we take the time to do that. But we'll encourage our students as well.

GLENN JOHNSON: It's not that big a deal. It's like five minutes worth. I mean you're filling it out. You're going like, OK, fine. That's taken care of. You've done your thing, and again, the cities, the university, we all depend on federal money. And it all comes down to that. They take a look at those numbers and make sure that we have those numbers and everybody counted. So thank you very much for doing your part.

ADAM LINCOLN: Yeah, I'll echo that. The census is a really critical thing for us, and it's remarkably easy to get it filled out. I think about five minutes is a pretty good way to put it. It's easy, and it's really impactful. So it looks like we're getting pretty close to the end of our time here, end of the hour. I want to just kind of go through and just get final comments from all of you and start with Chief Jenkins.

GARY JENKINS: I'll just reiterate what I've already said. First of all, thank you to the community for how you've responded to the COVID-19 issue and being responsible and helping us flatten the curve. It's been extremely noticeable and really great to see. And then also, just to my staff at the police department and at the fire department, they're doing an incredible job. A shout out to them, really just rolling with this. And as Glenn was saying earlier, at first, there were changes every hour. And then it became changes every day. And now it's kind of flattening out a little bit.

But there was a lot to deal with there initially and a lot of gray area. My staff's put in a position of enforcing a proclamation in a situation we haven't really had to deal with before. And so they're struggling with that, and they've done a really great job with that. And so thank you to the community. Thank you to my staff and city staff.

GLENN JOHNSON: And I'll just add this thank you in the community for saying-- when you can take a look at the streets, and yes, I know from a business perspective, it doesn't look good. But from a standpoint of staying home and staying healthy, that's what we need right now and not to impact our hospitals. We've got a great medical staff here. We just want to make sure that we can even the curve as best we possibly can.

And I just want to commend our citizens for doing that, stepping up. They've actually volunteered to make masks for the police department, for various people working for city hall. We've appreciated all that as well. And they've given us some good suggestions, too. And we've certainly welcomed that. You can email me directly. You can email the council members. Our council has stepped up during this time period as well. So we just want to thank everybody for working.

And again, I just want to commend Kirk Schulz and the leadership team at WSU, because we've had some great communications with the Town Gown Collaborative. And working through this has been-- actually, you can see that cooperation. We know what we can do together. And this is a together thing for everybody, and we can all do it, and we can all get through it.

ADAM LINCOLN: Thanks, Glenn. Kirk, how about your final thoughts here?

KIRK SCHULZ: Well, I just believe we have a very resilient community. We've got an incredibly creative set of business leaders in town. We've got fantastic people at the university. Everybody working together, I think, is what's going to be critical doing this. And I want to make sure that WSU is seen as a key positive partner for the Pullman community. It's been that way for decades. We got to continue to make sure we do that.

We also-- leadership does matter in these times, and we are incredibly fortunate to have Glenn, who's been mayor for a long time, there helping lead that. And folks, I know Gary Jenkins can come across as kind of serious, but I've been around Gary a lot. We are lucky to have Chief Jenkins in our community leading these efforts at these times as well. So let's hang in there together. We're going to get through this. It'll be different when we're done, but on the other hand, I'm optimistic enough to always think it's going to be better. So thank you, and go Cougs.

ADAM LINCOLN: I hear that Gary's a blast on a trip to Samoa, but that's just the rumor. So I really got to thank everyone who participated on our panel today, and really appreciate you and your time. I know that you're all really busy, and it's essential to help get the message out during these times. And thank you, also, to everyone who participated online. There were a lot of great comments that were submitted, so thank you. We'll continue to be Pullman proud and absolutely echo that. Go Cougs.