

In The Matter Of:
DeKalb County COVID-19 Task Force Meeting

Audio Transcription
April 1, 2020

Regency-Brentano, Inc.
13 Corporate Square
Suite 140
Atlanta, Georgia 30329
404.321.3333



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DEKALB COUNTY COVID-19 TASK FORCE MEETING

APRIL 1, 2020

DEKALB COUNTY

TELEPHONIC MEETING

**REGENCY-BRENTANO, INC.
13 Corporate Square
Suite 140
Atlanta, Georgia 30329
(404) 321-3333**

Regency-Brentano, Inc.

1 Mr. Michael Thurmond, DeKalb County CEO
2 Mr. Steve Bradshaw, Presiding Officer, DeKalb County
Board of Commissioners
3 Dr. Sandra Ford
4 Dr. David Ross, Task Force for Global Health
5 Dr. Patrick O'Carroll, Task Force for Global Health
6 Ms. Lorraine Cochran-Johnson, Commissioner
7 Ms. LeAnne Levitan, former DeKalb County CEO
8 Ms. Ramona Tyson, Interim Superintendent
9 Chief Joseph Cox
10 Mr. Jack Lumpkin, Public Safety Director
11 Sheriff Melody Maddox
12 Ms. Karla Drenner, House Chairwoman
13 Mr. Emanuel Jones, Senate Chairman
14 Mr. John Ernst, Mayor of Brookhaven
15 Ms. Melanie Hammet, Mayor of Pine Lake
16 Mr. Jeff Parker, MARTA CEO
17 Ms. Ann Hanlon, President of Perimeter CID
18 Mr. Emory Morsberger, President of Metro South CID
19 Mr. Dorian DeBarr, Interim Director, DeKalb Development
20 Authority
21 Mr. Alan Goodman, President, Brookhaven Chamber
22 Mr. Kenneth Coleman, Interim President, DeKalb Chamber
23 Mr. Lamar Smith, DeKalb DFACS Director
24 Mr. Larry Johnson, District 3
25 Mr. Jack Williams, DeKalb County COO

1 Chief Judge Asha Jackson

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1 CEO THURMOND: ...defeat the spread of this
2 insidious disease that's ravaging our county,
3 our state, our nation, and literally all of
4 humankind.

5 But before I go further, I would like to
6 invite a good friend and an outstanding public
7 servant, our presiding officer of the Board of
8 Commissioners, Commissioner Steve Bradshaw, to
9 also offer some words of welcome on behalf of
10 our Board of Commissioners.

11 MR. BRADSHAW: Yes. Thank you, Mr. CEO.
12 Good morning, everyone. This is Steve Bradshaw.
13 I have the honor of serving as presiding officer
14 for the Board of Commissioners for this year. I
15 know that some of my colleagues are on the
16 phone, and I'm certainly happy to have them
17 decisively engaged. I appreciate everyone's
18 diligence, professionalism, forbearance and
19 courage as we all work our way through this
20 difficult and challenging time.

21 And I'm here to underscore that we're
22 united as a governing authority. And we're here
23 to support the CEO and the administration in
24 their efforts to lead us through this crisis.
25 So thank you all very much for being engaged

1 today.

2 CEO THURMOND: Thank you, Mr. Presiding
3 Officer.

4 And thanks also -- I know that there are
5 several members of our Board of Commissioners on
6 the call. I want to personally thank you as
7 well as our -- as your fellow commissioners for
8 your ongoing support in this effort in DeKalb
9 County to make good, solid policy decisions that
10 will net a very positive result for our citizens
11 as well as our residents in our county.

12 I will now ask Ms. Delores Crowell to call
13 the roll so we can officially begin this
14 organizational meeting of our DeKalb COVID-19
15 Strategic Task Force. So, Ms. Crowell, if you
16 will call the roll, we'll proceed from there.

17 MS. CROWELL: Thank you, Mr. CEO.

18 I will call your name so we can -- cause we
19 have about -- I think we have close to 20
20 members. And if you would just affirm when your
21 name is called.

22 Dr. Sandra Ford.

23 DR. FORD: I'm here.

24 UNIDENTIFIED VOICE: I would like to be
25 added to (inaudible) --

1 MS. CROWELL: We ask that you would,
2 please, mute your phones.

3 UNIDENTIFIED VOICE: I'm sorry. I'm on two
4 calls at the same time. Doing my best.

5 MS. CROWELL: That's okay. We understand.
6 Mr. David Ross.

7 MR. ROSS: I'm here. Thank you.

8 MS. CROWELL: Mr. Patrick O'Carroll.

9 DR. O'CARROLL: I'm here.

10 MS. CROWELL: Commissioner Lorraine
11 Cochran-Johnson.

12 MS. COCHRAN-JOHNSON: Present.

13 MS. CROWELL: Our former CEO, Ms. LeAnne
14 Levitan.

15 MS. LEVITAN: Present.

16 MS. CROWELL: I'm sorry. I need to
17 introduce our task force members by title.

18 So I'll go with the interim superintendent,
19 Ms. Ramona Tyson.

20 MS. TYSON: I'm here. Good morning.

21 MS. CROWELL: Good morning.

22 Chief Judge Asha Jackson.

23 Chief Joseph Cox.

24 MR. COX: Present.

25 MS. CROWELL: Public Safety Director Jack

1 Lumpkin.

2 MR. LUMPKIN: Present.

3 MS. CROWELL: Sheriff Melody Maddox.

4 SHERIFF MADDOX: Present.

5 MS. CROWELL: House Chairwoman Karla

6 Drenner.

7 MS. DRENNER: Here.

8 MS. CROWELL: Senate Chairman Emanuel

9 Jones.

10 MR. JONES: Present and accounted for.

11 MS. CROWELL: Mayor John Ernst of

12 Brookhaven.

13 MAYOR ERNST: That's me.

14 MS. CROWELL: Mayor Melanie Hammet of Pine

15 Lake.

16 MAYOR HAMMET: I'm here.

17 MS. CROWELL: Jeff Parker of -- CEO of

18 MARTA.

19 MR. PARKER: Present. Thank you for the

20 invite.

21 MS. CROWELL: Ann Hanlon, President of

22 Perimeter CID.

23 MS. HANLON: This is Ann. I'm here. Good

24 morning.

25 MS. CROWELL: Emory Morsberger, President,

1 Metro South CID.

2 MR. MORSBERGER: Incredible, and ready for
3 action.

4 MS. CROWELL: Dorian DeBarr, Interim
5 Director, DeKalb Development Authority.

6 MR. DEBARR: Present.

7 MS. CROWELL: Alan Goodman, President,
8 Brookhaven Chamber.

9 MR. GOODMAN: I'm here.

10 MS. CROWELL: Ken Coleman, Interim
11 President, DeKalb Chamber.

12 MR. COLEMAN: I'm here.

13 MS. CROWELL: Okay. Have I missed anyone?

14 MR. SMITH: Lamar Smith, DeKalb DFACS
15 Director.

16 MS. CROWELL: I am sorry, Mr. Smith.
17 We have Lamar Smith, DeKalb DFACS Director.

18 MR. SMITH: Good morning.

19 MR. JOHNSON: This is Larry Johnson,
20 District 3.

21 MS. CROWELL: Yes. And let's have our
22 commissioners chime in as well.

23 Thank you, Commissioner Johnson.

24 What -- any other commissioners on the
25 bridge?

1 MS. COCHRAN-JOHNSON: Yes. Commissioner
2 Lorraine Cochran-Johnson.

3 MS. CROWELL: Yes, ma'am.

4 Okay. Mr. CEO, we've completed the roll
5 call.

6 And what is your pleasure?

7 CEO THURMOND: We will move from here.

8 Let me once again just express on behalf of
9 DeKalb's 750,000 residents, and if I may as well
10 as the governing authority, as the presiding
11 officer has already spoken, we really appreciate
12 each and every one of you for volunteering to
13 engage in this ongoing effort to address the
14 challenges that we face in our county; really,
15 throughout our state.

16 We know how busy you are. Many of you are
17 already engaged in very critical efforts that --
18 to assist those who have been infected or are
19 affected by this disease. And it is an honor
20 and, really, we're just privileged that you
21 responded in a positive way.

22 First -- and we won't -- this will be a
23 brief organizing meeting. There will be some
24 discussion, but it's, obviously, the first, but
25 not the last. And, of course, as we go forward

1 there will be other appointments to this task
2 force as we move forward, but we wanted to go
3 ahead and organize and begin to strategize and
4 prepare to address this crisis that seems to be,
5 and is, in fact, becoming more serious by the
6 day. So other members will join us.

7 You will note based just on the roll call
8 we have some of the most really talented and
9 dedicated public servants in our county already
10 committed to serve and support and lend their
11 talents to this effort. But, also, you will
12 note that there are health experts as well as
13 economic development experts already at the
14 table as well as political and others. That was
15 purposeful and intentful.

16 We are faced with a dual crisis that is
17 unfolding and apparently not one way; one, a
18 health crisis, but at the same time we are
19 seeing serious, serious disruptions to our
20 economy. Tens of thousands of Georgians,
21 millions of Americans are now out of work, so,
22 hence, we've brought together at this point a
23 health expert as well as economic expert to help
24 us shape policy.

25 The overarching strategy here -- and I

1 share with David Ross, my good friend, I'm a
2 public policy professional, but I'm not a
3 medical professional. And I think one of the
4 challenges we face is that we need to allow the
5 scientists and the medical experts to provide us
6 with the necessary information, direction, and
7 intelligence so that we can make better public
8 policy decisions.

9 Defeating COVID-19 will not be a political
10 exercise. We are going to have to rely on the
11 medical experts such as Mr. Ross and
12 Mr. O'Carroll and others and Dr. Ford to help us
13 make better public policy decisions whether it
14 relates to our economy or even legislation that
15 may be promulgated through our government. So
16 thank you so much for doing this.

17 The first thing on the agenda today before
18 I hear from our medical expert, I would like to
19 ask our Chief Operating Officer, Mr. Jack
20 Williams, to take about five minutes and, and
21 brief the task force members with the steps that
22 have been taken so far in this relatively short
23 window over the last few weeks as DeKalb County
24 has begun to develop its response to COVID-19.

25 Mr. Williams.

1 MR. WILLIAMS: Thank you, Mr. CEO.

2 And thank everyone on the call for
3 participating. Before I start, I'd like to
4 announce that there is a slide presentation that
5 will be able to be found on the county's
6 website. If you've not had an opportunity to
7 take a look at the county's website specifically
8 dealing with COVID-19, please take that
9 opportunity at dekalbcountyga.gov. And there's
10 a myriad of information sources for everyone to
11 use and to share. And this slide presentation
12 that I will be talking from will also be
13 included.

14 So what we're going to talk about --

15 CEO THURMOND: Excuse me, Mr. Williams. So
16 I think all the task force members should also
17 have a copy.

18 Is that correct?

19 MR. WILLIAMS: Yes. That's, that's
20 correct, sir. Yes. We e-mailed. Each task
21 force member should have it via e-mail.

22 MAYOR ERNST: This is John Ernst. I never
23 got an e-mail. I know Dolores and I have been
24 talking. If someone could try to send it to me
25 at john.ernst@brookhavenga.gov.

1 MS. CROWELL: We'll forward it, we'll
2 forward it right over.

3 MAYOR ERNST: Thank you.

4 MR. WILLIAMS: Thank you.

5 MAYOR HAMMET: This is Mayor Melanie
6 Hammet. Same, same for me. I don't have a copy
7 either.

8 MR. WILLIAMS: Okay. So what we will do
9 is --

10 MAYOR HAMMET: I don't have it at Pine
11 Lake -- yeah.

12 MR. WILLIAMS: -- we'll ensure to resend
13 to, to everyone.

14 What I'd like to describe is actions that
15 led to the last 30 days, and then the actions
16 over the last 30 days.

17 When talking about DeKalb County's
18 emergency response, it's very important to note
19 that back in February of 2017 the governing
20 authority CEO Thurmond and the Board of
21 Commissioners adopted the county's Emergency
22 Operations Plan and Continuity of Operations
23 Plan, so that established the framework from
24 which we would deal with any type of emergency.
25 It's an all hazards plan, so be it flood; be it,

1 you know, tornado; or any other -- major fire.

2 And in the Continuity of Operations Plan, we
3 actually have a pandemic plan. And this was
4 adopted in 2017; February of 2017.

5 So January 30th -- I'm going to
6 fast-forward to January 30th, 2020. That's when
7 the World Health Organization declared the
8 outbreak of COVID-19 a public health emergency
9 of international concern. And so it kind of set
10 the stage that this was something different;
11 this was something, of course, new; and this was
12 something very serious.

13 On January 31st, 2020, Health and Human
14 Services Secretary Alex M. Azar declared a
15 public health emergency for the United States in
16 order to aid in the nation's healthcare
17 community in responding. Recognizing this in
18 February -- beginning in early February, the
19 department -- the county's department of
20 emergency management, the emergency management
21 agency, initiated a request for masks, gloves,
22 and other essentials in anticipation of an
23 event.

24 We were following what was happening in
25 Wuhan, we were tracking kind of the spread as it

1 began to spread throughout Europe, and
2 recognized that this is something that we very
3 likely would have to contend with. We began
4 ordering supplies in early February.

5 And on March 2nd, 2020, the facilities
6 department initiated COVID-19 cleaning
7 protocols. One of the things that was
8 emphasized from CDC guidance and other
9 professionals was this can be curtailed in many
10 instances through disinfecting, through
11 cleaning, so we initiated facility cleaning
12 protocols beginning on March 2nd, 2020.

13 On March 3rd, we initiated the emergency
14 management response team and requested that each
15 department update their Continuity of Operations
16 Plan. This was an important statement, quite
17 frankly. It was the administration's desire to
18 ensure that we are ready, that we are reviewing
19 our plans, that they are up to date, and we are
20 able to access the personnel and resources that
21 those plans call for.

22 On March 3rd, the CEO's Office of
23 Communications published the COVID-19 web page
24 recognizing that there was a, you know, a great
25 desire on the part of our citizens to understand

1 what can they do. What is this COVID-19 that
2 people are talking about? And what actions can
3 we take? And so this was beginning March 3rd,
4 less than 30 days ago -- that's how fast this
5 has moved -- the county published a web page.

6 On March 6th, we began distribution of
7 COVID-19 educational materials to seniors. On a
8 daily basis our human services department
9 touches over 3,000 seniors at our, at our
10 facilities and through home-delivered meals. We
11 felt it important to get information to those
12 seniors as quickly as possible advising them of
13 COVID-19 and its possible impact.

14 On March 9th, we installed hand sanitizer
15 stations in all county-owned buildings. Again,
16 this was based on the recognition that, to the
17 extent people can, can wash their hands, we make
18 it easily available, it will help to suppress
19 the spread of this disease.

20 On March 10th, we made a presentation in
21 the county operations committee briefing the
22 commissioners and the public -- the
23 commissioners in attendance and the public on
24 here are actions that we are beginning to take,
25 and here is actions that we anticipate taking if

1 and when this virus grows.

2 On March 11th, the CEO and along with the
3 superintendent and the public health director
4 conducted our first virtual town hall meeting.
5 This was on March 11th. And at that point, to
6 our knowledge, there had not been municipalities
7 or local governments conducting town hall
8 meetings. But this was an opportunity to share
9 with the public what we knew and to ensure that
10 it was clear to everyone watching that the
11 county's overarching goal is very simple. And
12 it's saving lives. It's saving the lives of our
13 citizens, and saving the lives of our employees.
14 And this message was communicated clearly on
15 March 11th.

16 On March 12th, we issued an employee health
17 and safety memo. We wanted to make it clear to
18 employees that if anyone is showing signs of
19 being sick, stay home. It sounds like a simple
20 thing to say, but if -- you know, think of our
21 culture. Quite often it is the desire of the
22 rugged individual who is going to tough it out
23 and going to show up sick. And, you know, that
24 may have, have worked in other times, but in
25 this instance not only does it put the

1 potentially ill employee in danger, it puts the
2 entire workforce in danger. And we cannot have,
3 you know, the disease or the virus spread
4 throughout our employee areas that we would not
5 be able to provide service.

6 On March 13th, the executive leadership
7 prioritized delivery of services and all county
8 departments activated their emergency operation
9 plan. The March 13th discussion was, was an
10 interesting one, quite frankly, because what it
11 did -- and the CEO really, you know, drove home
12 the point where we had to focus on what are
13 those essential, what are those most important,
14 for lack of a better word, services that the
15 county must provide at all costs.

16 In each department, you know, any person in
17 a leadership position is going to feel, well, of
18 course, my department, my function is the most
19 important. But after lengthy discussion and a
20 certain amount of soul searching, it became
21 crystal clear that the most important function
22 that DeKalb County provides day in and day out
23 is clean, fresh, potable water.

24 And so through that process we came up with
25 a prioritization of functions and departments

1 wherein it was clear that we will do all that is
2 necessary to ensure that the 750,000 residents
3 in DeKalb County will continue to get clean,
4 fresh potable water because in -- and in this
5 instance where we're talking about a public
6 health emergency where the consistent message
7 from the CDC, from the Health Department, from
8 other medical professionals is wash your hands.
9 You cannot wash your hands unless you can rely
10 that when you turn the spigot on you are going
11 to get water. And so we have focused our
12 efforts, our resources, and our thought process
13 around ensuring that, no matter what, the
14 citizens of DeKalb County will have water.

15 On March 13th, the President declared a
16 national emergency. So you see the actions that
17 had been taken up to this point by DeKalb County
18 prior to the declaration of national emergency.
19 But on March 13th, the President declared a
20 national emergency. On March 14th, Governor
21 Kemp declared a public health emergency in
22 Georgia.

23 On March 15th, we implemented the socially
24 distant service delivery strategy ensuring
25 continuation of essential services while

1 restricting public access to county facilities.

2 So hopefully it's clear to anyone who is
3 witnessing the actions of DeKalb County, at no
4 point have we lost sight of our responsibility
5 to serve. We did not want to simply say that,
6 okay, employees, now you work from home when, in
7 fact, you know, we were not prepared to do that.

8 So what we did is we began with
9 implementing the socially distant service
10 delivery strategy wherein the buildings were
11 closed to public access, but we made provisions
12 for dropping off whether it's building permits
13 or purchasing. And staff was directed to
14 perform their duties, you know, much more
15 online.

16 On March 16th, we completed initial deep
17 cleaning of county buildings using
18 hospital-grade disinfectant and instituted
19 continued deep cleanings. Throughout this, the
20 past 30 days, we have really focused on sanitary
21 conditions throughout our facilities to -- if
22 they're being accessed by the public or
23 employees to ensure that we minimize the risk of
24 spread of this virus.

25 On March 18th, Georgia received an official

1 statewide disaster declaration from the U.S.
2 Small Business Administration. And we will be
3 working very closely with the U.S. Small
4 Business Administration for -- to ensure that
5 people are aware of future opportunities and how
6 they can assist the small business.

7 On March 19th, Cybersecurity and
8 Infrastructure Security Agency issued a memo
9 regarding the identification of essential,
10 critical infrastructure workers. We found this
11 to be very interesting and affirming because
12 CISA in their memo, they went through much of
13 the same process that we had gone through in
14 identifying the importance of those critical
15 infrastructures to the viability of communities.
16 And water was at the top of their list as well.

17 On March 19th, we issued a public health --
18 the CEO issued a public health emergency
19 protocol delineating the workforce, and held the
20 second COVID-19 virtual town hall.

21 On March 20th through 23rd, we tested the
22 public health emergency protocol. This was
23 providing for service provision from home in
24 many instances, or socially distant service
25 provision and others. But this was an

1 opportunity to test and ensure that we were
2 prepared to continue service delivery should we
3 go forward with a stay-at-home order.

4 On March 23rd, the CEO declared a State of
5 Emergency and issued executive order 20-001,
6 which began implementing employees working from
7 home and other provisions of people staying at
8 home.

9 On March 27th, the CEO issued executive
10 order 20-002, implementing a stay-at-home order
11 for DeKalb County. And this is what we are
12 currently operating under.

13 On March 31st, the CEO provided a briefing
14 to the Board of Commissioners wherein questions
15 were asked and answered. And the commission and
16 public got a clearer understanding of the
17 overarching philosophy of saving lives for our
18 citizens and our employees, and continued
19 service delivery.

20 And that brings us to today, which is the
21 initiation of the COVID-19 task force meetings.
22 And so if you look at the past 30 days alone --
23 and these are major activities. Of course,
24 there are activities that are going on behind
25 the scenes where our individual departments and

1 emergency support functions are working in
2 implementation of their Emergency Operations
3 Plan.

4 So that concludes my, my brief walk through
5 some of the major actions in our timeline. And,
6 again, this PowerPoint can be found at
7 dekalbcountyga.gov; will be found. It's there.
8 And each of the task force members will have an
9 e-mail copy.

10 Thank you, Mr. CEO.

11 CEO THURMOND: Thank you, Mr. Williams.

12 And included in the presentation that
13 Mr. Williams didn't address just in order to
14 respect your time was the list of opportunities
15 we've taken to open up the lines of
16 communication with our state legislative
17 delegations.

18 We've had two conference calls with the
19 DeKalb legislative delegation and, of course,
20 ongoing conversations with Dr. Ford as well as
21 the judiciary constitutional officers. Our
22 municipal leadership is represented here today.
23 And, quite frankly, that's been the key, I
24 think, to any short-term success that we've
25 achieved in getting our emergency response up to

1 speed is that we've maintained open lines of
2 communication. I'll stop now.

3 Mr. Williams, will you chair the meeting?
4 I'm managing a minor crisis at home. I've got a
5 gas leak. So I'm doing this and entertaining
6 some of the most important people in the entire
7 county all at the same time. So if you hear a
8 loud boom, you'll understand what's going -- no.
9 I'm just being facetious.

10 So, Mr. Williams, if you will chair the
11 meeting for about ten minutes, I would
12 appreciate it.

13 MR. WILLIAMS: Absolutely, Mr. CEO.

14 CEO THURMOND: Yeah. So if there are any
15 questions, we will entertain them right now.

16 MR. WILLIAMS: Okay. Thank you.

17 Hearing none -- yes. Are there any
18 questions?

19 MR. MORSBERGER: Emory Morsberger with --

20 UNIDENTIFIED VOICE: Is that just questions
21 on stuff presented, or questions overall? I
22 would assume it's just presented.

23 MR. WILLIAMS: Right. Right. So thank
24 you. And I heard Emory. So, yes, that would be
25 questions on information that has been presented

1 thus far. We will have opportunity for, for
2 general questions later in the discussion.

3 Okay. Hearing no questions on the
4 information presented, I'd like to have -- turn
5 back over to Delores, and we will continue our
6 discussion.

7 MS. CROWELL: Thank you, Mr. Williams.

8 We also have two distinguished guests on
9 our COVID -- all of our members are
10 distinguished, but there were two that the CEO
11 specifically had asked to, to speak to. And
12 that would be Mr. David Ross from the Task Force
13 for Global Health, as well as Mr. Patrick
14 O'Connell {sic} from Health Systems, Health
15 Systems Strengthening. He's the sector director
16 and vice president. I wanted to give you a
17 little bit of an overview. They both have
18 pretty distinguished resumés. And I'll just
19 give you a little background, first on Mr. David
20 Ross.

21 David Ross took office as the task force
22 third president and CEO in May 2016. He's a
23 recognized leader in global health. And
24 Dr. Ross has led collaborative programs to
25 strengthen information capacity of public health

1 systems in the United States and other countries
2 for more than three decades. Dr. Ross provides
3 strategic direction to the task force and
4 oversees 15 programs focused on disease
5 elimination and protecting the health of
6 populations.

7 He assumed leadership of the task force in
8 May 2016 after 16 years as director of the Task
9 Force Public Health Informatics Institute and
10 its predecessor All Kids Count. Dr. Ross holds
11 a doctorate of science degree in operations
12 research from the John Hopkins University, and a
13 bachelor of science degree in aerospace
14 engineering from the University of Colorado.

15 I'd also like to introduce Dr. Patrick
16 O'Carroll, Health System Strengthening Director.
17 And he is the task force -- Dr. O'Carroll has an
18 MD, MPH, FACPM, FACMI. So if you know what all
19 those letters mean, God bless you. Maybe we can
20 have Dr. O'Carroll expound on that a little.

21 But just to give you a brief overview of
22 Dr. O'Carroll, he's the Task Force Health
23 Systems Strengthening Sector; he leads that
24 sector. And in this role, Dr. O'Carroll
25 provides overall strategic and operational

1 direction to the sector that currently consists
2 of the programs that help US, state, and local
3 public health agencies and, also, many other
4 countries train their field epidemiology
5 workforce, design essential disease surveillance
6 and other information systems, improve
7 healthcare regulatory licensing and
8 credentialing, and also manage donated medical
9 equipment and supplies.

10 Dr. O'Carroll provides strategic guidance
11 to the global network of over 80 programs that
12 train the disease detectives we badly need in
13 every country. Dr. O'Carroll holds a medical
14 degree and a master's in public health from the
15 John Hopkins University.

16 And I believe in the CEO's discussions with
17 both Mr. Ross and Dr. O'Carroll he had asked you
18 to say a few words to this distinguished body.
19 And I'll turn it over to Mr. David Ross.

20 MR. ROSS: Hi. Thank you, Delores.

21 First, I'd just like to say my, my thanks
22 for the prompt and professional action and
23 service that our CEO Michael Thurmond and our
24 COO Jack Williams and the commissioners have
25 paid to try to get ahead of this pandemic. And

1 I really want to stress my thanks to Dr. Ford.
2 She and her public health -- the DeKalb Board of
3 Health employees are probably stressed beyond
4 imagination right now. And I think this
5 probably applies to all the agencies of the
6 county.

7 But I think the situation we're in right
8 now points to something I feel very strongly
9 about. And that is that this should be a
10 wake-up call for us nationally that we should
11 have been investing in building stronger local
12 and state public health capacity; not cutting
13 it. And so this is an opportunity for everybody
14 to come together and realize that these
15 essential services of government are, in fact,
16 critical.

17 I really applaud the county for focusing in
18 first on water. I think your priorities of
19 water and sanitation, you know, in the first
20 responders spectrum are absolutely appropriate.
21 And I also wanted to say that on behalf of the
22 Task Force for Global Health. You know, we are
23 based in DeKalb County right in downtown
24 Decatur. Urge all of you to visit us. And, in
25 fact, if you go in to the county offices for

1 licensing, permitting and such, you are walking
2 into that building. We are eager and willing to
3 help any way we can this effort to contain and
4 eventually concur the COVID outbreak across the
5 county and the city and the country.

6 With that, I want to also introduce my, my
7 colleague Dr. Patrick O'Carroll. Patrick has,
8 among a number of accolades, he was also a rank
9 of Assistant Surgeon General when he was in the
10 public health service and served as Deputy
11 Assistant Secretary for Health in the second
12 term of the Obama administration.

13 But Patrick has a lot of experience with
14 these kind of events, so, Patrick, why don't I
15 turn to you and let you say a few words.

16 DR. O'CARROLL: Thanks, Dr. Ross. This is,
17 I have to tell you, a real privilege to be part
18 of this group. Both David and I spent many
19 years at CDC, which as you all know is a federal
20 agency responsible not only for US health, but
21 has a big role globally. But the truth is,
22 everyone who works at CDC here in Atlanta is
23 also a citizen of DeKalb County. And I want to
24 join David in congratulating you on this list of
25 accomplishments and achievements in this -- just

1 this past 40 days or so. It's really striking.

2 I've been involved in a number of crisis
3 responses, including the response to Katrina and
4 Rita. And I can tell you I'm sympathetic that
5 during the early days it's nothing but chaos.
6 It's not clear what should be done. Everyone is
7 trying to figure out what guidance is coming out
8 of the CDC. And sometimes it doesn't come out
9 in a way that's as clear as you'd like it to be.

10 And yet in looking backwards just over the
11 last four weeks or so, it is an impressive and
12 timely set of activities that you've undertaken;
13 decisions that you've taken and declarations
14 that have been made. So congratulations to CEO
15 Thurmond, but, really, to all of you in DeKalb
16 County. And it really is a wonderful
17 opportunity. If David and I can contribute
18 anything to help the citizens of this county,
19 it's a privilege for us to do so. So I'm glad
20 to be part of this group.

21 CEO THURMOND: All right. Thank you, so
22 much, Dr. O'Carroll and Dr. Ross. Thank both of
23 you all for your friendship and your service to
24 our nation; literally, to the world. I remember
25 the first time I visited the Task Force for

1 Global Health. I was just so amazed at how much
2 good work is being done and has been done all
3 across our nation, all across the world helping
4 people to be safe and secure. So thanks a lot.

5 So could either one of you gentlemen --
6 and, and then I want to hear from Dr. Ford if
7 she's also on the call. She's actually serving
8 two health districts simultaneously.

9 DR. FORD: I'm still here.

10 CEO THURMOND: Dr. Ford, do you want -- do
11 you have time to chime in a little and help us
12 understand more about the activities you're
13 engaged in on behalf of DeKalb County in
14 response to the crisis?

15 DR. FORD: Absolutely. Good morning,
16 everyone. Thank you for your participation on
17 this task force.

18 As of this morning, DeKalb has 358 cases of
19 COVID-19, which means our little bitty county
20 has 8 percent of the state's entire burden. As
21 the CEO mentioned, I'm also managing Fulton
22 County, which I have been doing since May.
23 Between DeKalb and Fulton, we have close to
24 25 percent of the burden for the state.

25 I would like to take this moment to thank

1 DeKalb County government for their support in
2 our efforts to address this pandemic.

3 Everything I have asked for in regards to
4 support has been addressed immediately. I can't
5 tell you how wonderful that is. We have
6 identified space for drive-thru testing. Well,
7 drive-thru specimen collection which will then
8 be sent to the lab to address those folks who
9 are symptomatic, including our first responders
10 and those who care for vulnerable populations.

11 Newest data from the Centers for Disease
12 Control prevention is even more worrisome
13 because now we are learning that this virus is
14 actually infectious 48 hours before symptoms
15 present. And so that's going to demand that we
16 expand our testing to folks that are not
17 symptomatic. And for areas in the county that
18 are having outbreaks, such as nursing homes, we
19 are testing everyone whether they're symptomatic
20 or not. And the same for the jail. We're
21 having challenges with any environment where
22 folks are congregated, and that would include
23 those two facilities I just listed.

24 And so that's really our focus right now.
25 As I'm sure you've all heard, testing kits is

1 where we are struggling where there are
2 insufficient numbers of test kits throughout the
3 state. And we are trying to find other entities
4 that can produce tests so that we can expand our
5 ability to test within the county. Right now
6 our testing facility is -- the first one is
7 located down in the southern part of the county,
8 but we are looking to expand in northern DeKalb
9 by Wednesday.

10 We have a hotline number so that folks can
11 ask questions about the disease. And if they
12 are symptomatic, we are trying to also see
13 whether we can get them evaluated and a specimen
14 collected. That number is area code
15 (404)294-3700, and you press option one.

16 What do we need? We need manpower. We
17 need volunteers to participate in the call
18 center. We need folks to assist us in the
19 specimen collection site. We really need
20 clinical personnel. Right now we are evaluating
21 every individual that comes into our centers to
22 ensure that they are not symptomatic, including
23 staff.

24 We have dramatically constricted services
25 so that only the most essential services are

1 being provided so that staff can be redirected
2 to address this disease. And so right now we're
3 working with WIC, (indiscernible), and
4 immunizations are basically the only services
5 that will be provided pending further notice.
6 And we have closed the East DeKalb Health Center
7 in order to allow us to focus more directly on
8 this disease. After this call, we'll be meeting
9 to identify some other areas where we can
10 continue to compress staff.

11 My main concern is, obviously, protecting
12 the community and then protecting my staff. And
13 so we're trying to identify ways that we can
14 manage this pandemic, but also keep folks safe.
15 There are certain personnel that just simply
16 have to report to work, but we are trying to
17 maintain physical distance and, when available
18 and appropriate, operate from home and telework.

19 We have been partnering, of course, with
20 the school system and basically all other
21 entities to make sure that folks who are
22 symptomatic or positive know what actions they
23 need to take. And I appreciate the CEO's
24 shelter in place request because it allows us to
25 control this virus spread. As inconvenient as

1 it may be, it's truly the most effective way to
2 curtail this pandemic. Thank you.

3 Any questions?

4 CEO THURMOND: Thank you so much, Dr. Ford.
5 And let me just say again -- I know you're on
6 another call -- how much we appreciate the
7 outstanding work you're doing under the most
8 trying of circumstances. We celebrate and thank
9 you and you will have our full support. You
10 mentioned, of course, the work and the
11 cooperation you receive from our DeKalb County
12 school system. I know that our interim
13 superintendent is on the line.

14 Ms. Tyson, you want to give us a brief
15 update on steps that have been taken and are
16 being taken as you continue to lead our DeKalb
17 County School District?

18 UNIDENTIFIED VOICE: Mr. CEO --

19 MS. TYSON: Thank you, Mr. CEO.

20 DR. FORD: Is it okay if I sign off before
21 we do this?

22 CEO THURMOND: Okay.

23 MS. COCHRAN-JOHNSON: Dr. Ford, this is
24 Lorraine Cochran-Johnson. And I have one
25 question, if possible, before you sign off.

1 DR. FORD: Okay.

2 MS. COCHRAN-JOHNSON: As it relates to the
3 drive-thru testing sites --

4 DR. FORD: Yes.

5 MS. COCHRAN-JOHNSON: -- what are the
6 parameters that must be in place before an
7 individual comes? Because with those sites, as
8 a general rule from what I've seen thus far, you
9 know, I want to make these things known. But I
10 know that generally there were requirements as
11 to testing with some of those sites.

12 So are there any requirements, or are
13 people free if they demonstrate symptoms to just
14 report to the drive-thru testing sites?

15 DR. FORD: No. And thank you for asking
16 that specific question.

17 So right now we are very limited with the
18 volume of tests that we have available. I
19 believe on any given day most of metro has about
20 200 tests for the public health district at
21 least. And so right now we are all trying to
22 adhere to the governor's priority list of
23 individuals, so that would be symptomatic
24 patients who have what we call a PUI, which is a
25 person under investigation number. That number

1 is generated when your primary care physician
2 calls the Board of Health and identifies you as
3 being symptomatic. At that point, you would be
4 connected to the information about the testing
5 site, and then you would be instructed to go
6 there for specimen collection.

7 We have also expanded, though, that
8 priority list to include our first responders
9 for obvious reasons in their high-risk levels of
10 exposure. So symptomatic first responders can
11 also call that (404) number I gave earlier,
12 294-3700, option 1. And if they are
13 symptomatic, they also will be provided with a
14 PUI number so that they can have a specimen
15 collected. That also includes individuals who
16 work in nursing homes and our jail, jail staff
17 as well.

18 As more tests become available, we will be
19 able to expand testing more to the general
20 community. There are a couple of exciting
21 initiatives coming out that should assist us
22 with that expansion. One is a pilot and CVS is
23 doing a rapid test that won't require that
24 nasopharyngeal swab, which is a little more
25 invasive that goes through your nose and all the

1 way down. They have one that is just a nasal
2 swab. But it is brand new and under test, so
3 it'll be some time before we can get to identify
4 whether it's actually effective.

5 There's also a pilot with UGA, Georgia
6 State, Georgia Tech, and Augusta University and
7 Emory to develop additional test media so that
8 more tests can be created. And each of those
9 universities also has a CLIA-approved lab, so
10 they would be able to assist us with testing at
11 which point we would hopefully be able to ramp
12 up to as much as 3,000 tests per day, which
13 still is insufficient. But I'm hoping that with
14 additional resources, we'll be able to identify
15 more tests.

16 As we continue to try to manage this, the
17 criteria, of course, will have to be loosened.
18 But right now, based on the limited number of
19 tests we have and some critical areas -- for
20 example, our nursing home and our jail
21 population -- those are my primary focus right
22 now. But we are still trying to include those
23 priority groups I mentioned earlier.

24 MS. COCHRAN-JOHNSON: Okay. And one last
25 question as it relates to this before you leave.

1 Across the state I've seen a lot of ambiguity in
2 turnarounds for testing.

3 Can you speak to the turnaround currently
4 that we're experiencing in DeKalb County between
5 the time an individual is tested and when test
6 results are received.

7 DR. FORD: Yes. This is a challenge
8 throughout the state. Different labs have
9 different turnaround times for their tests. It
10 also depends on the media that you deliver the
11 test in. Some labs have very specific media
12 which allows them to more efficiently test.
13 However, those -- that -- those particular labs
14 have a limited number of tests. So what we have
15 been doing is doing the general swab that you
16 see in every doctors' office, but they take more
17 time to process.

18 And so throughout the state we have seen
19 folks nine days in still waiting for their
20 results, which is a big challenge as we -- you
21 know, part of our management of this disease has
22 to do with test results. That's why we are
23 really urging everyone to treat this disorder as
24 if everyone is infected. And that way, you
25 know, we don't have to, you know, worry about

1 who has a positive test.

2 Does that make sense?

3 MS. COCHRAN-JOHNSON: It does. I just
4 wanted to hear because I'm seeing, again -- you
5 know, a lot of what I do is research -- a lot of
6 ambiguity and differences in reporting times, so
7 I just wanted to try to get a sense of what
8 we're experiencing here in DeKalb, but --

9 DR. FORD: Yeah.

10 MS. COCHRAN-JOHNSON: -- thank you very
11 much for the work you are doing.

12 DR. FORD: (Inaudible). We all have the
13 same challenges, you know. And as soon -- this
14 rapid test, if it works, would be a blessing if
15 we could get that going.

16 CEO THURMOND: Well, thank you, doctor.

17 MR. MORSBERGER: While you're -- while,
18 while you're still here --

19 CEO THURMOND: Can we take --

20 MR. MORSBERGER: -- how fast will we move
21 to, how fast will we move to --

22 CEO THURMOND: Please identify yourself.

23 MR. MORSBERGER: I'm sorry. Emory
24 Morsberger.

25 CEO THURMOND: Please identify --

1 MR. MORSBERGER: Emory Morsberger.

2 DR. FORD: Yes.

3 MR. MORSBERGER: Doctor, how soon will we
4 move to requiring everyone to wear a mask all
5 the time?

6 DR. FORD: Well, the issue with that is
7 supply. I mean, we don't have adequate masks
8 even for staff. So we're -- we are making
9 recommendations based on, you know, availability
10 of supplies. And so I, I think that these next
11 two weeks, as you've heard, are going to be the
12 teller of everything. And so we'll have to, you
13 know, figure out supply before we make that
14 recommendation. I can't say everyone wear a
15 mask when you can't find any available.

16 MAYOR ERNST: All right. This is John
17 Ernst, Mayor of Brookhaven.

18 DR. FORD: This is going to have to be my
19 last question, sir. Go ahead.

20 MAYOR ERNST: Okay. Well, I have a lot,
21 but I will try to -- real quick.

22 Is it true that the problem with the
23 testing is that we have run out of reagent?
24 I've heard reports that we don't have the proper
25 supplies of reagent to actually to conduct the

1 test.

2 DR. FORD: Yeah. That's correct. That's
3 what I was saying earlier. The media in which
4 you put the sample is short. And so we're using
5 other media which work, but just take longer.
6 And that's why we're getting delays in test
7 results.

8 CEO THURMOND: Thank you, doctor.

9 MAYOR ERNST: And we heard from GMA that
10 there was going to be -- the governor was
11 releasing a 5-minute, 15-minute test.

12 Have they given you guys any information
13 about what that's about?

14 DR. FORD: It's a trial. We don't have the
15 data on whether they're accurate or not.

16 CEO THURMOND: Thank you, Dr. Ford.

17 MAYOR ERNST: Thank you very much.

18 CEO THURMOND: Thank you, Dr. Ford.

19 What we can do --

20 DR. FORD: Thank you. I apologize. I
21 would like to provide more time to you all, but
22 I'm literally pulled in two directions right
23 now.

24 CEO THURMOND: No. Thank you so much.

25 DR. FORD: I would be happy to take more

1 questions if you want to e-mail them.

2 CEO THURMOND: Well, that's what we're
3 getting ready to do. If you have more questions
4 for Dr. Ford or anyone else who's presented
5 today, please e-mail the question to Ms. Delores
6 Crowell. You have her e-mail address. And we
7 promise you that we will respond or find the
8 subject matter expert to provide you with the
9 information you need.

10 Ms. Tyson, can you update us on school
11 district?

12 MS. TYSON: Thank you, Mr. CEO. And good
13 morning, everyone. I will keep my update to
14 three points that I want to share with the task
15 force.

16 And, first of all, as you know, we've been
17 closed as a school district since March 16th.
18 And over the last two weeks we have been really
19 focusing in on three points, and the first one
20 is the continuity of our virtual learning
21 program for our 100,000 students. And, as you
22 know, our closure has now been extended through
23 April 24th, so our focus over the next three
24 weeks will be on ensuring that we put a plan in
25 place that brings some relief to our teachers

1 and our students as well as our parents that
2 have become teachers of their own children.

3 And that means that we have put a plan in
4 place that gives our teachers and our students
5 by grade level with time limits on how they are
6 to use the virtual learning. Our students were
7 becoming overwhelmed. Our teachers were
8 becoming overwhelmed because they were trying to
9 apply the traditional face-to-face instructional
10 day in a virtual learning format. And so we
11 spent some time this week laying out a
12 continuity plan that brings some relief to that.

13 At a very high level, we've instituted a
14 planning day for our teachers each week so they
15 get a break to continue to grade the work, to
16 plan for additional lessons, and to offer some
17 teacher and parent student conference time
18 during the week using virtual software
19 platforms. As you know, again, we're supposed
20 to be closed through the 24th, but we're putting
21 some focus on what does that look like if we
22 don't get to open back up this school year.

23 And my team and I are working around the
24 clock to ensure that we have a plan that
25 supports our seniors. And I want you to know

1 that our seniors have lost a lot through this,
2 through this national crisis. And not just in
3 DeKalb, but all over the United States, in that
4 if you can remember being a senior, it's a fun
5 time as you culminate your K-12 career. And
6 these seniors will lose the opportunity to
7 participate in a lot of senior activities that
8 we all -- that all of us have great memories
9 for.

10 And so our focus will be deliberate and
11 intentional to ensure that they graduate, to
12 ensure that we prepare them to go on to the work
13 of post-secondary education, or if they choose
14 the military, or if they choose to go straight
15 to work. And so we're working with Georgia DOE
16 and the State Board of Education and the
17 governor's office with 18 waivers that the state
18 board voted on last week to give the local
19 school districts flexibility from grading to
20 seat time to testing and other areas so that we
21 can make it very successful for our 8,000
22 seniors to graduate at the end of this school
23 year.

24 We do have to make some very firm decisions
25 about what we're going to do about graduation.

1 And I'll just say this at this time because I'm
2 not in a place where I can formally announce,
3 but we are looking at several alternative
4 options for graduation. And when the time
5 comes, we will be making our, our public
6 announcement on that.

7 And then, also, too, we're working with the
8 schools about prom. Proms have been canceled.
9 And while that's something that all of us are
10 far away from, that's very important to our
11 young people. And so they've been postponed for
12 now, but we're working with the venues to look
13 at the potential of some summer proms and, and
14 other options for them.

15 We are planning a summer learning program
16 so that our students will have opportunities for
17 remediation and enrichment. We want to make
18 sure that any of our scholars that -- don't fall
19 behind, and those students that need extra
20 reinforcement that we will be able to offer
21 multiple summer programs for them so that we can
22 ensure they are ready day one for next school
23 year in August.

24 And then, lastly, I do want to share with
25 you that we have distributed 60,000 laptops to

1 grades 6 through 12 for this virtual learning
2 platform. But what this has presented for us is
3 that we have about 38,000 pre-K through fifth
4 graders that do not have laptops distributed by
5 the school district. And this is going to be
6 one of the challenges we're going to have to
7 take a hard look at as we go forward with future
8 technology plans.

9 Cause when we usually look at our
10 implementation of virtual learning, we're really
11 working from a position of snow days, ice, power
12 outages, which only usually last about two to
13 three days, but now we are two and a half weeks
14 in, another three to go, a potential four if we
15 don't open back up. And I think this is a game
16 changer for all school districts in looking at
17 their population as a whole and what does this
18 look like for the future for potential learning
19 as we go forward with our technology plans.

20 Oh. Mr. Thurmond, I do want to add we have
21 been implementing a meal service program. We
22 are averaging about 18,000 meals a day for our
23 students; over 21 feed sites, including nine
24 recreational centers. We also have buses
25 delivering food in high-need areas to apartment

1 complexes and to areas where our students
2 qualify for our free and reduced lunch program.
3 We have a host of volunteers, but at the same
4 time we're working hard to mitigate exposure by
5 having restricted areas, practicing social
6 distancing, and ensuring that we're screening
7 for individuals that may be exhibiting sick
8 symptoms.

9 So in a nutshell, that's the work we've
10 been doing. We will continue to work to close
11 out the school year strong. And we thank you
12 for all of your support that you all have given
13 us as we work for the hundred thousand families
14 in DeKalb County.

15 CEO THURMOND: Before opening up to
16 questions for our interim superintendent, I just
17 want to once again put it on the record that
18 Ms. Tyson has done an outstanding job of
19 standing in the gap and leading our DeKalb
20 County School District during this crisis.

21 And, Ms. Tyson, I just appreciate you so
22 much. And let me just say this cause I have
23 some reference point when I see it. Ms. Tyson
24 is currently serving in the most difficult job
25 in the public sector that exists in DeKalb

1 County, and she's doing an outstanding job.

2 And you have our support.

3 So are there questions for our
4 superintendent?

5 MAYOR ERNST: This is John Ernst, Mayor of
6 Brookhaven. I would add to your sentiments on,
7 on Ms. Tyson and with the job that she's doing
8 and what I'm seeing in my city in and around
9 DeKalb County. And the fact that she -- we were
10 on a conference call on March 14th with the
11 mayors of all the cities, yourself CEO, and, and
12 Interim Superintendent Tyson, and I believe that
13 was the first time, and the information she gave
14 was, was great.

15 The question that I have -- or not question
16 or -- thought that I have, you did talk about
17 prom and what could be done about that. When we
18 get in the all clear, I don't know if your staff
19 has the time or wherewithal to get it done, but
20 if you could look at Field Day for the K through
21 5, or the elementary school kids. I can tell
22 you the most disappointing thing that my kids
23 have figured out is once they realized they lost
24 Field Day. And so very similar to prom, if, if
25 that could be accomplished, great; if not,

1 perfectly understandable.

2 Thank you.

3 MS. TYSON: Thank you for the feedback.
4 And you're absolutely right. In the mind and
5 hearts of our elementary students, Field Day is
6 the ultimate end of the school year. And we
7 will. We will consider it.

8 MAYOR ERNST: Thank you.

9 CEO THURMOND: Thank you so much. I'm
10 sorry.

11 MS. LEVITAN: Hi. This is LeAnne Levitan.
12 Am I doing this correctly? Can you all hear me?

13 CEO THURMOND: Yes, ma'am, Madam CEO. We
14 can hear you.

15 MS. LEVITAN: Okay. I want to commend
16 Michael Thurmond for his initiative and his
17 foresight in forming this task force. I've had
18 the privilege of currently serving on the
19 Atlanta Regional Commission and I have received
20 memos from them as of late.

21 And I think DeKalb County continues, in my
22 opinion, to be the leader. And what I would
23 like to see done in listening to all of the
24 great things that are happening, if we could
25 just summarize this so that the general citizens

1 know stay home where you can get a shot; all of
2 these phone numbers; and then get a full page in
3 the Atlanta-Journal Constitution that talks
4 about the task force because I think this is the
5 first county task force in the nation. And have
6 phone numbers. I think the Atlanta-Journal
7 Constitution should do this free of charge; if
8 not, I think that we can raise the money very
9 quickly to do this.

10 But I think communication with citizens,
11 especially the seniors -- and I am one of those.
12 But, also, I've been getting calls yesterday
13 inundated with some of those that are living in
14 high rises such as Clairmont Place and, you
15 know, I won't mention names, but these citizens
16 need to have more information where they can get
17 in touch or at least reassurances.

18 And, again, you know, I've had the
19 privilege not only of serving as CEO in the
20 past, but also working with the Global Task
21 Force. And I'm so pleased and proud that you
22 are located in Decatur; and I say, again, DeKalb
23 County. But anything that I can do, we've got
24 to get the information out regarding the schools
25 and where people can go ahead and get

1 information.

2 But the most important thing that I've
3 gotten from ARC and from listening to television
4 is urge people to stay in. And I don't think
5 that this can be emphasized enough. I'm, again,
6 very proud of Mr. Thurmond, CEO, Michael, and
7 friend, what you have done and continue to do.

8 My other concern is that, of course, a lot
9 of the county employees are working at home, but
10 I fully support providing the additional pay to
11 those that are in danger. And everyone in the
12 county is in danger, but those that are working
13 more in -- those that are working in the public
14 safety; those people really and truly. Our
15 garbage collectors, sanitation people, they are
16 helping us, but they are -- their lives are in
17 danger.

18 And I'm not trying to be overly dramatic
19 because, those of you that know me, I can be
20 overly dramatic. But this is a war that we're
21 fighting right now. I, I lived through war with
22 the bombs and blitz in Europe and in England.
23 And I knew what a war is, but we knew bombs were
24 coming. But now we have an enemy that we know
25 is around, but we can't touch it.

1 And I want to again thank you, Michael
2 Thurmond, for what you continue to show
3 leadership in something that is not only
4 affecting our county, our cities, our state, but
5 the whole nation. And anything that I can do or
6 say, I will do. But I think communicating with
7 the general public I think is the most important
8 thing.

9 And we're very blessed to have CDC here in
10 DeKalb County, Global Health in DeKalb County.
11 We have the wonderful institution such as Emory.
12 And the letter that I have from ARC that I will
13 forward to you, Michael Thurmond, and you can
14 forward this to everybody else, but it does
15 encompass the ten counties, but it also includes
16 Emory, Grady, Piedmont Health, and WellStar. So
17 all of these people are interested in this, but
18 DeKalb County now is the leader in the State of
19 Georgia, and I believe in the nation.

20 And thank you for allowing me to put my 2
21 cents' worth in.

22 CEO THURMOND: Oh. Thank you, Madam Chair.
23 And thank you so much for your mentorship and
24 your friendship and your willingness to continue
25 to serve our great county. Your contributions

1 here will be forever noted and appreciated by
2 myself and all of DeKalb County.

3 I understand our Chief Judge, Judge Asha
4 Jackson -- Chief, could you give us some
5 oversight as to the county operations? I've
6 seen the chief on many occasions, the
7 administrative wing, executive branch of the
8 government, and legislative is in milieu, but
9 our government sits at the courthouse. It is
10 the county seat. It's the heart of our county.

11 So, Judge, if you can give us a brief
12 update, we'd appreciate it.

13 MS. DRENNER: Mr. CEO, before we, before we
14 move to the judge -- this is Representative
15 Drenner -- can I say one thing to Dr. Tyson?

16 CEO THURMOND: Yes, ma'am.

17 MS. DRENNER: Dr. Tyson, you've done an
18 outstanding job and I, I can't thank you enough.
19 I just wanted to offer to send you a couple of
20 contacts on virtual commencement and just, and
21 just wanted to kind of flag that. I'll send you
22 an e-mail with an overview on, on some virtual
23 commencement kind of practices.

24 MS. TYSON: Yes, ma'am. Thank you. I'll
25 be -- I would love to receive the information,

1 so I'll be on the lookout for it. And thank you
2 so much again.

3 And just for our protocol, I'm not a
4 doctor. It's Mrs. Tyson.

5 MS. DRENNER: Okay. Well, in my mind, you,
6 you have done an outstanding job: Mrs. or
7 doctor.

8 MS. TYSON: Thank you so much.

9 CEO THURMOND: Thank you, Madam Chair.
10 Chief, are you there? Chief Jackson?

11 CHIEF JACKSON: I am. Thank you so much,
12 Mr. CEO. And hello to everybody. Thank you for
13 inviting me to participate on the task force.
14 Just a brief overview about what is happening
15 with judicial operations in DeKalb County.

16 We are very excited to work with our DeKalb
17 County IT people, the hardworking IT folks that
18 we have over in our various court systems,
19 whether it is probate, magistrate, state, or
20 superior court where I sit as chief. And we are
21 operating in a virtual environment, which is
22 very exciting and probably long overdue.

23 The court operations are very limited. And
24 that is pursuant to the statewide judicial
25 emergency order that was issued after Justice

1 Melton, you know, realized that we needed to
2 have some statewide guidance in terms of
3 judicial operations. And so from that
4 standpoint, as of the 13th of March, we have all
5 been operating under the statewide judicial
6 emergency order so that only, quote, unquote,
7 essential court matters are supposed to be heard
8 at this time. However, beyond that, it is in
9 the discretion of the courts to decide with
10 their various statewide counsels what
11 constitutes essential court issues. And so from
12 the standpoint of most of the trial courts, that
13 would include issues that would concern the
14 life, liberty, or extraordinary loss of
15 property.

16 And so I can just tell you that in DeKalb
17 County I piloted last Friday a bond calendar
18 where the inmates were able to participate from
19 the jail in small numbers by coming up to a
20 virtual setting. Since that time there have
21 been some concerns at the jail, so we cannot
22 have as much movement of the inmates so those
23 hearings have to slow down unless individuals
24 waive their appearance. But we are still
25 conducting a lot of hearings where individuals

1 have waived their appearance.

2 And we allow for the public to participate
3 via Zoom. So all of the judges are setup with
4 Zoom accounts. It is my understanding that
5 those hearings are going off with very little
6 hitch. And so we are continuing to serve the
7 public in that regard; similarly, for other
8 types of civil and domestic matters,
9 particularly those where there are critical
10 issues that have come up during the time frame
11 the judges are conducting hearings via Zoom.

12 I would like to say, like our past CEO
13 said, that we are the leaders in the state in
14 terms of setting up those processes and we're
15 going forward. We are able to manage TPOs. The
16 ideal environment for protective orders is for
17 individuals who are victims of domestic violence
18 to come in person to have those protective
19 orders filed, but we have setup for individuals
20 to be able to file those complaints online.

21 And that was due to the hard work of our
22 clerk Debra DeBerry as well as our Chief
23 Magistrate Court Judge Berryl Anderson and the
24 IT folks once again. And so we are up and
25 running for that to occur in a virtual

1 environment as well where the individual can
2 file their complaint and get a hearing via Zoom
3 and get some relief. The Women's Resource
4 Center, some of the other agencies that help our
5 victims of domestic violence are available and
6 are helping those individuals via Zoom as well.

7 And then the final thing would just be we
8 keep getting a lot of questions about -- please
9 excuse my six year old in the background cause
10 I'm a, I'm a full-time kindergarten teacher
11 right now as well in addition to being chief
12 judge.

13 But wanted to share that with respect to
14 the landlord/tenant issues which are heard out
15 of magistrate court, we have been getting a lot
16 of questions from both sides. Those matters are
17 suspended for 60 days. That, again, is pursuant
18 to some direction that we got from our chief
19 justice, excuse me, from the supreme court as
20 well as, I believe, the mayor in the City of
21 Atlanta. And I believe CEO Thurmond gave that
22 directive as well. So those matters are
23 suspended for 60 days just to encourage
24 stability and safety, particularly for the
25 children in our county right now; that was the

1 vantage point and thought that was given to
2 suspending those types of matters.

3 We have a weekly call statewide to address
4 some of the issues that have arisen due to the
5 Coronavirus threat. And so we are constantly
6 trying to find ways to make it easy for
7 individuals to be able to access justice during
8 this time frame. And, of course, I will
9 continue to update the committee. But we are
10 working hard. We are trying to make sure that
11 the courts stay afloat as much as possible
12 while, obviously, practicing social distancing;
13 not -- we don't want our citizens to be afraid
14 to access justice, but we're not requiring the
15 burden of them coming to the courthouse to
16 receive justice.

17 And then the final word that I would say if
18 anybody ever asks is the suspension of deadlines
19 in terms of statutes of limitation or filing
20 deadlines, filing answers, all of those matters
21 are suspended during the pendency of the
22 emergency judicial order.

23 And thank you so much for supporting us.

24 CEO THURMOND: Oh, no. Thank you, Judge,
25 for your leadership during this time. You've

1 done an outstanding job.

2 Are there questions for Judge Jackson?

3 MR. MORSBERGER: Emory Morsberger here.

4 Two quick questions.

5 Are extended-stay hotels allowed to evict
6 their tenants who are normally hourly workers
7 during this time?

8 CHIEF JACKSON: Hmm. That is a good
9 question. Would those hotel owners normally
10 have to go through the eviction process? Is
11 that your understanding?

12 MR. MORSBERGER: No. No. They do not if
13 they are considered hotels. Our goal is to try
14 to keep those low-wage folks in place rather
15 than pushing them out to live under bridges.

16 CHIEF JACKSON: I've not received that
17 question before.

18 MR. MORSBERGER: Okay. Well, that's a
19 question that's going to heat up as the
20 lower-paid people are losing their jobs. And
21 our goal is to try to keep them in housing.

22 But my second question is on the law
23 enforcement. It is my understanding that the
24 police are now actually, actually pursuing much
25 fewer crimes; basically, not going after crimes

1 where someone is not hurt.

2 Is that the case? And, and managing two
3 community improvement districts, should we be
4 beefing up our security for our buildings?

5 CEO THURMOND: Mr. Morsberger --

6 CHIEF JACKSON: I was not --

7 CEO THURMOND: Yeah. Go ahead, Judge.

8 But Director Lumpkin is on the call, so
9 that may be better directed to our public safety
10 director.

11 CHIEF JACKSON: Thank you. That is what I
12 was going to say. Thank you.

13 MR. MORSBERGER: Okay. On the extended
14 stay, can we work on that?

15 CHIEF JACKSON: Let me make sure that I
16 understand.

17 You're saying that the employees who work
18 there are given --

19 MR. MORSBERGER: No.

20 CHIEF JACKSON: -- housing as part of their
21 compensation?

22 MR. MORSBERGER: No. I'm saying that the
23 residents of the extended-stay hotels, of which
24 there are numerous in DeKalb County, are usually
25 low-paid workers. And many of them have lost

1 their jobs and have no money to pay rent April
2 1st. And so our goal is to not have them
3 evicted for nonpayment of rent.

4 MR. JONES: If I can just -- this is
5 Senator Jones. If I can just interject for a
6 moment.

7 We had a conference meeting with the
8 Department of Labor. Part of the CARES Act that
9 was passed, there is assurances in there that if
10 they apply online for unemployment benefits
11 there's up to 5-, \$600 a week, they are
12 eligible. Part-time individuals that work part
13 time are eligible. Individuals that had their
14 wages cut and working now half time at the same
15 job are still eligible to get it restored. So I
16 would encourage you to remind those individuals
17 that there is unemployment benefits.

18 And the penalty to employers has been
19 waived, by the way, during this period. So it's
20 not -- it does not account against their returns
21 of unemployment benefits that employers are
22 given during this time. But I would strongly
23 encourage you to encourage those individuals to
24 go online to the Department of Labor website and
25 apply for unemployment benefits. That was part

1 of the CARES Act that was passed by the federal
2 government.

3 So there are funds out there available for
4 these people, but they have to reach out and
5 make the necessary application. Don't have to
6 do anything in person. And it's pretty much
7 guaranteed that they're going to receive up to
8 \$600 a week.

9 CEO THURMOND: Thank you, Senator. Excuse
10 me.

11 MR. MORSBERGER: Okay.

12 CEO THURMOND: Excuse me.

13 Judge Jackson, thank you so much. We want
14 to move through this. If you have additional
15 questions -- and, by the way, let me just say
16 this. On next Thursday at 6:30, which is March
17 {sic} the 9th, the task force, our task force,
18 will hold a town hall, a virtual town hall, as
19 we've done on two previous occasions where we
20 will entertain not only your questions, but
21 questions from our citizens as well as questions
22 from across the State of Georgia, if the
23 previous town halls have been any indication.
24 If you have a question not answered today,
25 please send an e-mail. I'm trying to be

1 respectful of the time of the people on the call
2 and -- if you would.

3 Thank you so much again, Judge Jackson.

4 Senator Jones and --

5 CHIEF JACKSON: Thank you.

6 CEO THURMOND: -- chairman of the senate
7 delegation as well as Chair Lady Drenner, I
8 would like for you to update us on any
9 state-related issues.

10 Senator Jones spoke to something that was
11 very important. Many of the economic supports
12 that people will need are actually state
13 originated. They're a state program and/or
14 administered, whether it's the unemployment
15 insurance program, the SNAP program which is
16 generally known as food stamp, or cash
17 assistance. And I know we have the DFACS
18 director on. We talked to our delegations. So
19 Senator Jones, Representative Drenner, would you
20 all like to take a moment to update us on some
21 of these key state-level issues?

22 MR. JONES: Thank you, Mr. CEO. And those
23 issues are really important, by the way. One
24 certainly deals with unemployment.

25 I cannot tell you how important the hearing

1 was, the hearing yesterday that we had with our
2 labor commissioner, and how important it is to
3 let people know, particularly those daycare
4 workers and -- who may not feel as if they're
5 eligible for unemployment during this period;
6 they are. And there's a lot of provisions
7 that's been put in there in the CARES Act, by
8 the way, for times such as this. They don't
9 have to qualify. They simply fill out the
10 application and those monies are being made
11 available to people during this crisis time in
12 America. SNAP benefits have been increased.

13 It's also important to let everybody know,
14 and I'm sure Chair Lady Drenner will concur,
15 that essentially all of the state services have
16 moved online. And there's a really good
17 website, Georgia Public Health. And you can
18 Google it, but it gives daily updates on any
19 declarations by the governor, any actions taken
20 by the various departments and state
21 governments. And that information is critical.
22 I use it regularly, by the way, considering that
23 we are doing our jobs virtually as well.

24 And I guess everyone's heard about our
25 prison system and, and those non -- some of the

1 offenders that have been released. And that's
2 an issue that's continuing to be addressed as
3 well because that virus has already moved into
4 our prison system and we're trying to stop the
5 spread in that system as well. I've heard an
6 accurate update already from our superintendent
7 in DeKalb County Schools. And that -- those
8 kind of efforts have been implemented statewide,
9 by the way.

10 And those deadlines and things that have
11 been issued by the governor, they -- we passed
12 when we were back in session on the 16th of
13 March, by the way, in that executive order that
14 he passed cause we have to affirm the executive
15 orders by the governor. It essentially gives
16 him authority out to the end of March -- till
17 end of April till they -- I think that
18 information is correct.

19 And as far as our legislative body is
20 concerned, we have not been told when we're
21 going back into session. But if there is any
22 other executive orders that have been issued by
23 the governor, we know that we have to go back in
24 session probably late April, sometime in May to
25 affirm those executive orders, if nothing else.

1 And when we are in a suspended session -- and I
2 use the word -- emphasize "suspended" because,
3 technically, we are still in session, by the
4 way. We suspended session on crossover days,
5 but there's still a lot of legislation out there
6 that's pending.

7 We passed our midyear budget. We have not
8 passed the final budget, the big budget for the
9 next fiscal year that starts July 1. So all
10 those are actions that we're going to be
11 required to take at some point soon. And we
12 just don't know when that day is.

13 And hopefully everyone has heard about the
14 threat of the virus in the state senate. Chair
15 Lady Drenner, I don't know if you guys have had
16 any confirmed cases in the house, but we've had
17 at least six over the senate of my members. And
18 those are just the ones that have come forward.
19 We don't know if there's any others out there
20 that's dealing with this virus that's not come
21 forward publicly and disclosed it. But we pray
22 for us as, as we continue to attempt to do the
23 state's business.

24 And I will hand it off to our chair lady
25 from the house in DeKalb County, Chair Lady

1 Drenner.

2 MS. DRENNER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

3 We get daily updates from the governor's
4 office which are pretty comprehensive. As
5 Senator Jones mentioned, there's lab updates
6 about where's vendor testing and you can go to
7 do that. You know, a lot of members are sending
8 in to the governor's office suppliers that are
9 coming forward through individuals like myself
10 and Senator Jones. There's a couple of really
11 good websites from the SCIA (phonetic) and the
12 Georgia Department of Labor, Driver's Services.

13 And I, I would like to just comment that
14 our county has done an outstanding job. And,
15 Mr. CEO, you, you have led the state in
16 responses. Our caucuses, our democratic
17 caucuses, are still calling for the governor to
18 issue a shelter in place statewide. As you
19 know, there are a lot of hotspots out there.
20 And I think that the reason that our county has
21 not mimicked Albany is because of your swift
22 actions.

23 And so I -- from my house, who I'm -- as
24 Chief Jackson said, she's running a full-time
25 daycare -- running a full-time kindergarten, I'm

1 running a full-time daycare from my house. I'm
2 learning to be a preschool teacher. So it's
3 very reassuring to know that our county is, is
4 mobilizing in the form of this task force and
5 that you have jumped into action.

6 CEO THURMOND: Thank you, Madam Chair.

7 And, of course, we have great partnership
8 with our municipal leaders who we will hear from
9 shortly, but I understand the DFACS director is
10 on the call.

11 Mr. Smith, and I've not heard or had the
12 opportunity to talk to you directly, so I've
13 been looking forward to hearing comments from
14 you in terms of where we are with our most
15 vulnerable population in DeKalb County. As a
16 former DFACS director, I know the challenges
17 you're facing. So can you briefly give us some
18 update as to where we are in terms of the
19 population that is in the greatest need of
20 economic and other support services?

21 MR. SMITH: Certainly. Good afternoon,
22 Mr. CEO. I thank you for the invitation to
23 participate on the task force.

24 Currently we have a little more than 850
25 children and youth in foster care in DeKalb

1 County. I want to let you all know the three
2 high-level areas for our response: Our Child
3 Welfare; our Office of Family Independence,
4 which is our economic support services; and then
5 our community engagement activities.

6 We continue to respond to allegations of
7 child abuse and neglect, so our child protective
8 services case managers are still responding face
9 to face when appropriate and virtually if that
10 is an option when we receive allegations of
11 child abuse and neglect. So we do consider our
12 staff first responders as well as they are very
13 bravely going into homes to ensure that our
14 children are safe and that our families are safe
15 as well. So that work continues daily.

16 Related to our Office of Family
17 Independence -- and that's where we determine
18 eligibility related to TANF, SNAP which is food
19 stamps, and Medicaid -- those services continue.
20 We have closed our lobby here at our DeKalb
21 office which is located at 2300 Parklake.
22 However, we can -- our citizens can apply online
23 at www.gateway.ga.gov. So that's G-A-T-E-W-A-Y,
24 dot, G-A, dot, G-O-V. And they can also apply
25 via telephone. And that number is

1 1-(877)423-4746. That's for questions related
2 to economic support services as well as to apply
3 online.

4 And if they have a manual application, they
5 can fax that to (678)476-3837. And if there are
6 concerns around abuse or neglect, citizens can
7 always call 1-(855)GA Child, or that's
8 1-(855)422-4453. And then, lastly, our local
9 community engagement response, DeKalb DFACS has
10 what we call the ARC, the Access and Resource
11 Center, and we actually have a food pantry
12 there. We are accepting appointments if
13 families need food items. And appointments can
14 be made at (678)476-3837.

15 So we are still working, CEO Thurmond, to
16 ensure that DeKalb's most vulnerable are served
17 during these most critical times. And we'll
18 continue to have updates for you during these
19 task force meetings.

20 CEO THURMOND: Thank you, Mr. Director, for
21 your outstanding service. And please
22 communicate to the men and women who work with
23 you every day how much we appreciate their
24 service during this critical moment in time.

25 I mentioned earlier we have a great

1 relationship with our municipal leaders. And
2 the president of the DeKalb Municipal
3 Association, the mayor of the great City of Pine
4 Lake is on the line, as well as Mayor Ernst from
5 Brookhaven.

6 So, Mayor Hammet, could you update us on
7 some of the work that's being -- outstanding
8 work that's being done on the municipal level to
9 respond to the COVID crisis?

10 MAYOR HAMMET: Yes. Good, good morning,
11 CEO. And I appreciate being part of this call.
12 This is Mayor Hammet, City of Pine Lake.

13 In anticipation of this morning's meeting,
14 I talked to a number of mayors around the city
15 of DeKalb -- I mean, DeKalb County. And as I'm
16 sure you know, I believe all of the mayors in
17 the county are in solidarity with the
18 stay-at-home edict as well as, of course, the
19 messaging of sheltering in -- I mean, social
20 distancing and closing public spaces.

21 The, the word that most of the mayors had
22 was that we feel like we have done what we can
23 with our toolbox to be in concert or harmonize,
24 as the Atlanta Regional Commissioner's letter
25 said, harmonize policy across the county. And

1 that the, the next level that needs to be taken
2 is sort of beyond our, our elected official
3 ability.

4 I did have some feedback that there was
5 some extra help asked for in terms of some
6 enforcement. A direct quote was, "Home Depot is
7 a total incubator." That was a report from a
8 contractor. So I know we have some sites. All
9 of us have these stories about places that are
10 happening around the county that, you know, as
11 we move forward we are trying to control for.

12 I want to say, you know, speaking from the
13 smallest city in DeKalb, I'm proud to say we
14 have an interesting little nexus. One of our
15 craft services trailers from the movie industry
16 has setup in our police department parking lot.
17 And in the last two days they have, they have
18 fed 236 first responders just out of this
19 woman's pocket. She's just like, you know, I'm
20 off work. I got a little extra pool of money.
21 I'm just going to be feeding our first
22 responders until the money runs out. And I saw
23 an AMR guy walk away with a chili dog that was
24 as big as a baseball glove, so that was just a
25 little bit of uplifting news on the, on the Pine

1 Lake front that was really -- really brought me
2 a lot of smiles.

3 But I think, in general, the, the message
4 is that the mayors of DeKalb County in concert
5 with what the CEO has been doing are, are all on
6 the same page. We're all looking at the same
7 data. And I'd also like to thank the Georgia
8 Municipal Association for keeping us abreast of
9 what is current. And we just will continue.

10 I'm pleased to be part of this task force.
11 I'm sure that Mayor Ernst may have something to
12 add.

13 John, would you like to say a few words?

14 MAYOR ERNST: Yes. Thanks, mayor, county.
15 John Ernst, Mayor of Brookhaven. Again, thank
16 you so much for having me on this task force.

17 As, as folks know -- or as you know,
18 Mr. CEO, and the other people that there has
19 been great coordination between the county, the
20 cities, the school system; all the major players
21 in DeKalb County. And that started even before
22 it was a, a major, major issue, or thought was a
23 major issue.

24 Mr. CEO, you and I on March 11th at the, at
25 the Brookhaven Chamber of Commerce meeting were

1 sitting down and we were talking nothing but
2 COVID on March 11th, just before really -- I
3 think the state had just a few cases. As you
4 guys know, the City of Brookhaven had an
5 employee notify us on the 13th that they had
6 COVID. We immediately shut down city hall on
7 the 14th.

8 But on -- what was more important on the
9 regional aspect, not just Brookhaven, was on
10 March 15th we convened an emergency meeting of
11 the DeKalb Municipal Association, all the
12 mayors, in which we did have the CEO and
13 Superintendent Tyson and Chairman Marshall Orson
14 on the call along with GMA executive director
15 and other, other people from GMA.

16 I can tell you those questions and those
17 comments out of that meeting was the backbone of
18 the questions to the governor on, on March 17th
19 when the -- all the mayors of all of the entire
20 state had a teleconference with the governor.
21 And that meeting on March 15th, the questions --
22 I think, not -- 80 percent or 85 percent of the
23 questions came out of our meeting that we were
24 on on the 15th. So we, we have been -- you
25 know, DeKalb has been leading this response in

1 the metro area and the state area statewide to,
2 to ask questions and concerns.

3 We, we, we continue to -- we are continuing
4 to work with the county and we continue to work
5 with you, Mr. CEO, in any capabilities
6 whatsoever. As stated before, myself, and I'm
7 sure all the mayors, you know, in terms of
8 testing sites, anywhere you want to be in, in my
9 city, please let me know. We'll provide
10 security around the clock. We'll provide all
11 the services needed to, to do that.

12 And I look -- I thank you for having me be
13 on this task force and continuing our great
14 partnership.

15 CEO THURMOND: Thank you, Mr. Mayor, Madam
16 Mayor, for your continued support.

17 One of the things that Ms. Vivian Ernst and
18 her staff have carefully analyzed the municipal
19 orders, the executive orders that have been
20 issued. And so when we were able to move, we
21 tried as best we can to align our order with
22 what many municipalities had already done to
23 create synergy.

24 I also want to acknowledge -- she's not on
25 the phone, but the chair lady of Gwinnett

1 County, Ms. Charlotte Nash. On last Friday we
2 worked together to coordinate the issuance of
3 the stay-at-home order because so many of our
4 citizens in Gwinnett and DeKalb migrate across
5 the border on an ongoing basis. So I'll mention
6 that as well. So thank you.

7 The other thing we're most proud of in
8 DeKalb is that we are a MARTA pioneer. More
9 than 40 years ago, DeKalb residents -- and Ms.
10 LeAnne Levitan was one of them -- advocated for
11 support of MARTA and bringing MARTA into DeKalb
12 County. We're the first suburban area with
13 heavy rail. And we have a great leader now, CEO
14 Jeff Parker, who is a transformational leader
15 and has done great things in a very short period
16 of time.

17 CEO Parker, could you brief us on the steps
18 that have been taken for those of us who are
19 still -- who are riding MARTA to ensure their
20 safety in the face of this pandemic?

21 MR. PARKER: Yeah. Thank you, CEO, for
22 including me on this, on this esteemed panel.

23 I'm really glad that I can share some of
24 the information. I'm going to be brief. And I
25 will share, although it's available on our

1 website by e-mail -- it's pretty simple --
2 jparker@itsmarta.com. So if there's any
3 follow-up questions, you can do it through
4 Delores or directly through me. I want to be
5 helpful.

6 You know, one thing that I think I should,
7 I should point out is that -- the obvious, that
8 there is a ton of anxiety out there right now;
9 personal anxiety about our own personal safety.
10 And our frontline employees at MARTA are not
11 immune from, from that situation, so I want to
12 thank them for their dedication and their hard
13 work and assure them and assure everyone on this
14 phone call that we are taking very, very
15 seriously our need to protect both our employees
16 and our customers.

17 And we're doing that by, by, by really
18 trying to understand and follow at great lengths
19 the recommendations of public health officials
20 like the ones on this phone and the CDC. And
21 we're making sure that we're up to date on all
22 of those recommendations and, and following
23 them.

24 One of the things that we have observed --
25 and I think it's, it's, it's going to be strange

1 for me to say and it feels odd every time I say
2 it, but it is the truth -- we have seen a
3 significant decrease in our ridership. The
4 message that we've put out is that we are going
5 to be here as a transit system for the people
6 who need us, and those who don't need us
7 shouldn't ride our system. It's that simple.

8 And so we have seen a 60 percent decline of
9 our bus ridership and a 70 percent decline on
10 our rail ridership. And in light of that, what
11 we have done is we've done -- taken some steps
12 to decrease our service, but in a way that, that
13 is not going to encourage overcrowding of our,
14 of our bus service and rail service.

15 Our ten busiest bus routes are still
16 running the same way; regular weekday service.
17 We have about a 30 percent decrease in the
18 remainder of our bus service. And our, and our
19 rail service is running like Sunday service with
20 starting early in the morning like we do on the
21 weekdays.

22 We built in some operational procedures
23 with some extra buses out there in strategic
24 locations to make sure that if there is
25 overcrowding that we are taking buses -- or, or

1 taking buses out of service; not taking the
2 passengers off the bus, but not allowing anyone
3 else to add and getting an extra bus on that
4 route to run. And we're monitoring that on an
5 ongoing basis.

6 We are protecting our employees through
7 policies like closing the rear -- closing the
8 front doors and only allowing boarding through
9 the, through the rear doors of our vehicles to
10 keep our bus operators safe. We've closed some
11 of our restrooms to reduce the, the close
12 coordination where we're letting people in and
13 out of restrooms. And we're really focusing on
14 our station cleanliness; the cleanliness of our
15 rail and bus vehicles. And our unionized
16 employees who are responsible for cleaning
17 overnight our stations and buses and, and rail
18 cars are working hard to, to do that.

19 Another thing that we initiated quite a
20 long time ago, it's an important piece of our
21 strategy, is to track the health of our
22 employees. And we have a, a very clear system
23 where we're communicating with our employees who
24 are calling in sick making sure that if there's
25 any suspicion or actual confirmation of anyone

1 with the virus -- and we do have eight employees
2 at MARTA who have been, been diagnosed with the
3 virus -- that we're making sure that those --
4 the people who are working in close contact with
5 them are sent home to self-quarantine. And
6 we're taking that very, very safely.

7 So we've got, we've got a lot of activity.
8 We've got a lot of efforts going on to keep our
9 system safe. We're committed to continue to do
10 that. And we will continue to make sure that we
11 fully understand the recommendations of public
12 health and continue to work with our
13 jurisdictional partners like DeKalb County to
14 make sure that the people who need to rely on us
15 to get to those essential jobs are able to ride
16 MARTA. And that we're clearly encouraging
17 people who don't need to rely on us not to use
18 our system. And, most importantly, to make sure
19 that anyone who is not feeling well is simply
20 not riding our system no matter what.

21 So that's a brief update. And I supplied
22 you with some contact information, so please
23 reach out if you have any questions.

24 Anything else, CEO? I'm more than happy to
25 answer some questions on here if you need me to.

1 CEO THURMOND: Thank you.

2 Are there critical questions for
3 Mr. Parker?

4 MS. COCHRAN-JOHNSON: CEO, this is Lorraine
5 Cochran-Johnson. I don't have a critical
6 question for Mr. Parker, but I did have a
7 question for Representative Drenner and Senator
8 Jones.

9 MS. DRENNER: Okay. Go ahead, please.

10 MS. COCHRAN-JOHNSON: Yes.

11 MS. DRENNER: I can, I can hear you.

12 MS. COCHRAN-JOHNSON: Thank, thank you.

13 I had received a call from an attorney who
14 had been contacted by an individual who reported
15 a DeKalb County business on the governor's
16 hotline for their failure to literally comply
17 with the shelter-in-place directive. And, also,
18 within the workplace, they have failed to
19 enforce the 6-foot distancing. The business
20 owner was notified and he did fire the
21 individual; the whistleblower. The current
22 whistleblower protection, they're rather anemic
23 if you really read it at this point and they
24 would not apply to someone who was fired for
25 challenging a company's decision to defy the

1 current directive for either shelter in place or
2 the 6-foot social distancing.

3 I've done a little bit of research and I
4 don't see that there is any other state at this
5 point who has addressed this issue. And I
6 believe that this is something that should
7 probably be addressed on the state level. I
8 don't want to carry this conversation too far to
9 the left, but I did want to ask whether or not
10 either you, Representative Drenner, or Senator
11 Jones have had any conversation on this issue.

12 And, also, following this call, I will send
13 both of you an e-mail because I would be more
14 than happy to work alongside you because this,
15 this was very alarming and is a concern because
16 I think we may need to address this issue.

17 MS. DRENNER: Commissioner, no. I can say
18 that I have not, excuse me, I have not heard
19 this on any of the calls. Our, our last call
20 with the governor, we as a caucus submitted our
21 questions to the minority leader, and then he
22 submitted them to the governor's office, and
23 then they would address in the call.

24 So if you would like to send me the
25 information that you have, I will follow the

1 protocol that has been in place -- that has been
2 put in place for us to address these types of
3 questions.

4 MS. COCHRAN-JOHNSON: Understood. And
5 thank you so much.

6 MS. DRENNER: Sure. Thank you.

7 MS. CROWELL: Okay. Thank you,
8 Representative Drenner.

9 We have two other groups that we think are
10 very important for us, and we're mindful of
11 everyone's time. We'd like our Sheriff Melody
12 Maddox, if she would give us an update on what's
13 going on with her department as it relates to
14 COVID-19.

15 SHERIFF MADDOX: Yes, ma'am. Thank you so
16 much. I appreciate it. First of all, let me
17 just tell everybody thank you for this
18 opportunity. And I want to thank everybody on
19 this call. They have really been helpful.

20 And to keep this short and brief, to the
21 point, first of all, let me just give you an
22 update. I'm sure many of you all have heard
23 that I am out of the office and -- because I had
24 a possible interaction with an employee that
25 tested positive for COVID-19. However, if you

1 look at the timeline in between, it's been over
2 two weeks with the incubation period for the
3 COVID-19. And I had a teleconference with the
4 doctor at which time there was no signs or
5 symptoms and I was cleared to go back to work.
6 So let me just clear that up for everybody,
7 first and foremost, to let you all know that I
8 am okay.

9 Now, as to the -- thank you all. Sorry.
10 My kid was bringing me food. And just to give
11 an update on the agency, as you all know, we --
12 right about now we have a little over 1400
13 inmates in the jail. And we've been working
14 with the courts, as Judge -- Chief Judge Jackson
15 said, with SORs, you know, releasing
16 individuals.

17 And we want to make sure that it's noted
18 that those individuals that are released are
19 low-level misdemeanor violators. These are not
20 your hard-core criminals that are being
21 released. And they had very low bonds and which
22 would be sitting in the facility without being
23 able to be released.

24 With that said, we have a plan of action
25 that has been in place for so long and -- you

1 know, before this, but nobody ever prepared for
2 the COVID-19. We were prepared for TB and other
3 infectious diseases, but not for the COVID.
4 Anxiety has set in. We have put the inmates on
5 a 14-day quarantine. And that is so we can stop
6 the movement because we already had two
7 employees as well as two inmates that tested
8 positive for COVID-19. And we just want to make
9 sure that we stop the movement from there and
10 because the anxiety has set in with the inmates.

11 So to counter -- counteract some of that
12 and to put the inmates at ease, first of all, we
13 want to make sure that we have control. I sent
14 out a personal letter to all 14-plus inmates
15 that was hand delivered to them. And the first
16 thing's first is to get control, oversight, and
17 authority and care for this facility. And that
18 was -- that is what has taken place. So they're
19 on a 14-day quarantine. They come out on next
20 Friday.

21 And we have employees that once come in
22 contact, depending on the length of time they
23 had the exposure, they are put on a 14- or it
24 may be a 5-day quarantine. As of right now, I
25 am down probably about 50 employees at the

1 agency. We've received help from the marshal
2 unit which is assisting us because we still have
3 to do virtual court. And every now and again,
4 depending on the case, we have to move that
5 inmate to the court -- virtual courtroom which
6 is upstairs on our third floor. And, again,
7 working with the judges has, has assisted us
8 with that.

9 And, gosh, I mean, it's just, it's just so
10 much. But just note that the -- all the inmates
11 even with our grounds crew has been put on
12 lockdown for the 14-day quarantine. So the
13 workers that we have at the jail have been
14 stepping up and beyond. And I have to say that
15 they are doing an outstanding job. As we speak,
16 our Chief Deputy Akies is outside the jail -- if
17 you go there right now, is cutting the grass
18 because we want to make sure that this agency
19 continues to slow the way it should and that the
20 health and safety, number one, of the employees
21 are taken care of and of the inmates.

22 I don't want -- again, want to go into it
23 cause there's so much that is going on over
24 there, but I will take any questions. But it's
25 just, it's just a lot. And we're containing and

1 we're making it happen and I'm very pleased with
2 the workers. I'm pleased with the support of
3 the commissioners, Mr. CEO. And DeKalb, DeKalb
4 Police Department has been very helpful with the
5 marshals. So thank you all so much for this
6 outpouring at this point.

7 And with respect of time, so -- and I am
8 fine. I self-quarantined myself. The
9 incubation period is over, but I
10 self-quarantined myself just because of, you
11 know, the safety of everybody and my family. I
12 have not seen my grandkids since the first week
13 in March.

14 MS. CROWELL: Thank you, Sheriff Maddox.
15 You be sure to give them a big hug when -- as
16 soon as you can.

17 Are there any questions for the sheriff?

18 SHERIFF MADDOX: Okay. Well, and we -- and
19 just to let you --

20 CEO THURMOND: Yes, sheriff. We --

21 SHERIFF MADDOX: We have masks -- yeah.

22 CEO THURMOND: Go ahead, sheriff. I'm
23 sorry. Go ahead. Go ahead.

24 SHERIFF MADDOX: No. I was just saying we
25 do have masks. We finally did receive some of

1 the masks, but we've taken the extra step in
2 making sure that those officers that are working
3 do have masks because they come in contact with
4 those inmates on a day-to-day basis. I just
5 want people to know that this is a facility that
6 never closes and we are there.

7 And I know some people are asking, well,
8 sheriff, why are you there, and how did you even
9 come in contact with this individual? And it is
10 important for people to know that I am the
11 sheriff. I'm a frontline supervisor. And in
12 order for me to make decisions, I need to be
13 there. I need to see what's going on so that I
14 can make these decisions. I do have people in
15 place, don't get me wrong, but I need to be
16 there in the trenches, in the trenches with
17 them.

18 And this, this is working and it is what it
19 is. I understand that I have to be safe, but I
20 also have to make sure that the employees are
21 safe. And I have to make sure their families
22 are safe in order to keep them coming to work.
23 And I will continue to do what I need to do in
24 order to protect myself as well as protect
25 everybody else. But, also, to make sure that

1 you all are safe to make sure that these
2 individuals are not released back into our
3 community able to wreak havoc on our day-to-day
4 lives.

5 I'm responsible for the administrative
6 court field and jail divisions. We still have
7 to execute certain warrants such as murder
8 warrants and domestic violence warrants. Those
9 are things that we just cannot stop doing as, as
10 a sheriff. We just -- we cannot do that. And,
11 again, this is my number one priority.

12 And I want everybody on this call to know
13 that I am dedicated and committed. And as soon
14 as this is over, which is today is the last day,
15 I will be back in my office and you all can
16 reach out to me. So I wanted you all to know so
17 that when it gets out into the media that, no, I
18 do not have COVID-19. It is a potential
19 exposure and, because of that, we take every
20 case serious.

21 And we have two entries at the jail: The
22 front and the jail lobby side. No one gets into
23 that agency without their temperature being
24 checked. We have an infrared thermometer on
25 each side. Everybody must be checked. And I am

1 not exempt from not being checked. I have no
2 temp, no problem; nothing. So I take my job
3 very seriously.

4 You hear that authority in my voice because
5 I'm very serious about what's going on and I'm
6 very serious about my community and about making
7 sure that you all are safe cause my grandkids
8 are here. And, again, not being able to see
9 them for almost a month is very hard for me.

10 CEO THURMOND: Thank you so much, Sheriff.
11 And, of course, our prayers go out to you, your
12 members of the sheriff department, their
13 families, as well as the people you're serving
14 county wide. And, of course, whatever we can do
15 to support and assist, you know that this
16 government and this community are to do that.
17 You be safe and you be healthy. And we know
18 your level of commitment to your job and to our
19 county.

20 As you know, as we stated earlier, this is
21 a two-prong crisis. Health, of course, we've
22 heard a lot about, but this is also an economic
23 crisis. And I submit to you that as the weeks
24 unfold, the economic element will continue to
25 elevate itself in importance. As a matter of

1 fact, there's been some ongoing tension in the
2 political arena about how can you address one
3 and not damage the other.

4 And so we're proud that we have five
5 individuals who are outstanding representatives
6 of our business community on this call: Ms. Ann
7 Hanlon with the Perimeter CID; Dorian DeBarr
8 with the DeKalb Development Authority; Ken
9 Coleman who's stepped forward to help us with
10 the DeKalb Chamber; of course, the legendary
11 Emory Morsberger, our former colleague in the
12 Georgia House of Representatives; and, of
13 course, the Brookhaven Chamber President, Alan
14 Goodman.

15 And so I would like for you all to help us
16 better understand what government can do to
17 support and assist the employees, the employers,
18 and our businesses in DeKalb County to help
19 bridge this gap that's being created by this
20 virus.

21 So I'll call on my good friend Ann Hanlon
22 first, and then Mr. Morsberger, Alan Goodman,
23 and then, of course, Mr. DeBarr, and
24 Mr. Coleman.

25 MS. HANLON: Thank you, CEO Thurmond. This

1 is Ann Hanlon with the Perimeter Community
2 Improvement District.

3 And I just want to say I've been a DeKalb
4 County resident for over 15 years. And my
5 DeKalb pride, certainly, my cup runneth over
6 this morning listening to everyone speak. I've
7 got two children in the DeKalb County Public
8 School system, so I want to thank Ms. Ramona
9 Tyson for her work there. I'm so proud of the
10 team that has been assembled here and the hard
11 work we're doing.

12 So two quick updates from Perimeter. I
13 wanted to speak quickly on infrastructure and
14 business. So in terms of the public
15 infrastructure, the Perimeter CID has been
16 working with the CEO staff at the county, also
17 with our city partners in Dunwoody and
18 Brookhaven, and the Commissioner Russell
19 McMurray to declare the construction site at
20 I-285 and Georgia 400 as an essential service to
21 the State of Georgia.

22 So at least for now I'm happy to report
23 that construction can continue there for the
24 interchange remodel. It was actually slightly
25 behind schedule, so a silver lining of this is

1 that this is a chance for the contractor there
2 to continue working, if not make up for lost
3 time, because they can now do road closures and
4 lane closures in places that they normally would
5 not on normal business days. They would usually
6 reserve those for nights and weekends. Now they
7 can be a little bit more aggressive about road
8 closures to make up some construction time. So
9 thankful to everyone on this call who worked on
10 that, and especially to Commissioner McMurray to
11 deem that one of the critical infrastructure
12 sites for the whole State of Georgia, and
13 certainly for DeKalb.

14 The second thing I'll mention is for our --
15 the business community in Perimeter, you know,
16 most of our businesses are closed. And I wanted
17 to point out that Perimeter Mall is closed. And
18 the CID, we're working closely with Brookfield
19 Properties is the owner of that mall. They -- I
20 wanted to make sure the CEO and Delores know
21 that Brookfield has offered up that site -- the
22 Perimeter Mall site is now totally closed -- as
23 a site for the county to use in the case if you
24 need mobile testing site or anything for
25 healthcare purposes. That's a huge site. And

1 they've offered that parking lot and the
2 facility up if the county should need it for
3 anything during this time.

4 So that's it from Perimeter. Thank you for
5 the opportunity.

6 CEO THURMOND: Mr. Morsberger.

7 MR. MORSBERGER: Emory Morsberger here.
8 We've got a couple different things that we're
9 dealing with over in Tucker and down in south
10 DeKalb.

11 First of all, about half of our companies
12 are closed down, but some of them may not open
13 again. We are the southeast regional
14 distribution center for Macy's. You may have
15 read that they're having financial problems and,
16 and we've actually been helping their people
17 find jobs elsewhere. Our goal is to try to help
18 the businesses get whatever government funding
19 might exist, and at the same time, help keep the
20 employees plugged into financial support as it's
21 available from various government sources.

22 Our second issue relates to, to crime. We,
23 we are aware that the police are enforcing less
24 crime just because there's only so much they can
25 do. And, and their, their forces are probably

1 going to be depleted over the next month or so.
2 What I'm trying to figure out is, is what crimes
3 should we be working to prevent on our end. How
4 much extra private security should I have
5 patrolling Mountain Industrial Boulevard? We've
6 got money to do that and we're willing to pick
7 up the slack. We just need to be tuned in on
8 what the police are able to do. We were excited
9 last week to actually supply the, the Tucker
10 precinct with 50 gallons of hand sanitizer to
11 keep them clean and healthy.

12 Our third issue is something that we're
13 seeing in Gwinnett, and that is eviction of
14 tenants from extended-stay hotels. These
15 tenants are, are usually lower-level employees
16 that are often hourly wage earners and, and are
17 living week to week. So when they lose their
18 job at Waffle House, there's no money to pay for
19 food or rent.

20 It would be great if there was some kind of
21 a policy that could be created to help keep
22 those, those people in place until they have
23 adequate money to, to cover a portion of their
24 rent and to cover their other living expenses
25 rather than them being evicted out and living in

1 tents in the woods.

2 But, in general, DeKalb has been going
3 strong and we're proud to be here. Tucker has
4 been great as well.

5 CEO THURMOND: Thank you, Representative
6 Morsberger.

7 But I want to address your second item
8 before we go to Alan and Dorian and Ken. I'm
9 not aware of any directive or, or either
10 decision by Director Lumpkin and/or Chief Ramos
11 to reduce our enforcement activities.

12 And if Director Lumpkin is on the call,
13 could you clarify what Mr. Morsberger has
14 stated, i.e., that we are enforcing less as a
15 result of the COVID virus?

16 MR. LUMPKIN: Yes, sir, Mr. CEO, and
17 committee members. We have not made that
18 direction. Our staffing is -- continues to be
19 better than it has been in the past. We
20 actually have more officers on the street today
21 than we've had since you took office. The --
22 our self-initiated calls are up the last couple
23 weeks compared to this time last year. Our
24 citation rate is down. Our traffic citation
25 rate is down.

1 But there's -- at some point we may have to
2 implement contingency plans to -- if we lose
3 10 percent or 15 percent or 20 percent of our
4 staffing. We have contingency plans for that.
5 But for our public safety today, we have more
6 folks on the street than when you took office
7 and what it was this time last year.

8 CEO THURMOND: So, Emory, help me
9 understand your understanding as to a reduced
10 level of enforcement cause we're not aware of
11 that.

12 MR. MORSBERGER: What I've heard is this
13 rumor from various officers that, that
14 non-victim crimes are not very import. And I
15 can understand that. And those may or may not
16 be true. We just want to make sure that,
17 that -- many of our buildings are now not
18 operational. They're empty. And that's the
19 prime time when we experience break-ins and
20 burglaries. If we're, if we're reducing any
21 kind of enforcement, we just need to know about
22 that in advance so that we can upgrade our own
23 enforcement.

24 CEO THURMOND: No.

25 SHERIFF MADDOX: Mr. CEO? I'm sorry.

1 CEO THURMOND: Go ahead, Mr. -- then I'll
2 come back to the sheriff.

3 Go ahead, Director Lumpkin.

4 MR. LUMPKIN: Certainly, if we were going
5 to redirect services, we would let critical
6 stakeholders know. Structures that are empty or
7 closed because people are sheltering, those
8 would not be victim -- victimless crimes.
9 Actually, we've caught a number of burglars in
10 the last couple of days where we've responded
11 our, our security. Our shared responsibility
12 citizens call us and directing us to those.
13 Burglary will always be one of those crimes that
14 you will be enforcing.

15 CEO THURMOND: Sheriff? Did you have
16 something to add, Sheriff?

17 SHERIFF MADDOX: Yes. I just wanted to add
18 with Mr. Lumpkin -- Director Lumpkin, if I may,
19 sir.

20 And what he's speaking on -- what I think
21 they're probably speaking on, and as a police
22 officer -- I'm going to the police mode -- that
23 we have what you call citeable offenses. That
24 does not mean that they're not prosecuting these
25 people or enforcing the law on that. What

1 they're saying is those crimes that you can cite
2 that person and release them on, they are still
3 held accountable for the crime they have
4 committed.

5 And, like you said, burglary or anything
6 else are one of those crimes that will call for
7 you to be incarcerated; not a citeable. That's
8 not something you just give a citation on and
9 release. So I think that's the difference that
10 people need to understand that you have what you
11 call citeable offenses that you can write
12 citations on and release the individual. And
13 then you have others that must be -- they'll
14 called for transport, if that clears up
15 anything. There's a big difference there.

16 So I don't think DeKalb PD is stopping
17 cause we don't see a stop in it. They are still
18 coming into the agency.

19 MR. MORSBERGER: Thank you. That covers
20 it. I appreciate what you're doing.

21 CEO THURMOND: All right. Thank you,
22 Mr. Morsberger.

23 Now, let's get back to my good friend Alan
24 Goodman from the Brookhaven Chamber.

25 MR. GOODMAN: Thank you, sir. I appreciate

1 it. It's funny. The last time I saw you was at
2 our, our luncheon, which went over extremely
3 well, thanks to you. And, in fact, a lot of
4 people have told me that was the last good meal
5 they've had, so we were very --

6 CEO THURMOND: The last time I had a good
7 meal with more than two people in the room.
8 That's for sure.

9 MR. GOODMAN: I know. But it was, it was a
10 great event, so we were -- we're really
11 appreciative.

12 What the Brookhaven Chamber has been
13 involved in along with the City of Brookhaven
14 is, is that we're trying to help pickup morale
15 with the residents and the businesses. We've --
16 we're involved in a, in a campaign called
17 Brookhaven Strong. We're putting out yard signs
18 now with Brookhaven Strong on them.

19 And it's going to -- and the restaurants
20 that are in need of a lot of help, they're --
21 we're giving the signs to the restaurants. And
22 we're advertising on our searchable media that
23 when you go to pick up an order at one of the
24 restaurants, these signs are available for you
25 to pick up as well. And it's all free of

1 charge. So we've just started that campaign.
2 Actually, it's a -- we have the signs were
3 printed today, so that's just going on.

4 We're -- through our food and beverage
5 association which we call the Epicurean Society,
6 we've been very involved in helping all the
7 restaurants to get what they need and advising
8 them and helping them to promote during this
9 very difficult time.

10 We're also -- the chamber is involved in a
11 confer -- a lot of conference calls to update
12 small business as far as the financial support
13 that's available. And, as you know, that's,
14 that's been on changing from two and a half
15 weeks ago where it was the SBA wanted businesses
16 to contact them directly to now it's on local
17 banks, so we're, we're very happy about that.
18 And we're dealing constantly with the banks in
19 the City of Brookhaven to see what is happening
20 so we can give instant updates on, on that.

21 We're also keeping everybody informed on
22 all of our social media as well, so it's a, it's
23 a constant thing. And, in fact, I've -- just
24 from a humor standpoint, I've started referring
25 to myself as the Brookhaven Chamber wartime

1 president. So we're moving ahead. We're, we're
2 constantly involved.

3 We've -- the City of Brookhaven, on
4 April 2nd we're doing a virtual telecast whereby
5 we're having -- we're inviting our people to, to
6 be involved. We're going to have everybody do
7 the pledge of allegiance. We have a local opera
8 star who is going to sing the Star Spangled
9 Banner.

10 So just trying to keep morale up and
11 keeping all of the community involved is what
12 we're doing. Thank you.

13 CEO THURMOND: Let me follow up.

14 So are the bankers you're talking to, are
15 they actually going to be able to originate and
16 turn these loans around in a reasonable amount
17 of time? Cause by definition, typically it's a
18 very ponderous process.

19 MR. GOODMAN: Well, you know, it's also
20 what you mean by your definition of
21 "reasonable." A lot of this is, is at the
22 behest of the SBA. The, the bill was passed
23 last week, or ten days ago; whatever. They're
24 still writing the regulations how it's going to
25 work. We think it's going to actually get to

1 the bankers either by the -- by Friday or next
2 Monday or Tuesday.

3 What we're doing is we're encouraging all
4 the small businesses in Brookhaven. Although we
5 don't know exactly what it's, it's going to be,
6 the banks have been sending out notices.
7 There's certain things that the bank knows
8 they're going to have to have for an SBA loan
9 such as IRS forms, tax returns, bank statements.
10 Small business owners are going to have to
11 supply what their monthly income is. And that
12 is -- and the SBA is going to be distributing
13 money based on two and a half times the, the
14 monthly revenue from that owner.

15 So that's, that's part of what's going on.
16 It keeps, it keeps changing. Now it has come
17 out that small business is going to be any
18 business that has less than 500 employees, so
19 that's, that's taking a different turn with it
20 altogether. From what I've observed from three
21 or four of the banks, they are just being
22 besieged now by people calling to, to apply for
23 it. There's, there's now a new form on, on the
24 SBA for small businesses.

25 And, also, what some businesses don't

1 realize, they can even be sole proprietor
2 businesses. So there's applications for that.
3 And all of this will be going through local
4 banks, so -- and the community banks are the
5 ones that are mainly going to be getting the,
6 the blunt of all of this. So we encourage if
7 you, if you haven't been dealing with a
8 community bank to make contact.

9 A couple in our -- in Brookhaven -- for
10 instance, Piedmont, Fifth Third, Iberia -- they,
11 they are just overwhelmed right now. In fact,
12 we're trying to get one of the banks to sponsor
13 part of the yard signs that we're doing. And
14 they said they'd be glad to make a donation.
15 They don't want to sponsor cause right now they
16 have all the calls they can possibly handle. So
17 it's interesting times.

18 CEO THURMOND: Yes, it is. Thank you so
19 much, Alan. Thank you for your leadership.

20 Mr. DeBarr, and Mr. Coleman.

21 MR. DEBARR: Thank you, CEO Thurmond.
22 Thank you for your leadership during this time
23 and forming this task force. It is my absolute
24 pleasure to serve. And I honestly look forward
25 to what we are able to achieve as a group here.

1 I think it goes without saying that our
2 businesses within DeKalb County are suffering
3 financially during this time as well as our
4 diverse and talented workforce. So, CEO, I
5 applaud your quick action to address the
6 workforce training and development meetings.
7 And definitely those have been necessary to try
8 to put our workforce back to our work.

9 As for Decide DeKalb, we consider ourselves
10 as a trusted source and definitely a repository,
11 a resource of information for our local business
12 owners. For those businesses located in DeKalb
13 County, the goal is that we provide resources
14 that allow our businesses to sustain and survive
15 during the shutdown.

16 With the ever-changing environment and
17 understanding of local businesses, I think it's
18 important that we provide relevant, reliable,
19 and timely information so that businesses can
20 feel confident when they go apply for these
21 loans, whether they be SBA, local lenders,
22 regional banks and the like, and also in
23 receiving assistance.

24 So we're trying to be at the forefront of
25 that and trying to be a repository for good

1 information, so I suggest that everyone stay
2 tuned to decidedekalb.com and, definitely, our
3 social media feeders. We're trying to put
4 information out there as timely as possible.

5 So we continue to have robust and great
6 conversations with our local partners in this,
7 whether it be Georgia Department of Economic
8 Development, Georgia Power and the like, as well
9 as our local municipalities. So this Friday,
10 Decide DeKalb is hosting a meeting with all our
11 economic development professionals from our city
12 specifically so that we're able to fine tune and
13 understand what are city partners are offering,
14 and so that we're all on the same page. And
15 then we can offer those resources up through,
16 again, through our website.

17 And we just want to make sure that we're
18 all collectively moving in the right direction
19 in this and that we're hitting the nail on the
20 head with respect to the needs of our business
21 community because, again, they are suffering.
22 And we want to make sure they have the tools and
23 resources that they need in order to survive.
24 And so we're -- that is what we're doing as an
25 organization. And I welcome any questions.

1 And, again, thank you for this opportunity.

2 CEO THURMOND: Thank you, Dorian.

3 Mr. Coleman.

4 MR. COLEMAN: Thank you, Mr. CEO. And let
5 me echo the comments about thanking you and your
6 team for your leadership through this crisis.

7 We at, at the DeKalb Chamber have really
8 had a focus during this crisis on small
9 business. We've had several forums with our
10 small business owners throughout DeKalb, and
11 they have basically asked us for support in
12 three areas.

13 The first being helping them sort through
14 the litany of information that is out regarding
15 how to keep them -- their employees safe; how to
16 manage a remote workforce; and, as my good
17 friend Alan mentioned, helping them figure out
18 how much of the federal aid will flow and
19 support their, their businesses.

20 To that effort, on Monday we are hosting
21 another small business forum where Fred Daniels
22 from Citizen Trust and Jeff Taylor, CEO of
23 Oakhurst Medical, will help walk our small
24 businesses through how to access the funds, who
25 should apply, et cetera. So we invite you to

1 view our website at dekalbchamber.org for more
2 information, and encourage any good small
3 businesses in and around DeKalb who want to
4 participate in that to join us.

5 Second thing they've asked us for is to
6 help promotion, so we have started a By DeKalb
7 campaign on all of our social sites really
8 helping to make sure that our members are aware
9 of other members who are open, what their
10 operating hours are, and to also tell some of
11 the good stories that are happening with our
12 businesses in and around DeKalb. We've got a
13 number of businesses who are providing free
14 meals and supporting local farmers. And so
15 we're out now trying to get -- or working to get
16 video footage with many of our businesses around
17 in and around DeKalb to help better tell those
18 stories as well.

19 And third thing they asked us for was
20 continued advocacy. So to our municipal and
21 state partners who are on the phone, we thank
22 you for ensuring that as we laid out municipal
23 and county and state ordinances and requirements
24 that those included -- or those were written in
25 a way that help support many of our local

1 business. And so we'll, we'll continue to do
2 that. Again, I invite you guys to visit our
3 website, dekalbchamber.org for more information.

4 And, Mr. CEO, our intention is to continue
5 to focus on small business, continue to have
6 those dialogues and identify opportunities to
7 help continue to support them as they migrate
8 through. And as we begin to start to think
9 about the recovery phase, how can we connect
10 many of our local businesses to what will be
11 needed as we begin to, to come out of the
12 pandemic phase and more into economic recovery.

13 CEO THURMOND: Thank you, Mr. Coleman. And
14 thank you to all of our business and economic
15 development leaders.

16 Mr. Coleman, I want to go on record and
17 thank you for volunteering to come from the
18 private sector from one of our most
19 distinguished corporate citizens of Georgia
20 Power. We really appreciate your help. Give my
21 best to your chair, my good friend Brenda Reed.

22 Thank you all so much for those who
23 presented and participated.

24 Just for housekeeping, this entire phone
25 conference, this entire meeting will be

1 developed or submitted in writing through
2 transcript. We will turn the recording over to
3 a court reporter. Of course, it'll be shared
4 with the members on this task force and also
5 printed online so that citizens can access it
6 and benefit from the wealth of information
7 that's been shared.

8 On next Thursday at 6:30, this task force
9 will host a town hall where much of this
10 information and additional information will be
11 shared on multiple platforms working with
12 Ms. Diamond Lewis through our CCTV as well as
13 Mr. Matosky on multiple electronic platforms so
14 we'll be in touch going forward.

15 Now --

16 SHERIFF MADDOX: Mr. CEO?

17 CEO THURMOND: Yes.

18 SHERIFF MADDOX: I'm sorry to interrupt. I
19 just -- this is Sheriff Maddox. And I wanted to
20 ask you before you finalize: May I give out two
21 numbers, please, for the community so -- since
22 you said this will be available?

23 CEO THURMOND: Yes.

24 SHERIFF MADDOX: Yeah. Okay. Thank you.
25 If you don't mind, if anyone should have any

1 concern about anything in the jail as far as an
2 inmate or a loved one wanting to get some
3 information on their person incarcerated, I'm
4 going to give two numbers, and one is for
5 medical. That's (404)298-8531, (404)298-8531;
6 that's if you have a medical concern. And,
7 also, for our community relations, Ms. Lisa
8 Wiley at (404)298-8282, (404)298-8282.

9 And if no one should answer, leave a
10 message. And I can guarantee someone will
11 contact you within 24 hours. Even if they don't
12 contact you, I also check the calls and will
13 return phone calls as I, I have been doing as
14 well.

15 CEO THURMOND: Thank you.

16 SHERIFF MADDOX: So thank you, Mr. CEO.
17 And I do apologize.

18 UNIDENTIFIED VOICE: (Inaudible) to
19 disconnect because we are literally having COVID
20 calls back to back today. You know, we have a
21 task force and today is our first time actually
22 convening.

23 But let me first begin by saying to you,
24 Jeff, as well as everyone that's involved on
25 council (inaudible), this is a very important

1 call (inaudible). And I think everyone on this
2 call --

3 CEO THURMOND: Yeah.

4 UNIDENTIFIED VOICE: (inaudible). This is
5 a multiregional problem. It goes beyond health.
6 This has economic impact.

7 CEO THURMOND: Yeah. She's on another
8 call.

9 All right. So thank you all so much for
10 joining this call today. And this is not an
11 event. This is a journey. This is not just the
12 first step, but it's a critical step in DeKalb
13 County's effort to respond in an appropriate
14 way.

15 We will continue to inform you --
16 Ms. Crowell -- in the coming weeks about the
17 town hall that's going to be next Thursday.
18 We'll continue to share information with you as
19 it becomes available. And, please, take the
20 opportunity to share it with your various
21 constituencies because in this environment a
22 commodity that is in shorter supply is really
23 good, solid, credible information. And now you
24 are a critical clearinghouse to reach and to
25 share information that we receive through the

1 CEO's office.

2 I want to thank the people who put this
3 together: Mr. Matosky, Diamond Lewis, Zach
4 Williams, and Delores Crowell. And thank you
5 all for joining. Now I'll allow my presiding
6 officer to share some final words.

7 MR. BRADSHAW: Thank you, sir. I want to
8 thank everyone for their participation on this
9 call today in lending your expertise to this
10 task force. Again, I want to thank CEO Thurmond
11 for your outstanding leadership during this very
12 challenging time. And the team that's around
13 you that's supporting you in this effort, I
14 thank them as well.

15 And I want to underscore that you have the
16 support of the Board of Commissioners as you
17 lead us through this crisis. And I'll further
18 underscore that we are united as the governing
19 authority of DeKalb County.

20 So I thank you for allowing me to be a part
21 of this process. I will hand it back.

22 CEO THURMOND: Thank you, Mr. Presiding
23 Officer, members of the Board of Commissioners
24 for your ongoing support and leadership.

25 And a personal note to everyone on this

1 call. Look, I've been searching the internet
2 and calling friends. There's just no playbook;
3 no COVID-19 playbook for political leaders or
4 governmental leaders or public servants
5 anywhere. There's just no playbook. And so,
6 consequently, I need your support. But, more
7 importantly, I need your insight. I need your
8 suggestions, your ideas. I need your questions
9 in terms of how we can make better use of the
10 resources that we have.

11 So with that, I thank you once again. And,
12 most importantly, you be safe as we go about
13 this important work. God bless you.

14 (End of Task Force Meeting.)
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