

For April 30, 2020

Economic Affairs Interim Committee

Pat Murdo, Research Staff

AGENCY MONITORING - WORK GOES ON

Alcoholic Beverage Control Division

| New Activities | Previous Activities |
|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• May 31 - Deadline for agency liquor stores to place 2020 holiday orders | Jan. 22 – Public hearings on a new rule to implement limited all-beverage licenses in continuing care retirement communities and revisions to resort license rules . |

Department of Agriculture

| New Activities | Previous Activities |
|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• April 29 - Growth through Agriculture Council teleconference meeting, 1 p.m. | March 1 – Proposals due for Pulse Crop Marketing or Educational Projects |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Applications being accepted for hail insurance program. | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• June 29 - Montana Beverage Show, Helena | |

State Auditor's Office

| New Activities | Previous Activities |
|--|---------------------|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• News Releases in April warning of scams. | |

Department of Commerce

| New Activities | Previous Activities |
|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• May 18-19 Board of Housing meetings | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• June 8-9 - Tourism Advisory Council meeting | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• June 8-9 - Board of Investments meeting | April 23 - Board of Investments special meeting |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• June 11 - Coal Board meeting | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• June 12 - Revised deadline for TSEP Construction grant applications (from 5/1) | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• June 16 - Board of Housing Virtual Partnership meeting | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• July 20 - Region-Convention Visitor Bureau financial reports due for 4th Quarter FY2020 | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• For Census Information see next page | |

Department of Labor and Industry

| New Activities | Previous Activities |
|--|---------------------|
| Unemployment applications being accepted from self-employed, independent contractors: http://dli.mt.gov/self-employed-contractors | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • May 12 - Nurse licensure compact hearing on proposed rules | |

Department of Livestock

| New Activities | Previous Activities |
|---|---------------------|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • May 31 - Per capita fees due (later than normal) | |
| See below for Livestock / Dairy Information | |

Montana State Fund

| New Activities | Previous Activities |
|---|--------------------------------|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • June 5, 2020 - Board Meeting | March 13, 2020 - Board Meeting |

Banking and Financial Institutions Division

| New Activities | Previous Activities |
|----------------|--|
| | April 15 notice to check on economic impact payments |

Governor's Office of Economic Development

| New Activities | Previous Activities |
|-------------------------------------|---|
| Advises to check its Facebook page. | 2019 Report on MT Economic Development and October 2019 Update |

Specific Updates

Census - Montana's self-response, based on the U.S. Census map (<https://2020census.gov/en/response-rates.html>), shows 45.5% responding here compared to 53.7% nationally (as of April 29, 2020).

Unemployment Filings - Montana's Department of Labor and Industry recorded the following in the first three weeks of April as well as an unemployment rate for March of 4.4%, which does not include the period of most layoffs into April.

| | Week ending April 18 | Week ending April 11 | Week ending April 4 |
|------------------------------|----------------------|----------------------|---------------------|
| Initial unemployment filings | 13,668 | 17,332 | 26,457 |
| Continued claim filings | 66,175 | 60,853 | more than 50,000 |

The state is accepting filings for those not routinely eligible for unemployment insurance, including the self-employed, independent contractors, and some with COVID-19 specific reasons for not being able to work. The application portal is <https://mtpua.mt.gov/> PUA stands for Pandemic Unemployment Assistance. Those eligible for this form of unemployment insurance will get the additional \$600 a week from the federal government that is being made available to those typically eligible for unemployment insurance. The Bureau of Business and Economic Research estimated COVID-19 impacts on unemployment by industry sectors (see [chart](#)) and [reported](#) in late April a 10% unemployment rate for Montana.

Livestock and Dairy - The Board of Milk Control issued an [emergency rule](#) to address concerns about milk surpluses. With the temporary rule, any milk that is dumped will be recorded as part of a pool to avoid any particular producer being put at a disadvantage in a situation where reduced routine demand from schools and stores has led to surpluses.

In response to questions about the status of livestock markets and processing facilities, Mr. Honeycutt provided the following information on April 16:

- All protein markets including beef had already taken a cash hit from lost demand because of the slowdown.
- The issue is worsened by having processors shut down because of COVID clusters, we will probably notice it on the store shelves in the coming weeks.

The entire supply chain gets backed up. If there is nowhere for fat cattle to go to get processed, then there is no room in the feed lot for new placements, then cattle and calves are not moving off the ranches, and so on. Beef is an industry that can wait a bit although it means whoever is holding the supply now has increased operational costs waiting for a market to open up. For pork and poultry which are most aligned to a just-in-time supply chain, and there is no way or value to hold on to the animals waiting for the processor to begin moving again, many of these animals may end up being euthanized. Hogs and poultry are already being euthanized because there is nowhere to go to get them processed in certain parts of the country.