

SUCCESS

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weide said, who come in after school during “happy hour” and buy 30 cent ice cream cones. Coaches and others also favored the shop as a place bring youth for after-game parties and the like.

None of that is happening now, however, with school closed due to the pandemic. And Sorweide said getting ice cream has proved a challenge as well.

The delivery service Hought’s relied on changed its route and no longer swings through town on the way to Wallowa County. Instead, it stops in at the Safeway in Pendleton, where Sorweide said she can meet the driver and pick up her ice cream in the middle of the parking lot. She decided on a different approach.

“So we’re going to Kennewick to get our ice cream,” she said.

This last trip was fine, she said, but the ice cream was a bit soft by the time they were back in La Grande. She said she might tap another delivery service to bring ice cream to the shop but has not had the time to explore that option.

While there are hurdles, Sorweide said if the pace of business keeps up, Hought’s can operate into the summer even under the restrictions. She said she had to expand hours to keep up with the demand. Customers are not just just ordering a thing here or there, she said, but placing large orders and coming back.

“We’re making it work,” Sorweide said. “That’s the thing. Whatever we have to do.”

Still, she said, she misses having folks dine in, and social distancing means she can’t hug customers.

For more about Hought’s 24 Flavors, its hours of operations and menu, find it on Facebook or call the business at 541-962-7856.

LABOR

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movement when alarm about worker safety and public health spurred organizing and reforms in meatpacking plants, New York’s garment factories or coal mines.

“People’s fears of sickness and death are finally stronger than people’s fears of their employer,” said Daniel Graff, a labor historian at Notre Dame University. “It might be a sort of cataclysmic opening.”

Labor faces plenty of other hurdles. One involves logistical barriers — organizing generally needs to happen via text or Zoom in the era of social distancing. Workplace protests tend to happen in cars, and labor is operating under the hostile eye of the Trump administration.

Basic economics also pose a challenge. Unions

typically have more power in times of low unemployment, when it’s easier for unhappy workers — or striking ones — to find another job. The U.S. unemployment rate is projected to hit 20% soon, a level not seen since the Great Depression.

In the scramble to adjust to the outbreak, some companies that are part of the “essential” economy are rushing to hire new workers, which may temporarily give current staff some bargaining power. But many economists project more than a year of widespread joblessness, said Jed Kolko, an economist at Indeed.

High unemployment and the end of a tight labor market create “the headwind for more worker power,” Kolko said.

Even without that headwind, the labor movement has withered in past decades as employers found new ways to fend

off unions. Republican presidents stocked the National Labor Relations Board with members unsympathetic to labor, and the economy became dominated by large companies that are harder to organize and have an increasing array of tools to keep unions at bay. So-called “right to work” laws that allow workers to opt out of paying union dues have proliferated in more than half the states.

Unions have tried to adapt, targeting some of the biggest employers like Walmart and Amazon with new organizing strategies.

Only 10.7% of U.S. workers are union members, and they tend to be in the public sector, like teachers or police officers.

In the private sector, unions tend toward older-line jobs like utility workers.

Only about 1% of restaurant workers are in a union.

BREWERS

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than three-quarters of total production goes into malt, according to the state Department of Agriculture.

Mexico, a major buyer of Idaho malt barley, in the past month deemed brewing a nonessential business amid COVID-19 concerns.

In the U.S., challenges include shutdowns of restaurants and big events. The Brewers Association and the Beer Institute on

April 21 issued a letter urging states to follow the federal government’s lead in deferring collection of excise taxes.

“So it’s going to affect barley dramatically, and when that happens, the contracting companies aren’t as aggressive getting contracts out and signed,” Southeastern Idaho grower Dwight Little said.

“This is made to run progressively in a circle, and when something stops the wheel from spinning, then we’ve got trouble,” he said.



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