



Publisher's Notebook

May 2020 Matt Winters

Getting back to work depends on responsible grownups following logical precautions

In Oregon and Washington — where governors and citizens alike are trying hard to avoid losing the ground we have gained versus this terrible virus — resuming anything very similar to our former work lives is still weeks or months away.

Of course most local people have continued working throughout the covid-19 crisis, as the unemployment rate has skyrocketed to Great Depression levels. Even for most of us with jobs, the past couple months have been a time of unprecedented strains as we juggle schedules, bills, child care, work locations and more.

For those who have lost their jobs outright, or have been laid off, or whose small businesses have capsized into insolvency, the whole situation is much more grim and the need to get back to some kind normality more urgent. Unemployment payments and deferred evictions and foreclosures aren't enough to avoid sleepless nights of worry.

Despite the need for serious caution, there are some signs of hope. As phased reopening of parts of the economy moves forward,

we're noticing a little more traffic on our streets and highways. Construction activity is slowly picking up again, a vital aspect of addressing a housing shortage that hasn't diminished. Some business and recreational activities that can be resumed without undo sacrifice of personal and societal safety are starting to show signs of renewed life. These in turn will begin enhancing the circulation of cash in our economy.

There's a narrow path to travel between living smart in the midst of a pandemic and edging back toward conventional life — we're still in the Year 0 P.C. (Post-Covid). It might be year 2 or 3 P.C. before medical science really gets a handle on coronavirus, and it may take several more years before full economic recovery — before we're really, truly post-covid.

Beyond governmental steps like implementing fast and accurate testing, and tracing/isolating infections, incremental reopening of our local economy depends on strong compliance with measures including wearing masks, maintaining physical separation from strangers, and washing our hands. This will sound like a tiresome litany after so many reminders for weeks, but there is a genuine

cause-and-effect relationship between these simple actions and getting our economy moving again.

Costco and other businesses are absolutely right in requiring

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all customers and employees to comply with these requirements. Individuals and businesses that spurn these simple steps will delay reopening for everyone.

Getting everyone back to work will look like responsible grownups following logical precautions.



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