

An open question

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For the TODAY

To open or not to open, that is the question. As the state of Oregon reduces restrictions on businesses and many sectors of industry are being allowed to re-open within certain parameters, business owners are now faced with some big questions.

How do we re-open? Can we re-open? Should we re-open? Locally, these questions are being answered differently on a case-by-case basis. Owners of retail, restaurant and service industry businesses in Lincoln County have been left unsure of the next steps while restrictions limit the functionality of many local establishments.

Some small restaurant spaces are not capable of re-opening within the constraints of the state's requirements. Dan See, owner of Grill 1646 in Lincoln City, tells us that it is, "cost restrictive to reopen at this time due to the adjusted restrictions they [the state of Oregon] just added." See is facing strict guidelines that are too costly to implement in a space that wouldn't be able to seat more than a couple of tables. Grill 1646 was mid-expansion and remodel when the March 23 order came into place. Even with the expansion, his space is too small to accommodate the new restaurant re-opening rules. Despite implementing online ordering, curbside pickup and even nearby deliveries, See's diner has seen a near-75-percent reduction of income.

See has worked closely with city government to stay abreast of all the changes as each day brings new updates. As a vocal community advocate for businesses re-opening, it has been a particularly hard-hitting blow to have his own doors stay shuttered.

Throughout Oregon's "Stay at Home" period, Grill 1646 has consistently been one of the leading businesses making sure that community needs are being met — feeding food-insecure school children, working with the Eagles to feed our community and fighting to support his fellow local businesses. Now, despite his community activism and hard work to keep up with the many abrupt changes facing small businesses, See could not



Left Coast Coffee Co. owner JB Haslett grinds coffee for an order.

definitely tell us if his business would remain viable until it could fully re-open. He added that for him, the business he has today determines if he can be open tomorrow.

Another local company actively working to help the community (and bringing smiles to the faces of frontline workers) is Left Coast Coffee Co. in Depoe Bay. Left Coast's retail storefront will be staying closed at this time, as well. Owner JB Haslett tells us that while he could technically open his doors to sell to-go coffee, the retail space is a place to meet with people and is heavily tourist-based. He has felt since the beginning that it is not worth the risk to the community to be open. For those who would like to pop in and grab a freshly brewed coffee or handmade latte from one of the employees, the wait continues. Luckily, Left Coast Coffee Co. distributes locally and ships their beans nationwide to thousands of customers. The Hasletts' decision to keep the retail shop closed was based on the overwhelming feelings of the community that now is not the time for tourists to return to the coast en-masse. Their focus has shifted, instead, to bringing on new cafés, supplying new grocery stores and continuing to supply



Bryan Nichols, owner of ZuhGLife Surf Shop stays safe behind a plexiglass screen.

their online orders rather than serving hot beverages to guests off the street.

On the other side of the spectrum, we revisited two small retail shops that had to close and take their entire operation online during Oregon's Stay-Home-

Stay-Safe order. ZuhGLife Surf Shop and Lark & Meadow are two small retail businesses that are re-opening this week, alongside many others who

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