Shelter seeks donations to continue helping women

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‘Rural mountain communities will be especially hard hit’

by Henry Netherland
Mail Staff Writer

While U.S. economists are uncertain of the economic trajectory resulting from mass closures of certain businesses because of COVID-19, Emily Gallagher, assistant professor of finance at Leeds School of Business at University of Colorado-Boulder, said there are ways for small businesses to survive in the approaching unprecedented times.

Gallagher said there was “no way of sugarcoating it,” but rural mountain communities like those in Chaffee County will be especially hard hit because so much of the local economy relies on tourism. Industries that rely heavily on generating mass gatherings will struggle in upcoming weeks. Affected businesses include hotels, restaurants, bars, airlines, cruises, movie theaters and venues.

On the other hand, she said any business that is supported by remote work will do well or even thrive during the crisis, including any online or telecommunication service. Businesses in medical supplies and logistics industries will also more than likely thrive due to high demand.

She said the situation is so unprecedented because it contradicts the U.S. government’s usual goals of developing a stable economy and encouraging citizens to seek employment. U.S. economists have never really seen the government intentionally stop so many aspects of its own economy before.

For business owners who do not have an online store or a to-go option, Gallagher said they should encourage regular customers to purchase gift cards. If applicable, they should also organize a local delivery service if they do not currently have one.

To mitigate costs, she highly recommends applying for disaster loan assistance from the Small Business Administration. The loans are to be used exclusively for payroll and survival.

She said closures could have ripple effects on buying habits even after regulations are lifted. For instance, if a customer begins buying products online instead of in a store, they might continue to do so even if conditions improve.

When it comes to reducing employee hours, Gallagher said small businesses should be creative and base their decisions on their own personal situation. In the meantime, they should avoid laying employees off by cutting costs as much as possible.

“The most important thing is to keep people on the payroll for as long as possible, rather than on unemployment,” she said in a personal statement. “Businesses that don’t lay off will have a ready workforce when the crisis passes.”

She said currently the situation is a recipe for depression unless the government is aggressive in its goal of reformation. One of the biggest failures of the Great Depression was how slow the government acted in the beginning.

Democratic senators rejected a coronavirus stimulus bill Sunday that would have allowed the Treasury to distribute more than a trillion dollars in loans, loan guarantees and investments. They said their reasoning was they wanted more restrictions placed on federal assistance to large corporations as well as more unemployment benefits.

Gallagher said if Democrats are concerned about the Treasury, the authority should be

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A group of RailRiders enthusiasts pedals down a section of railroad track in Oregon. Colorado Mountain College Breckenridge business student, Leadville resident and RailRiders owner Sean Fay is working to expand rail riding in the U.S.

Leadvillian builds handcar business for hittin’ the rails

by Carrie Click
Colorado Mountain College

CMC business student Sean Fay hopes to inspire an evolving trend in human-powered transport.

We’ve all seen those 19th century sepia-toned photos of railroad workers pumping a seesaw contraption down a section of railroad tracks. Called handcars, these little hand-powered vehicles propelled railroad workers where they needed to go to check tracks and repair rails.

Sean Fay of Leadville is a railroad fanatic and go-cart enthusiast. Trains and those hand-powered cars had a lifelong effect on him.

“From the time I was 4 years old, I can remember playing with my grandpa’s model trains,” Fay said.

Fourteen years ago, Fay’s fascination with trains and tracks led him to Ron Forster, a New Hampshire cyclist who in 1980 devised a bicycle attached to an outrigger contraption that could be ridden on railroad tracks. Numerous improvements later, the bike became a four-wheeled rail vehicle propelled, not by hand cranking, but by foot pedaling.

Forster sold a bunch of the carts and created the Rail Riders Association to promote the hobby.

“They’re like aluminum roller coasters that weigh about 120 pounds,” Fay said.

Fay stayed in touch with Forster, and when he began hearing that the latter might want to sell his unique RailRiders company, Fay took notice. This was right about the time he was taking business classes from Dr. Robert Cartelli at Colorado Mountain College.

For the past several years, Fay has been attending Colorado Mountain College Breckenridge while working full time at Beaver Run Resort and Conference Center. He began as a security guard and is now an assistant maintenance manager.

He likes the resort business and is working toward an associate degree in resort management as well as

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... With a 6-foot pole

Salidan Skip Hillegas teaches his granddaughters how far 6 feet is in terms of social distancing by using a “safety stick.” With Hillegas at front is Olivia Christensen, 3, and Hannah Christensen, 6, is at back.