

PNWER Regional State, Provincial and Territory Leads Economic Recovery Call

Thursday, July 23 at 2pm PDT

notes have been paraphrased for clarity and brevity

Attendees:

Alaska:

- Katie McCall, Sen. Costello's Office
- Kevin Meyer, Lt. Gov
- John Springsteen

Alberta:

- David Kettles, Senior Director, Provincial and State Engagement, Economic Development, Trade & Tourism

British Columbia:

- Craig Windrim, Manager, U.S. Relations, Government of British Columbia
- MLA Rick Glumac
- Russ Kinghorn
- Nicole Longpre

Idaho

- Sen. Chuck Winder
- Jon Hanian, Idaho OEM

Montana:

- Tom Kaiserski, MT Office of Tourism & Business Development
- Sen. Mike Cuffe
- Susan Fox

Oregon:

- Sonya McCormick, OR OEM
- Stan Thomas, OEM, Mitigation and Recovery
- Stephen Richardson, Business Oregon and ESF 18
- Stan Thomas, OR OEM
- Nancy Cody, Operations Manager, State of Oregon

Saskatchewan:

- Lisa Harder, Senior International Relations Officer, Ministry of Trade and Export Development

- Larry Doke, MLA

- Katrina Ackerman, Ministry of Trade and Export Development

Washington State:

- Keith Swenson,, WA Dept of Commerce
- Sen. Bob Hasagawa
- Chris Green, Dept. of Commerce
- Rebecca Stillings, Dept. of Commerce
- Tristan Allen, Dept. of Commerce
- Rep. Cindy Ryu
- Bryce Campbell, Canadian Consulate
- Russ Elliot, Commerce

Yukon:

- Helen Booth, Assistant Deputy Minister, Economic Development, Government of Yukon
- Corey Riemer, Executive Assistant
- Saurabh Sati, Senior Policy Analyst, Government of Yukon

Northwest Territories

- Alexandria Malakoe, Manager, Trade & Business Immigration, Government of Northwest Territories

FEMA:

- Brett Holt, FEMA

PNWER:

- Tara Edens, PNWER
- Brandon Hardenbrook, PNWER
- Betz Mayer, PNWER
- Matt Morrison, PNWER
- Steve Myers, PNWER
- Nate Weigel, PNWER
- Eric Holdeman, PNWER

Notes:

1. Welcome & Introductions

Matt Morrison welcomed everyone to the call, explained that this was a combination of two ongoing PNWER efforts; the COVID-19 update call for PNWER Board members, and the joint state/province call for economic development leaders in PNWER jurisdictions. The purpose of this call is to showcase a best practice from Washington State and share information on the Boston Consulting Group's economic dashboard, developed in cooperation with Washington State Department of Commerce.

2. Washington's Economic Dashboard

Chris Green, Assistant Director for the Office of Economic Development and Competitiveness at Washington State Department of Commerce, began by expressing appreciation for their partnership with PNWER, especially during this pandemic. Green explained how the Boston Consulting Group worked with WA Department of Commerce Director Lisa Brown, Washington Governor Jay Inslee, and the Office of Emergency Management to develop the Washington State Economic Dashboard.

The Washington State Economic Dashboard project has two main goals:

1. Have a viable economic dashboard to measure recovery using a data-based approach. The BCG dashboard will measure:
 - Gross business income
 - Employment / unemployment rates
 - Number of people accessing social services programs
 - What regions are more adversely impacted by the pandemic and related economic shutdowns
 - What is the return on investment for various recovery programs, and how they can be shaped to get back to pre-COVID levels of economic output
2. Be able to analyze the merits of different kinds of recovery approaches
 - Examine what the benefits of certain programs are
 - Analyze how the programs help the state achieve goals around equity, sustainability, etc.
 - Identify potential investment ideas for economic recovery
 - Understand trade-offs across ideas on common dimensions to inform decision-makers

Steve Michelmore, Managing Director and Partner in the Boston Consulting Group Seattle Office, further discussed the economic recovery dashboard. He noted that Washington is seeing good recovery trends but that economic activity is still at a lower point now than at the lowest point of the Great Recession in 2008.

Creating this dashboard requires an understanding of how certain sectors are performing during the pandemic. While all sectors have been hit by the pandemic and subsequent shutdowns, leisure and hospitality suffered some of the greatest losses. Certain populations have been disproportionately impacted by the pandemic and by related job losses. This is important to know for equity and inclusion efforts.

Micheltmore noted that the hope is to understand the trajectory of economic recovery for Washington State. By doing so, decision makers can better understand where they're investing funds and what the pickup on those investments are. Once this is understood, they can better allocate resources moving forward.

Charlie Davis, Managing Director and Partner at BCG, further explained how the dashboard was set up for Washington State. The economy is currently 6 months into the current economic crisis, but recovery trajectories from past recessions tend to be pretty fast. The fastest recovery was after Hurricane Katrina in New Orleans, which took 1.7 years, while the average recovery to pre-disaster economic output is about 3 years.

The dashboard hopes to help understand the ways that Washington can most effectively influence the speed and trajectory of economic recovery. While state and local budgets may be constrained, that doesn't mean that policy changes can't have a substantial impact on economic outcomes. BCG has developed a standardized approach to identify and assess recovery ideas through a variety of means, including global benchmarking.

Globally, climate change, reskilling the workforce, and infrastructure are major long-term themes central to recovery, while many aid packages internationally prioritize the economy of the future, childcare and education.

Chris Green noted that the programs discussed in the dashboard have not been finalized, but that they wanted to have another way to analyze these economic recovery programs and policies once they emerge. The dashboard tracks credit card spending, debit card spending, and other measures of mobility to analyze how money is flowing. It also tracks support programs and pickup rates on various services to see how people are tapping into them.

MLA Rick Glumac (BC) asked if there was a way to share this information with colleagues. BCG representatives noted that the full dashboard will be online next month for the public, and that this slide deck may be distributed for information-sharing purposes only.

3. Brief round robin updates from states, provinces & territories

OREGON:

Sonya McCormick, Oregon State Office of Emergency Management, reported for Oregon. Governor Kate Brown is expanding the face covering order to include children over the age of 5 when they are indoors or outdoors where social distancing cannot be observed. People must now wear face coverings in gyms, and gathering sizes were reduced from 250 to 100 people maximum. A 10:00 pm serving cut off time was established for restaurants.

IDAHO:

Jon Hanian, Idaho Office of Emergency Management, provided the report for Idaho. There has not been a state-wide mandate requiring face masks, and there is pushback from citizens who do not want to wear them. The number of COVID-19 cases are jumping exponentially. Idaho is experiencing a backlog of unemployment claims due to the pandemic.

Governor Brad Little recently announced that Idaho will remain at Stage 4 of reopening, after having been there for several weeks already. The number of COVID-19 cases is increasing in prisons. However, there is still space at hospitals to accommodate the number of patients. Idaho OEM is working with firefighters to ensure that wildfire fighting camps do not see the spread of COVID-19 as they head into wildfire season.

Sen. Chuck Winder (ID) noted that counties and health officials are allowed to make decisions about opening and closing based on their outbreak situation. He noted that the metro areas are struggling the most with outbreaks. Some of the smaller counties and cities are not seeing higher numbers of cases, so Governor Little is trying to allow smaller jurisdictions to make their own decisions around reopening.

Currently, the state is keeping up with PPE needs, but this could change quickly. The state is also working on sheltering options for the homeless population. The biggest issue right now is whether schools will reopen in the fall. Idaho has said that schools should resume in-person classes, but some districts are still in "wait and see" mode.

MONTANA:

Tom Kaiserski, Montana Office of Tourism and Business Development, provided the update for the state with PNWER President, Sen. Mike Cuffe (MT). On July 15, Governor Steve Bullock issued a mask order for all counties with more than four cases of COVID-19, requiring face coverings indoors. The number of cases in Montana has jumped in recent weeks.

Governor Bullock rolled out a multi-million dollar program for business stabilization grants. The Montana Department of Commerce had more than 8,000 applications for the

first round of funding. The state legislature and Governor's office are focused on getting CARES money out the door and into the community.

ALASKA:

Alaskan tourism has been hard hit by COVID-19-related shutdowns, making a huge impact on the Alaskan economy. People entering the state are required to take a COVID-19 test with a negative result 72 hours prior to flying into the state or quarantine for 14 days upon arrival.

BRITISH COLUMBIA:

MLA Rick Glumac gave the update for British Columbia, noting that the province is seeing an uptick in cases. MLA Glumac wanted to know if Alberta had been successful in using an app for contact tracing.

ALBERTA:

David Kettles, Senior Director, Provincial and State Engagement, Economic Development, Trade and Tourism, responded saying that the app has seen success on Android devices but does not work on iPhones.

SASKATCHEWAN:

MLA Larry Doke reported that Saskatchewan will allow students to return to classes in September with contingency plans for a shift to an online learning model. There will be a blended delivery model for schooling in the fall, focusing on limiting physical contact. Saskatchewan has opened phase 4.2 out of 5 of the reopening plan.

YUKON:

The Government of Yukon is thinking of putting a mask mandate on public transit. The territory has not seen any outbreaks since earlier in the pandemic but are aware it could easily enter the area.

Northwest Territories:

There have been no active cases of COVID-19 since April 2020. All people entering the territory must isolate for 14 days upon arrival. The territory is currently in phase 2 of their Emerging Wisely plan.

4. Next Call?

Participants noted that they would like to have another similar call in one month's time. This call will focus on contact tracing, featuring a presentation from Canada and from the U.S. If there is a best practice in your state, province, or territory, please contact Betz Mayer at Betz.Mayer@pnwer.org, and we will arrange to have them present on best practices, tools, etc.

5. Questions from the call

Eric Holdeman: There are not enough resources available to do all the possible opportunities. Which ones provide the biggest bang for the buck and more immediate results? Climate actions for instance will take some time to bear fruit. Tourism might be an area that could yield more immediate results.

Sen. Bob Hasegawa (WA): Is there an analysis of past post-recession recoveries regarding budget actions (cuts) vs. investments and impacts of those actions on length of recoveries?