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THE RIGHT TITLE COMPANY MAKES ALL THE DIFFERENCE

City of Cocoa works with businessowners to reopen, wants customers to feel safe, enjoy local businesses

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In a key step toward the road to recovery, the City of Cocoa is dedicated to assisting small-business owners with the reopening of local businesses in Cocoa and help mitigate the impacts and disruption in services related to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Cocoa City Council approved measures to assist businesses through the governor's phased reopening of Florida, including allowing for expanded outdoor dining options and signage to promote the reopening of business.

A resolution was passed at the May 6 Budget Workshop that allowed businesses to work with Cocoa's Office of Economic Development to temporarily expand outdoor dining options throughout the governor's phased reopening plan.

Council also requested that staff work with local businessowners to allow for expanded signage options to promote the reopening of businesses.

"By working together, we will ensure to our community that business is safe to resume, following the COVID-19 pandemic. We want customers to feel safe and enjoy our Cocoa businesses once again to ensure a thriving economic future for the City of Cocoa," said Cocoa Mayor Jake Williams Jr.

Picnic tables are being placed in Myrt

Tharpe Square Gazebo in downtown Cocoa Village to expand the outdoor dining options in the historic village. Patrons can still come and order take out with their favorite Village restaurant, eat in the gazebo area and enjoy the ambiance the Village offers. Staff will be making sure the tables are sanitized to ensure the safety of visitors.

A survey of local businessowners was conducted, which showed that businessowners are eager to reopen, but want to make sure it is done in a safe manner to ensure consumer confidence.

Owners will take measures to ensure their businesses are following the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention guidelines to ensure safety, such as hand washing, requiring staff to wear masks, and the cleaning and disinfecting of spaces.

Marketing efforts have begun to promote that "We're Open for Business."

The city is utilizing digital billboards and social media to help promote the reopening message. Businesses can even request customized graphics for use on their own social media channels.

Soon light pole banners will be posted throughout the downtown in partnership with the Historic Cocoa Village Main Street program and stickers will be available for owners to place in their storefront.

The Office of Economic Development has a website with economic recovery resources, including marketing materials for local businesses at www.ChooseCocoa.org.

Local business leader Shawn Dickens is appointed new board chairman of the U.S. Pain Foundation

West Melbourne resident Shawn Dickens has been appointed the new chairman of the board of directors for the U.S. Pain Foundation. The U.S. Pain Foundation is the leading nonprofit organization for the 50 million Americans who live with chronic pain.

Dickens, a senior program manager at Leonardo DRS who specializes in government defense programs, has served on the board since 2019. Dickens has been a staunch advocate for people with chronic illness for nearly a decade. His daughter, Melanie, lives with severe chronic pain stemming from multiple diagnoses, including complex regional pain syndrome and mitochondrial disease.

He, Melanie, and his wife, Laurie, have been featured in two editions of the U. S. Pain Foundation's flagship publication, the "INvisible Project," the 2015 edition, and the first "Kids and Families" edition in 2016. The Dickens family also has been integral to helping other families in the organization's Pediatric Pain Warrior Program, which offers kids with pain and their loved ones a chance to connect and learn about treatment options in a supportive environment.

Locally, the family, including sisters Alyssa and June, have hosted an annual awareness event and fundraiser, the "Crazy Sock Walk," since 2011. (Melanie wears fun, knee-length socks, which help regulate her blood pressure.)

Dickens is a graduate of Worcester State College with a bachelor's degree in computer science and also holds an MBA degree from the University of Miami. He maintains certification as a Project Management Professional.

"Shawn brings invaluable business and financial expertise to the board of directors," said Nicole Hemmenway, CEO of U.S. Pain Foundation.

"But he also brings incredible heart and passion for serving patients. We feel incredibly fortunate to have him lead our board of directors and help grow the organization so that it can help more people than ever before."

For more information, visit www.uspainfoundation.org.