

# Coronavirus Club Update, 3/25/20: Families First Act Takes Effect April 1, and Club Members Raise Funds for Staff

By C&RB Staff | March 25, 2020

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*Wilshire Country Club*

**While courses in Pennsylvania and Minnesota fight to re-open, city officials in Arizona disagree with the Governor's decision to exempt courses from his closure order. Members of Wilshire CC in Los Angeles and Jericho National GC in New Hope, Pa. have found new ways to help club employees financially during the coronavirus pandemic.**

Here is C+RB's latest roundup and summary of club-related developments surrounding the pandemic that have recently been reported. Please send updates on what your property is doing that you would like to share with the C+RB community to [editor@clubandresortbusiness.com](mailto:editor@clubandresortbusiness.com).

All of C+RB's daily updates on the coronavirus situation can be found at <https://clubandresortbusiness.com/category/covid-19/>

—The **U.S. Department of Labor's Wage and Hour Division** (WHD) announced its first round of published guidance to provide information to employees and employers about how each will be able to

take advantage of the protections and relief offered by the **Families First Coronavirus Response Act** (FFCRA) when it takes effect on April 1, 2020.

FFCRA will help the United States combat COVID-19 by giving all American businesses with fewer than 500 employees funds to provide employees with paid leave, either for the employee's own health needs or to care for family members. The legislation will ensure that workers are not forced to choose between their paychecks and the public health measures needed to combat the virus while at the same time reimbursing businesses.

The guidance—provided in a Fact Sheet for Employees, a Fact Sheet for Employers and a Questions and Answers document—addresses critical questions, such as how an employer must count the number of their employees to determine coverage; how small businesses can obtain an exemption; how to count hours for part-time employees; and how to calculate the wages employees are entitled to under this law. “Providing information to the American workforce is a top priority for the Wage and Hour Division,” said Administrator Cheryl Stanton. “With so many workers and so many employers struggling to find their way in these trying conditions, providing guidance on a rolling basis will allow workers and businesses to prepare for the law to go into effect on April 1, 2020. We remain committed, and are working around the clock to provide the information and tools for employees and employers alike.”

The guidance announced is just the first round of information and compliance assistance to come from the WHD. A workplace poster required for most employers will be published later this week, along with additional fact sheets and more Q&A.

The WHD provides additional information on common issues employers and employees face when responding to COVID-19, and its effects on wages and hours worked under the Fair Labor Standards Act and job-protected leave under the Family and Medical Leave Act

at <https://www.dol.gov/agencies/whd/pandemic>.

For more information about the laws enforced by the WHD, call 866-4US-WAGE, or visit <https://www.dol.gov/agencies/whd>.

For further information about COVID-19, visit the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#).

—Clubs in Pennsylvania and Minnesota are attempting to get their respective governments to overturn orders to close their fairways during the coronavirus pandemic.

**Blueberry Hill Golf Course** in Russell, Pa., was one of four plaintiffs to oppose **Gov. Thomas Wolf's** emergency order in a lawsuit filed March 20 in Commonwealth Court of Pennsylvania. The other businesses were a law firm, a laundromat and a timber company, Rob Harris reported on his blog [golfdisputeresolution.com](http://golfdisputeresolution.com). Blueberry Hill contends that it still must maintain the golf course despite the lack of revenue, noting its relatively short 30-week golf season, thin operating margins and operating debt.

Wolf's emergency order March 19 compelled all state businesses that are not deemed to be “life-sustaining” to close during the coronavirus pandemic.

In the Twin Cities, golf courses were among the businesses ordered temporarily shut down by **Gov. Tim Walz** through at least March 27, the *Minneapolis / St. Paul Business Journal* reported. In response, the golf industry is lobbying the governor's office in hopes of amending the executive order since the game could be played while golfers practice social distancing of six feet away from each other.

Losing any of this season would sting, especially coming after two years of harsh weather that hampered play, the *Business Journal* reported. Banquet business is also a big driver of revenue for golf courses and country clubs, and the loss of that revenue will hurt.

Golf provides more than \$2 billion in economic output in Minnesota, pays more than \$200 million in taxes and employs roughly 25,000 people, according to the Minnesota Golf Association. If the closure order lasts through April, the economic hit to the golf industry will be huge, local industry insiders say.

**Oak Marsh Golf Course** in Oakdale, Minn. opened on March 14 before closing several days later due to the state order. Owner Steve Whillock said he was logging close to 200 rounds a day when he was open, the *Business Journal* reported. He now expects to miss out on \$100,000 through the end of March from the lost rounds, as well as from canceled banquets and related events, which were a large chunk of the roughly \$2.3 million Oak Marsh records in annual revenue.

“It's a tough industry, especially when we're only open for 180 days a year,” he said. “We've canceled a dozen events. That's the part that will hurt the most.”

The MGA's lobbyist, Doug Carnival, is trying to convince governor's office to open golf courses at least partially so people can play in a limited fashion, the *Business Journal* reported. Local golf industry leaders

aren't in full panic yet, but if courses and clubhouses are still closed in May or June, it's possible some won't survive from the lost revenue.

"We have a window of two to three weeks to get this resolved," said Tom Ryan, president of the MGA.

"We think we can [operate in a limited way] and be safe."

Gov. Walz said he was looking into the issue at a press conference on March 20, the *Business Journal* reported.

—Municipal leaders criticized Arizona **Gov. Doug Ducey** on March 24 over his decision to classify some businesses like golf courses as "essential" during the coronavirus pandemic, FOX10 out of Phoenix reported.

Mayors of five different cities, including Tucson and Flagstaff, sent Ducey a letter saying his executive order should not have included golf courses and payday lenders in the definition of "essential services" that cannot be shut down in response to the outbreak, FOX10 reported. They also requested a statewide moratorium on evictions and foreclosures.

Ducey on March 23 outlined an expansive list of essential services and that cities and counties are prohibited from shuttering, FOX10 reported. His action came after mayors took the lead in closing bars and gyms and prohibiting dine-in service at restaurants.

Patrick Ptak, a spokesman for Ducey, sidestepped questions about why golf courses were on the list.

"This order is about protecting public health and preserving critical financial lifelines for many communities across our state," he said in an e-mail to FOX10.

Ducey was initially criticized by Democrats, including U.S. Sen. Kyrsten Sinema, for only ordering the closures of schools but seeming to drag his feet on businesses, FOX10 reported. The governor later adopted his own restrictions on businesses in all counties with confirmed COVID-19 cases.

Arizona had 326 confirmed cases of COVID-19 as of March 24, according to the state Department of Health Services. That is a jump of nearly 100 from a day earlier, FOX10 reported.

—A pair of members at **Wilshire Country Club** in Los Angeles have set up a GoFundMe account to help subsidize the club's caddies missed income for the next three weeks—March 17 through April 7.

With a recommended donation of \$500, the goal was to reach \$60,000. In the first week, the **WCC Caddie Relief Fund** has already raised \$78,050 via 153 donors.

According to the GoFundMe page, donations will be allocated and organized in a similar manner to the club's holiday bonus structure—by part time and full time.

The group is subsidizing one round a day at \$80 and assuming a 6-day week. All full-time caddies will receive an equal rate. Part time caddies will receive 50 percent of that rate. There are 28 full-time and 20 part-time caddies at Wilshire Country Club.

—In New Hope, Pa., the members of **Jericho National Golf Club** have requested that their \$150 monthly food minimum be given to the club's employees, *Golf Digest* reported.

—To help alleviate shortages of critical medical supplies during the coronavirus pandemic, **Seamus Golf** has re-engineered its manufacturing facility in Beaverton, Ore., to produce equipment of another kind: masks for first-responders.

With doctors, nurses and other health-care professionals facing dire shortages of critical equipment in the wake of the coronavirus pandemic, *Seamus Golf* has shifted its manufacturing, [GeoffShackelford.com](http://GeoffShackelford.com), reported.

The company usually produces woolen accessories such as headcovers and other wares for golfers.

Now, according to a notice posted to its website, the company is using its existing supply of material and practicing social distancing in its manufacturing process to make surgical masks. The effort is two-fold: to fill a critical void in the nation's health-care supply chain and to keep Seamus Golf's employees on the job.

—Organizers of the annual **National Restaurant Association Show** have canceled the 2020 convention in Chicago over coronavirus pandemic uncertainty, they said March 24.

The organizers, in a post to the show's website, said they were making the decision "after many weeks of monitoring the evolving situation" by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the Illinois governor's office.

The show, which had been scheduled for May 16-19, last year celebrated its 100th year and drew more than 60,000 attendees.

"We recognize the critical importance of the show to the industry and we know that this will come as a disappointment to those who had planned for months to attend," organizers said. "While it is not the outcome we wanted, amid all the uncertainty around the COVID-19 pandemic, the safety of our

attendees, exhibitors, sponsors, vendor partners and our own staff is paramount. This is our community and we all must be kept safe."

The annual show is owned and operated by Winsight LLC, an information services and events company. "Although these developments resulting from COVID-19 require that the 2020 Show not go forward at this time, we are looking forward to partnering with you to make the 2021 show the best ever," the organizers said. "If you're an exhibitor or registered attendee, you will have received an email with this information and further instructions will follow on April 7."