

# It's time to reopen businesses in Dayton, get back to our lives



**Phillip L. Parker**  
CAE, CCE President & CEO

I know I don't have to tell you how hard it's been for everyone everywhere to live through the COVID-19 shutdowns and the stay-at-home response. Our Miami Valley citizens – our families, friends and neighbors – have all been stressed by this virus, without even catching it. As you know, many have lost their jobs, maybe by temporary furloughs, but some permanently. Many are waiting for government help, but most await the return of their jobs.

But think about our area businesses. Some are weathering this storm, but others are not so fortunate. Temporary shutdowns have led to insurmountable problems, including the closing of businesses never to again open their doors.

It's about time we start to fully reopen our businesses and get back to driving our economy and employing our community again. Federal or state stimulus helps, but, trust me, those are not permanent solutions. The real, long-term solution is getting back to work and producing and driving our economy.

Now I don't pretend to be the expert on the medical and health side of this issue, but what I do know is that the cure seems worse than the cause.

As I write this column, we are not yet fully open: Retail has started with restrictions; offices are opening with restrictions; manufacturing, distribution, health care and many more are beginning to open, but with restrictions. I know there are risks, and there will be for yet some time going forward. But you can get ill from just the regular flu, or killed by driving your car or stepping off a curb too soon.

The world can be a risky place sometimes. But we must get back to our nor-

mal lives. Back to work. Back to business. Back to normalcy – if that's possible. It's time!

I worry about how businesses will survive without their employees and how employees will feel about coming back to work if we don't open up enough of our childcare centers. What will our educational institutions do now and in the fall?

All of this is to make a point – a point that some readers will reject and criticize. But the point is we must get back to opening up our businesses and supporting them when they do open. Yes, some may be a bit timid until they get that guaranteed treatment or that preventative vaccine. But honestly, there are no guarantees, and a vaccine could still be months away.

So what do we do in the meantime? Continue to stay quarantined? I heard the other day that Los Angeles County wants to keep its citizens under stay-at-home orders through July. Yes, it may be a hot spot, but its economy will be ruined, taking years

to recover if that occurs.

But we are not L.A. or New York or even some other hot spot. And it's about time we fully opened up with reasonable precautions and help get our economy back on track. We are a nation born of the free enterprise system – one that thrives on its people's ingenuity, production and consumption.

We are a nation of consumers. Big government, already having allocated more than \$2 trillion and thus increasing our current \$24 trillion national debt, is thinking about more debt by printing more money. More debt won't be the answer. More jobs and open businesses are the better solution. That's the answer.

So I say, let's be careful, but let's get back to work and reopen our economy, our nation and our community. Three hundred sixty million of us can't all stay home forever. It's time we took back our lives and together took back our communities. It's really about time! Don't you think?

## BUSINESS OPENINGS

### Xenia passes law to help taxpayers

Xenia recently passed legislation for the city to join the **Regional Income Tax Agency** as a member municipality. With this legislation, the transition of the municipality's income tax collection services to RITA is scheduled to be complete by fall.

In addition to tax collection and administration services, RITA also plans to open a branch office within the Xenia City Administration Building to better serve taxpayers in Xenia and surrounding RITA municipalities. This branch marks RITA's first location in Southwestern Ohio.

"We are honored to welcome the city of Xenia as a member of RITA and look forward to serving the taxpayers of the city as well as the Miami Valley Region for all of their income tax filing and collection needs," Don Smith, executive director of RITA, said.

Formed in 1971 through the Regional Council of Governments, RITA offers full-service income tax collection and processing services for more than 300 of Ohio's municipalities, representing 50% of the state's cities and villages with an income tax. RITA's shared services offer municipalities a comprehensive, efficient and effective solution to income tax collection that results in cost savings and increased tax collections for municipality members. On average, RITA provides its comprehensive services to member communities for less than two cents for every dollar collected – which means more dollars for important public services such as road repairs, emergency services and more.

In addition to the collection and administration of taxes, RITA is currently providing insights to its members and other municipalities to project the impact of COVID-19 on income tax collection with its COVID-19 Municipal Income Tax

Forecast.  
To learn more about RITA, visit [ritaohio.com](http://ritaohio.com).

### Rehab hospital opens for patients

The **Rehabilitation Institute of Ohio**, a joint venture between Premier Health and Encompass Health, formerly known as the Encompass Health Rehabilitation Hospital of Dayton, has started serving patients in its new home at 835 South Main Street in Dayton, across from the Miami Valley Hospital campus.

The freestanding inpatient rehabilitation hospital is now a joint venture of Premier Health, the largest comprehensive health system in southwest Ohio known for its award-winning medical care, and Encompass Health, the nation's leading provider of inpatient rehabilitation services.

The freestanding inpatient rehabilitation hospital includes 60 private patient rooms, a spacious therapy gym, an in-house pharmacy, courtyard, dialysis suite, three bariatric rooms, an isolation room, dining room and dayroom areas.

Complementing local acute care services, the hospital will care for patients overcoming debilitating illnesses and injuries including strokes and other neurological disorders, brain injuries, spinal cord injuries, amputations and complex orthopedic conditions. It offers physical, occupational and speech therapies as well as 24-hour nursing care.

"This project unites the strengths of both our organizations under one roof," said Mary Boosalis, president and CEO of Premier Health. "As the region's only Level I trauma center, Miami Valley Hospital must maintain a significant number of inpatient rehabilitation beds to serve trauma patients and others. This joint venture will help us serve that community need while delivering great value and care for our patients."

## ECONOMIC INDICATORS

### Sales Tax Collections

County	Current Rate	Jan 2020	Jan 2019	12 Mos Change	YTD 2020	YTD 2019	YTD Change
Butler	0.75	\$4,667,532	\$4,418,692	5.63%	\$4,667,532	\$4,418,692	5.63%
Clark	1.5	\$2,761,540	\$2,337,202	18.16%	\$2,761,540	\$2,337,202	18.16%
Darke	1.5	\$935,270	\$810,928	15.33%	\$935,270	\$810,928	15.33%
Greene	1	\$3,118,165	\$2,900,500	7.50%	\$3,118,165	\$2,900,500	7.50%
Miami	1.25	\$1,914,793	\$1,823,033	5.03%	\$1,914,793	\$1,823,033	5.03%
Montgomery	1.25	\$10,040,644	\$9,280,926	8.19%	\$10,040,644	\$9,280,926	8.19%
Preble	1.5	\$562,163	\$531,372	5.79%	\$562,163	\$531,372	5.79%
Warren	1.25	\$5,779,034	\$5,392,567	7.17%	\$5,779,034	\$5,392,567	7.17%
<b>Region Total</b>		<b>\$29,779,142</b>	<b>\$27,495,222</b>	<b>8.31%</b>	<b>\$29,779,142</b>	<b>\$27,495,222</b>	<b>8.31%</b>

### Residential Home Sales

	Jan '20	Jan '19	%Change	YTD '20	YTD '19	%Change
<b>Number of Homes Sold</b>	936	895	4.58%	936	895	4.58%
<b>Total Home Sales</b>	\$158,654,696	\$129,919,867	22.12%	\$158,654,696	\$129,919,867	22.12%
<b>Average Sale Price (\$)</b>	\$169,503	\$145,162	16.77%	\$169,503	\$145,162	16.77%

Source: Dayton Area Board of Realtors, Dayton Area Home Sales for Jan 2020

## MONTGOMERY COUNTY VENDORS LICENSE

■ Jackson, Shekena, dba Material Addictions, 3022 Benchwood Rd, Dayton 45414

■ Reese, Damarcus, dba Apexx Legion, 969

Wilmington Ave Apt A, Dayton 45420

■ Williams, Cameron, dba Williams Golf Company, 3311 Salem Ave, Dayton 45406

## GIG ECONOMY

# 'I feel like a hero': a day in the life of an NYC Instacart shopper

**Aaron Randle and Brittainy Newman**  
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When he heard the news about the coronavirus pandemic and the citywide shutdown, Gerald Timothee called his family back home in Port-au-Prince, Haiti.

He wondered how long he could keep his job delivering groceries for the Instacart app with the deadly airborne disease running rampant. And how long would it be before the disease overtook him as he made deliveries?

"I told them I was going to die," Timothee, 35, recalled. "I thought my life was over. I didn't know how I could work with this."

The possibility of getting sick is a reality Timothee and thousands of other workers in New York City's gig economy have had to face each day as they venture out onto the city's streets not only to earn a living but also to feed other residents.

Yet for many of these workers, their initial terror has been steeled with a sense of duty and pride. "It's all about us right now," Timothee said. "We are holding this city together. I feel like a hero."

Following a dramatic increase in demand during stay-at-home orders, Instacart's personal shopper ranks in New York City alone have swelled to more than 14,000 since March, according to company officials, an



Gerald Timothee, a personal shopper for Instacart, at a grocery store in Manhattan on April 30. Timothee walks miles to deliver groceries. BRITAINY NEWMAN / THE NEW YORK TIMES

increase of more than 150%.

The company employs workers to shop for and deliver groceries and other household items ordered online through an app, paying them a fee for each delivery.

With a more than 400% increase in sales since March, Instacart has seen a greater rise since the pandemic than any other company – even Amazon or Walmart. It is one of several on-demand grocery delivery services, including Direct Now, Peapod, FreshDirect, and Shipt, which send legions of delivery people around the city every day.

Most of the money Timothee makes from his work as an Instacart shopper goes

to help family back home in Haiti. But he and some friends from Port-au-Prince also pool money to buy food for needy families back home – packages filled with rice, oil and fish that have helped dozens of families in Haiti get through the pandemic.

Timothee's day begins each morning with an hour-long trek from his small studio apartment in East New York, Brooklyn, to Midtown Manhattan, where, he said, wealthier city dwellers are more prone to use the app and its shoppers rather than brave the stores themselves. He boards a usually desolate No. 2 train and starts shopping at noon.

Unlike many Instacart workers who own cars, Tim-

othee is a "walker," making his deliveries on foot.

"I walk anywhere from 5 to 6 miles a day," he said from behind his face mask one brisk overcast afternoon in late April. Perched outside an apartment on 52nd Street and Third Avenue, he scrolled the Instacart app in search of his next shop, or "batch" as Instacart shoppers call them.

Being on foot forces Timothee to think strategically about each job he accepts. On a recent afternoon, there was a gig on 73rd Street that could score a \$45 payment (including tip), and another on 59th Street that would net him \$34. He chose the 59th Street option, noting its proximity to a nearby Grist-

edes market.

"It's a bit like chess, being a walker," he said. "You have to be smart. You have to be patient."

As he does in most trips, he made his way to the grocery store and then to his customer's building through a mix of walking and public transit.

Shuffling past eerily quiet Midtown streets at 2 p.m. – past empty bagel shops and sushi bars, an Equinox gym and New York souvenir shop – he hopped on a northbound city bus. With hardly anyone riding anymore, swiping was unnecessary. He entered the bus through its rear exit, and took a seat.

In the past, at this time of day, the bus might have been standing room only. But that day, there were only three riders. "This is the new norm now, man," he said. "It takes some getting used to."

He is a slender man just a little taller than 6 feet, with tattoos on his neck and a nose ring. But these days, his features are almost always hidden. His protective mask hardly ever comes down below his nose. "It's my armor," he said with a laugh. "I never take it off."

He carried a rolling aluminum and nylon reinforced shopping trolley that he uses to transport his groceries, and a backpack, stuffed with protective equipment provided by Instacart, including hand sanitizer and packs of protective gloves.

For weeks Instacart, and a number of other gig economy businesses like Amazon, drew criticism from workers for not adequately protecting them from the coronavirus.

After months of protests, strikes and walkouts, Instacart said it has improved its protective efforts, including an investment of more than \$20 million in the past few weeks on packs of person protective equipment, or PPE, for shoppers.

Now, all Instacart shoppers are able to use the company app to have a package (including a face mask, protective gloves and sanitizer) mailed to them.

Timothee, who has been shopping with Instacart since 2016, said he had never had problems getting equipment from local stores. "You have to know who to ask," he said.

Entering Gristedes, he began a well-honed routine. He put his cart near the register and approached the shopping baskets. Putting his phone into this pocket, he took a pair of fresh latex gloves from his backpack and slid them onto his hands as he grabbed a small bottle of hand sanitizer and began disinfecting the basket. He then retrieved his phone and sprayed it down.

"You never, ever touch anything first," he said.

Just then a woman came by and moved his shopping basket to the side. With a sigh, he repeated the process.