



Who Are We?

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## ACEC OKLAHOMA UPDATE/RECAP March 27, 2020

Wow, has this been a busy and different couple of weeks! COVID-19 virus dominating the news and all of our lives. State employees now working remotely as are virtually all of the engineering and design firms in Oklahoma. Many questions regarding if Engineering is part of the "Critical Infrastructure" section....YES based on Homeland Security guidelines and the Governor's Executive Order which specifically included "Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services." Numerous conference calls with ACEC National and the other state executives. Hundreds of emails from ACEC trying to keep the states updated on the latest COVID-19 info as well as Congressional activity regarding the stimulus package. And, sending almost daily updates to firms principals & key contacts so that firm leadership would have the latest and most up-to-date info on how to handle this unique and difficult time. And, many, many more things happening very quickly.

For example, less than an hour ago (at this writing) the U.S. House passed the Senate's Stimulus bill, and it's now headed to President for his signature!

Oh, and I almost forgot.....the Oklahoma Legislature is in Recess until.....well, who knows when! When they do return, they will face a May 29th constitutional deadline to adjourn the session. Of course, the state budget is the BIG issue they will face, Much work is being done unofficially via teleconference and it's expected that much of the budgeting process will be completed before the session reopens. As for "policy" legislation, leadership in both houses have made it clear that about the only policy measures which will move forward are those that deal directly with the COVID-19 outbreak. With that, ACEC OKLAHOMA's "Peer Review" and "Indemnification/Duty to Defend" bills, both of which passed the House overwhelmingly, are probably stuck in limbo in the Senate. We'll do what we can to move them, but my guess is that chances are very slim for either.

The ACEC OKLAHOMA office is open....yes, the Governor included "business associations" in the list of critical services. I'm trying to digest all of the information and pass it along as promptly as possible. While this is going to our entire mailing list, some of the previous communications only went to firm leadership. If you would like to see those communications, they are posted on our website:  
<http://www.acecok.org/The%20First%20Word%20ACEC%20Oklahoma.htm>

For now, below is the latest info which we hope will be helpful to you and your firm.

If you have any questions or need further information, don't hesitate to drop me a note or give me a call.

God Bless! Stay Safe! And, have a GREAT weekend!!!

Jim

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### In This Update:

- **ACEC Offers Three FREE Webinars Next Week**
- **ACEC Advocacy Team Summarized Key Items for Engineering in Stimulus Bill**
- **EPIC Brokers Answers Property and Casualty Insurance Questions**
- **ACEC's New Coronavirus Impact Forum**

- **Cybersecurity is More Urgent Than Ever in Teleworking Environment**
- **Latest Collection of USACE Materials for COVID-19**
- **450 ACEC Members Share Ideas/Concerns During On-Line Roundtables**
- **Second ACEC Member Survey Tracks Rising COVID-19 Impacts**

## ACEC Offers Three FREE-to-Members Online Classes on COVID-19 Responses

ACEC will host three **free-to-members** online classes on dealing with the COVID-19 pandemic. To register for the online classes, click on the links below.

### [COVID-19 Potential Effects on Overhead Deadlines, Allowable Costs, and Steps to Take Now](#)

March 31, 2020

3:30 – 4:30 PM Eastern

Presenter: Dan Purvine

### [Navigating Your Small Firm Through the COVID-19](#)

April 2, 2020

1:30 – 2:30 PM Eastern

Presenters: Barbara Irwin and David Cohen

### [You're Not Alone: Tools for Living and Working in Uncertain Times](#)

April 7, 2020

11:30 AM – 12:30 PM

Presenter: Geordie Aitken

**Registration & Log-On Instructions** : Follow the link above to the registration page. Then, click on the "Checkout" button in the top left. This will take you to a "log-on" page. If you don't already have a personal ACEC account, click on "NEW VISITOR REGISTRATION" to create your own personal account.

## Recording Now Available: P&C Questions

### Answered



More unfolds every day as our government, our industry, and our global market continues to react to an unprecedented pandemic. EPIC assembled a team early and immediately began addressing clients' risk and employee benefits concerns. EPIC subject matter experts Larry Reback, James Dunn, and Jacqueline Beaudet sat down to record a dynamic and conversational presentation to help answer your most immediate concerns. The recording is now live and available by clicking [HERE](#) . The presentation addresses the following:

- Property Coverage: Physical Damage to

## THIS JUST IN

### ACEC Advocacy Team Summarizes Key Items for Engineering Firms in \$2 Trillion Economic Stimulus Bill

The House passed the CARES Act by Unanimous Consent on 3/27/20. The bill now goes to the president for his signature.

ACEC's advocacy team released the following summary of the bill:

#### Small Business Program Overview

The new law establishes a Paycheck Protection Program to assist qualifying small businesses, nonprofits, and individuals through the Small Business Administration's 7(a) loan program. \$349 billion is authorized for 7(a) lending from Feb. 15 through June 30, and SBA would fully guarantee the loans. Loans would be available during the covered period for: Any business, nonprofit, veterans group, or tribal business with 500 or fewer employees, or a number set by the SBA for the relevant industry. ACEC is seeking clarification on this point – whether SBA will implement the loan program using the traditional size standard for engineering, or something broader. Sole proprietors, independent contractors, and eligible self-employed workers would be eligible. Eligible recipients could receive loans up to \$10 million or 250% of their average monthly payroll costs, instead of \$5 million, with interest rates capped during the covered period at 4%. Loans can be used to cover eligible payroll costs -- salaries, commissions, regular paid leave, and health-care benefits -- as well as mortgage interest and utility payments. Firms would be required to make a "good faith certification" that funds will be used to retain workers, maintain payroll, and pay for rent and similar expenses. Funds cannot be used to compensate individual employees at an annual rate above \$100,000, or to pay for emergency sick or family leave under the second coronavirus response package.

#### Loan Forgiveness – key elements

Recipients of SBA-guaranteed loans under the Paycheck Protection Program can apply for loan forgiveness over eight weeks for eligible payroll costs and for mortgage interest, rent, and utility payments -- SBA would pay lenders for any canceled debt plus accrued interest.

Loan forgiveness would be reduced for businesses that fire employees or cut their pay.

Canceled debt would be excluded from borrowers'

Insured Property, Business Income, Extra Expense, Civil Authority, Ingress/Egress;

- When and How to File Claims;
- The Response to Expect from Insurers;
- A Regulatory Update: State and Federal Response to the Pandemic; and
- EPIC's Helpful Resources.

Catch up on all our coronavirus coverage at [epicbrokers.com/coronavirus](http://epicbrokers.com/coronavirus) .

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## ACEC's New Coronavirus Impact Forum

The Coronavirus pandemic is truly an unprecedented event in our lifetime, which is impacting every individual and every industry. Each of us is handling the challenge of navigating through this crisis in our own way, but we are not alone. One of the greatest strengths we have as business leaders is the community we have in ACEC. We can help and learn from each other during this time of crisis by sharing our experiences and lessons learned. For that reason, ACEC has announced the creation of the "Coronavirus Impact Forum" on the ACEC Communities page. You are invited to join this members-only, self-moderated forum to discuss how you are responding to the coronavirus emergency. Again, the forum is open to all ACEC members. To access the forum, follow this [link](#) .

*Log in or register with your company email address. If you are creating a new account, allow up to one hour for the online system to create your new account and access to the forum. If you need any support contact Member Services ( [memberservice@acec.org](mailto:memberservice@acec.org) ) or call 202-347-7474.*



## Latest Collection of USACE Materials for COVID-19

Materials have been developed by medical and construction experts from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) and the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) to help States and municipalities address potential shortages in medical facilities during the 2020 COVID-19 Pandemic.

They are intended to assist Federal and State agencies in assessing and developing potential sites for suitability as alternate care facilities, and to rapidly engage contractors to prepare them for medical use. States are encouraged to use these documents to support local requirements without USACE or HHS involvement where possible.

To see the complete list of Alternate Care Sites (ACS)

gross income for tax purposes.

The measure also would authorize and provide \$17 billion for the SBA to pay the principal, interest, and associated fees for loans under the 7(a), 504, and microloan programs for six months.

### Disaster Loans

The package provides \$10 billion to expand the SBA's disaster loan program from Jan. 31 through Dec. 31 to cover businesses, cooperatives, employee stock ownership plans, and tribal businesses with 500 or fewer employees, as well as sole proprietors and independent contractors. The measure also authorizes SBA to advance up to \$10,000 to existing and newly eligible disaster loan recipients within three days of receiving their applications. Recipients could use the advance funds to pay sick leave to employees affected by Covid-19, retain employees, address interrupted supply chains, make rent or mortgage payments, and repay debt. They wouldn't have to repay the advance funds.

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## Cybersecurity is More Urgent Than Ever in Teleworking Environment

With companies and government agencies working remotely, often from home, the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) issued a bulletin for federal agencies to be more vigilant in their cybersecurity. This is guidance any firm with employees working outside the office should follow.

According to the bulletin: "An organization should assume that external facilities, networks, and devices contain hostile threats that will attempt to gain access to the organization's data and resources. Organizations should assume that malicious parties will gain control of telework client devices and attempt to recover sensitive data from them or leverage the devices to gain access to the enterprise network."

NIST offers four recommendations to improve teleworking efficiency and security:

- Plan telework-related security policies and controls based on the assumption that external environments contain hostile threats.
- Develop a telework security policy that defines telework, remote access, and bring-your-own-device (BYOD) requirements.
- Ensure that remote access servers are secured effectively and configured to enforce telework security policies.
- Secure organization-controlled telework client devices against common threats, and maintain their security regularly.

Read more [HERE](#) . The full NIST bulletin can be found [HERE](#) .

and the Implementation Materials, click [HERE](#) .

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## More than 450 Members Share Concerns and Ideas in ACEC Coronavirus Online Roundtables

ACEC members shared a lot of questions in three online roundtables that ACEC hosted on Monday afternoon. More than 450 members participated in the roundtables, which were grouped by firm size: Small, medium, and large.

Most of the discussions dealt with how to handle employee and cash flow issues. For instance, members asked about the treatment of exempt vs. non-exempt employees, the possibility of making salaried employees hourly, and how long to maintain benefits for furloughed employees. Regarding cash flow, they talked about how best to cut expenses, whether to tap credit lines, and the possibility of asking clients for retainers to make payroll.

In these uncertain times, answers were not plentiful, but there were a few:

- Regarding what percentage of employees could take paid leave at the same time, a member recommended “about a third.”
- On continuing to work on job sites, a member reported that the construction manager at one site is taking the temperature of everyone coming onto the site and turning away those who have a fever.
- Firms are reaching out and doing work for their health-care clients to help them prepare their infrastructure for an expected patient surge.
- One firm recommends giving employees letters/proof from the company that they are an ‘essential service’ in case they are stopped while out working/on-site.

ACEC plans to host additional roundtables in the coming weeks. As soon as we know more information on those plans, we'll let you know so stay tuned.

*by Dan Hilton, ACEC's Director for Procurement Advocacy and International Affairs*

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## Second ACEC Member Survey Tracks Rapidly Rising COVID-19 Impacts

ACEC completed its second member firm survey tracking the impact of the coronavirus pandemic on March 25, with 738 firms participating. Here are the key findings (compared to the first survey):

- More firms (79%, up from 71%) are restricting domestic travel;
- More firms (93%, up from 80%) have implemented a telework policy;
- Social distancing (84%, up from 77%) and virtual work (84%, up from 73%) are the top work continuation methods;
- There were big jumps in the number of firms reporting delays in RFP/RFQ awards (40%, up from 24%) and reporting project delays or cancellations due to COVID-19 (58%, up from 44%).

Responding to new questions in the second survey, 87 percent of firms have not received any assistance from creditors or know of any; 47 percent believe Congress should delay payment of firms' share of Social Security payroll taxes; and 44 percent favor increasing interest deductibility for businesses. Other suggested steps that Congress could take to ease cash flow challenges include no-interest loans, grants to cover payroll, tax credits and deductions, and direct payments/unemployment to employees. Click [HERE](#) to read the complete survey report.



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Let's Connect:

