



**TACO**

**Promoting RV Travel  
& Camping in Texas**

**SPRING 2020**

[www.tacomembers.com](http://www.tacomembers.com)

# Is There (Camping) Life *after* COVID-19?

We hope that by the time you read this, much of the COVID-19 devastation will be behind us. Now, as for the affects of COVID-19 may take longer to resolve. Obviously, life as we used to know it or business as usual may never be quite the same. Shaking hands and hugging customers might be a thing of the past. Only time will answer these questions. But what does it mean to our industry and to you? Let's do some recapping and forward looking.

Before COVID-19, RV parks and campgrounds were enjoying several years of steady grow at all levels. All operations and services including camp sites, cabins and recreational facilities were performing beautifully. In fact, association membership and support of its programs were at all-time highs. Suddenly, we had community after community shutting down their economies and in many cases trying to outdo each other for punitive effect on its citizens and businesses. Ultimately, it left many members with little to no new business.

Several parks and their monthly clientele were left to shelter in place. Amenities were closed – like pools, rec halls, restrooms, etc. Staff was reduced and offices were closed. What little new camping business that existed wasn't going to float anybody's boat. The TACO office began a long series of almost daily communiques keeping members abreast of local, state and national developments concerning COVID-19. Information was flying fast and furious.

Now the Texas governor has put out a plan to open the state of Texas. President Trump has put out national guidelines to open up the economy. So, where do we go from here? First, you still need to adhere to your local restrictions that may still be in place. You do not want to put your business or our industry in jeopardy of being shut down. Believe me, there are some government officials out there who are still "feeling their oats."

There are several priorities in moving forward post-COVID. Let me begin with an overarching theme that was best stated by one of our owners recently. He said, "We had a lot of goals for 2020 and even more for 2021. We still have those amazing 2021 goals, but we can't get to 2021 if we don't get through 2020." Pretty insightful. We all want to look ahead to those times when we are back on that track of exceeding previous years at every level of operations. But we have to take care of business now if we are to get to then.

How will "taking care of now" look? Some things never change. We must have customers. Good news – **WE HAVE PEOPLE WANTING TO GO CAMPING!** The issues will be timing and attitude. Most of our parks did not go to ground zero – meaning they didn't evacuate and shutdown. Most maintained a number of monthly clients which means cashflow for the parks and pent-up energy in our monthly guests to get out in the community and experience normal life again. Most areas are lifting shelter-in-place restrictions between May 1st and the 15th, if they haven't already done so. Therefore, parks can take in new business. How will that work?

Through the association and a couple of our vendors we surveyed parks in Texas and around the country to see how reservations looked. For the most

part, March was pretty dismal; April started a comeback (because folks were going stir crazy), and May is actually looking pretty good. So, the timing is about right to review park communications and marketing. In most cases, the park's website is the best place to indicate whether you are open and what amenities are available, how check-ins are being handled, etc. If you have an email list then it would be a good time to reach out to them as well.

Could your customers' attitudes be affected? Sure. They want to know it is safe to venture out and come to your park in particular. You need to practice CDC guidelines and obtain and post as many posters as possible about COVID-19 so that your customers know you are serious about their safety. Many parks are sanitizing areas of the park like never before, including a sanitary rinse down of the site hook-ups in between customer stays. Let your customers know this. It's important to them.

It is possible, and we hope and pray this comes to pass, that parks could be overrun with business this summer. I think this way because I just don't see folks standing in lines to get on cruise ships or airplanes or stay in hotels. That leaves camping and outdoor vacations. Your marketing needs to take advantage of this. Look at your campaigns and see what you can do right now to promote more business for this year. Your association has some good programs for this. To take advantage, just email Lisa Rhodes, Rhodes@TexasCampgrounds.com and she will have one of our terrific marketing reps explain what I am talking about.

If you wait until your business is clicking on all cylinders to communicate and market, you will likely have left a lot of revenue on the table. It's like trying to pick the bottom of the stock market. If you sell at the bottom, thinking you will jump back in when things turn around, you will likely miss the biggest part of the turnaround while you are waiting to feel good!

Speaking of which, we need to be in the GOOD NEWS business with our parks and our customers and our local merchants. We have to focus on NOW to get this done. There will be issues that come up months from now or even next year. We won't have to worry about those things if we don't take care of what is in front of us right now. There is life, or in our case, camping after COVID-19. How do we know that? Because many of you proved that there was camping during COVID-19!

We actually think we can come out of this disaster stronger than we went in. Why? Because we have a tremendous product to sell in the state of Texas, it's many wonderful regions, and our fabulous member parks. We are leaders in the nation in business and we are leaders in camping. People are going to take their vacations no matter what and camping and RVing are still the most wholesome and inexpensive options available. As jobs return to our communities that brings another subset of RVers. This is all called normalcy! Let's help each other achieve our post-COVID-19 dreams! ★

## INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

Election Analysis .....	2
TACO Legislative Report .....	4-5
COVID-19 Info. ....	8
TACO's Premier Park Promotion Packages! ..	10



# Election Analysis

Ron Hinkle – TACO Legislative Consultant

Aside from Biden winning Texas, by and large the Texas state election was fairly status quo. The only real news is Rep. Dan Flynn, R-Van did not make the required 59% and will be in the July 14 runoff election against candidate Brian Slayton.

Also, 28-year officeholder Sen. Eddie Lucio was 130 votes shy of hitting the required 50% to avoid a runoff. He will face local trial lawyer Sara Barerra for the Senate 27 district.

There are presently 83 Republicans and 67 Democrats. It is conceivable that given the heavier turnout in Democratic voters versus Republican voters there could be a 77-73 outcome of Republican-Democrat legislators after the General Election.

No real changes in the current Texas Senate of 19 Republicans and 12 Democrats with one exception; Senator Flores could lose his Senate that was previously held by Democrats since the beginning of dawn.

# WEB TRAFFIC IS UP 25-33%

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As businesses look to open, it is imperative they protect themselves and their customers. Helping those from getting sick is the best thing all of us can do as scientists and doctors work to eliminate the COVID-19 threat. To that end, AGS can produce branded (or unbranded) face shields and sneeze guards for your staff and campground.



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TACO Office

Crowley, TX

With the COVID-19 situation continuing in Texas there are some important programs and policies going on in state & federal policies.



# TACO Legislative REPORT

On March 19, 2020, Governor Greg Abbott announced a series of Executive Orders related to COVID-19 preparedness and mitigation. The four orders serve to limit public gatherings and help reduce exposure for people across the state. **Those orders are:**

- **Order No. 1:** In accordance with the Guidelines from the President and the CDC, every person in Texas shall avoid social gatherings in groups of more than 10 people.

- **Order No. 2:** In accordance with the Guidelines from the President and the CDC, people shall avoid eating or drinking at bars, restaurants, and food courts, or visiting gyms or massage parlors; provided, however, that the use of drive-thru, pickup, or delivery options is allowed and highly encouraged throughout the limited duration of this executive order.

- **Order No. 3:** In accordance with the Guidelines from the President and the CDC, people shall not visit nursing homes or retirement or long-term care facilities unless to provide critical assistance.

- **Order No. 4:** In accordance with the Guidelines from the President and the CDC, schools shall temporarily close.

On March 31, Governor Greg Abbott issued an Executive Order implementing Essential Services and Activities Protocols for the entire state of Texas. The protocols direct all Texans to minimize non-essential gatherings and in-person contact with people who are not in the same household. The Governor's Executive Order renewed and amended his March 13 executive order enforcing federal social distancing guidelines for COVID-19, including closing schools and instructing Texans to avoid eating or drinking at bars and restaurants. The protocols allow exceptions for essential activities and services based on the Department of Homeland Security's guidelines on the Essential Critical Infrastructure Workforce. Examples of these essential services include healthcare, grocery stores, banking and financial services, utilities, childcare for essential service employees, and government services.

This Executive Order follows the decision by President Trump and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) to enhance social distancing guidelines and extend the deadline for these guidelines to April 30th.

Governor Abbott was joined for the announcement by Lieutenant Governor Dan Patrick, House Speaker Dennis Bonnen, Texas Department of State Health Services (DSHS) Commissioner John Hellerstedt, MD, Texas Division of Emergency Management (TDEM) Chief Nim Kidd, and Texas Education Agency (TEA) Commissioner Mike Morath.

The Executive Order renews and expands the Governor's previous directive to minimize social gatherings and minimize contact with people who are not in the same household. It also renews the Governor's directive to avoid eating or drinking at bars, restaurants, and food courts, and visiting gyms or massage establishments, and it expands the order to include tattoo studios, piercing studios, and cosmetology salons.

In accordance with federal guidelines, people are still prohibited from visiting nursing home, state supported living centers, assisted living facilities, or long-term care facilities unless to provide critical assistance. Additionally, schools will remain temporarily closed to in-person classroom attendance before May 4, 2020.

**Below are some state and federal government programs for citizens and businesses.**

- To provide Texas franchise taxpayers some relief, the Texas Comptroller of Public Accounts is automatically extending the due date to file and pay the 2020 Texas franchise tax reports to July 15, 2020 to be consistent with the Internal Revenue Service (IRS). The due date extension applies to all franchise taxpayers. The extension is automatic, and franchise taxpayers do not need to file any additional forms. Federal Government Assistance

- On Friday, March 27, 2020, the President signed into law the CARES Act, which contains \$376 billion in relief for American workers and small businesses. The CARES Act established additional temporary resources for funding. To learn more or apply for any of these programs visit: <https://www.sba.gov/page/coronavirus-covid-19-small-business-guidance-loan-resources>

#### • SBA Express Bridge Loans

These loans are used to bridge the gap while applying for a direct SBA Economic Injury Disaster loan. If a small business has an urgent need for cash while waiting for decision and disbursement on an Economic Injury Disaster Loan, they may qualify for an SBA Express Disaster Bridge Loan.

*continued on next page*



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Crowley, TX 76036 | 877-518-1989



### • **Paycheck Protection Program (PPP)**

The program is designed to help small businesses keep their employees during the coronavirus crisis. Find out if you are eligible and apply here: <http://sba.gov/paycheckprotection>. The program is for any business with less than 500 employees. Businesses with more than 500 employees in certain industries may qualify if they meet SBA size standards <https://www.sba.gov/document/support--table-size-standards>. Lenders may begin processing loan applications as soon as April 3, 2020. The Paycheck Protection Program will be available through June 30, 2020. Visit <http://sba.gov/paycheckprotection> to download the Borrower Application Form to apply with an eligible lender.

### • **NEWS**

The Texas Travel Industry has reached out to officials within Governor Abbott's office providing the state of the industry as a result of the COVID-19. While at this early stage the dire travel numbers are as follows:

Travel spending in Texas for the week of 2/1/2020 was \$1.39 Billion, up 3% year over year. Travel spending in Texas for the week of 3/21/2020 was \$0.66 Billion, down 57% year over year for comparison (as tracked by U.S. Travel & Tourism Economics).

### **The Travel Industry made the following request to Governor Abbott:**

1. Use of the Tourism Promotion program for some amount of in-state marketing as it is anticipated this in-state travel will rebound first followed by international and larger domestic market travel.

2. A request for the Governor and First Lady of Texas to record a short, supportive statewide video message for in-state travel as part of a statewide campaign.

3. Consideration for a blanket 2020 school start date for the state of Texas of the 4th Monday in August, August 24, 2020. If we can indeed begin the recovery in June, a strong, full summer season will allow the Travel Industry to most fully contribute tax revenues at the state and local level.

4. A copy of the letter is attached.

• The Federal Court in Sherman, Texas issued an injunction on the City of Dallas PSL (Paid Sick Leave) ordinance. This is a big win for small businesses, especially because now small business have won in all three courts where filed (Dallas, San Antonio, Austin). Now is the wait for the high court's action (Supreme Court of Texas). These legal wins are a result of legislation that was passed in the Texas Senate but not taken up in the Texas House during the last legislative session that would have stopped cities from imposing local ordinances on businesses regarding mandated paid sick leave.

• As a clarification of the Federal PSL (paid sick leave) mandate, please note that PSL employers under 500 have to comply, and employers with 50 or fewer are exempt ONLY IF THE LEAVE IS FOR CHILD CARE and IF you prove it would jeopardize your business if they were out. For the extension of the FMLA (the emergency family medical leave act), employers with 500 or fewer have to comply and employers with 50 or fewer are exempt in total IF you can prove it would jeopardize your business to comply.

• Essentially, the Department of Labor is saying you don't have to provide any paperwork or send it in, just be ready to prove this if they come calling. Download and post this poster in your workplace: [https://www.dol.gov/sites/dolgov/files/WH1422\\_Non-Federal.pdf](https://www.dol.gov/sites/dolgov/files/WH1422_Non-Federal.pdf)

• The Adkins Group of San Antonio, working with the Travel Industry, has devised a set of short, narrative and positive ads to be used with Travel Industry members to help boost confidence to the traveling public so WHEN it's the appropriate time and the fear of spreading the COVID-19 virus has passed then those ads will urge families and travelers to FIRST travel at all their favorite destinations in Texas. Should the Governor agree, a portion of the out-of-state travel promotion funds is requested to be used to advertise heavily in Texas for in-state travelers to travel to all their favorite RV Park, restaurant,

amusement park, lake, beach, or wherever they enjoy Texas vacations.

• At the direction of Gov. Greg Abbott, Texas State Parks were closed to the public effective at the close of business Tuesday, April 7 in order to maintain the safest environment for visitors, volunteers and staff. The Texas Parks and Wildlife Department (TPWD) will continue to stay current with the latest public health recommendations and will announce when a definite reopening date has been determined.

• There is some question whether or not the COVID-19 is considered in an insurance policy. Since business interruption coverage typically requires accompanying physical damage to property, brokers/insurers argue empty businesses have had no physical damage. There are arguments, however, that loss of use can constitute physical damage, or that the presence of the virus on surfaces or in the air is itself physical damage. The same issues apply in cases of contingent business interruption, in which businesses are affected not by damage to their own business, but by damage to customers or suppliers, which will also be an issue caused by the pandemic.

### **Some of the other issues are:**

• **Ingress/egress & civil ordinance or law.** Many commercial property policies provide coverage for business interruption caused by physical damage that limits ingress or egress to covered property or for property that is inaccessible by civil ordinance or law. These are also coverages that could be available as state and local regulations go into effect limiting gatherings and access to businesses like restaurants and bars.

• **Event Cancellation.** Many events carry insurance that could provide coverage in the event of cancellation. These policies are often negotiated specifically for each event, but could provide coverage for events cancelled due to coronavirus.

• **Liability insurance.** Many businesses may face claims for damages brought by customers or employees potentially exposed to the virus, or by employees who are told not to come to work because of the outbreak. Most commercial liability policies should provide straightforward coverage in the event of such claims. Clients should be mindful of any consent-to-defense provisions requiring insurer consent before defense costs are incurred responding to such claims; clients should get on the same page with their insurers immediately to avoid issues down the road.

• **Exclusions.** Many policies contain exclusions for losses caused by viruses or pathogens that could bar coverage for coronavirus claims. Almost all policies contain exclusions for pollutants that insurers can argue apply to bar coverage for coronavirus claims. In all cases it depends on the exact language of the exclusion to determine applicability, but as a general rule exclusions for viruses will likely apply, exclusions for pollutants will likely not apply.

• **Sublimit/waiting periods.** Some policies specifically provide coverage for losses caused by communicable disease, but businesses that buy this coverage usually are not anticipating a pandemic with large losses, maybe a small, contained outbreak of a disease causing minor losses, and therefore have a relatively low sublimit for that coverage. For businesses that do have business interruption coverage or coverage for loss caused by law or civil ordinance, there is often a waiting period before that coverage commences.

• **Claim best practices.** As soon as a loss is incurred or a claim is made, insureds should provide notice of claim or notice of circumstances to their insurer. Typically, such notice is made through brokers, but insureds may hire coverage counsel to advise on claim strategy. Insureds with claims that appear to fall within exclusions might give notice in the event of government intervention to force payment of claims. Any concern about the effect of claims on future renewals is mitigated in these circumstances by the fact that every policyholder is turning to its insurer(s) for whatever coverage is available. ★

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# COVID-19 INFO FOR YOU

TACOMembers.com

**T**he TACO staff has reported on numerous topics regarding how COVID-19 is affecting the campground industry through the NEW TACOMembers.com blog. This is valuable information from the campground prospective that you cannot get from other sources.

## COVID-19 Blog Posts

1. Best Practices for Your Campground During COVID-19
2. FAQs for Texas campgrounds
3. What we know as Stimulus moves to House, Shelter-in-place orders, etc
4. CARES Act signed into law; Federal Aid on the way
5. Latest News and Staying Compliant
6. I can't pay my site fees (rent)
7. ESSENTIAL BUSINESSES AND PPP
8. State Parks, NOT Private, to Temporarily Close
9. Business Interruption Provisions, RE: Insurance
10. Governor Abbott, Goldman Sachs, LiftFund Announce Loans For Small Businesses
11. Industry News, Info
12. Guidelines for opening America
13. Gov. Abbott Issues Executive Order Establishing Strike Force To Open Texas
14. Business Deemed Essential by DHS/CISA Guidelines
15. Congress appropriates additional funding for PPP

- Other resources, such as posters for Employees and Healthy practices are available at: <https://www.cdc.gov/handwashing/posters.html>
- If you missed some messages or you would like to review them, you can find all the updates on <https://tacomembers.com/>
- If you have not been getting these in your e-mail box and would like to – go to <https://tacomembers.com/contact-us/> to sign up.

## PPL PRESIDENT CELEBRATES 40 YEARS WITH DEALERSHIP

From humble beginnings, Diana LeBlanc now leads nation's largest RV consignment dealership.

**T**uesday, February 4 marked a big milestone for PPL Motor Homes President Diana LeBlanc. The Houston native and radio personality known as "RV Nana" celebrated her 40th anniversary with the company.

"What a fun and exciting rollercoaster it has been," noted LeBlanc. "I started as a receptionist in 1980 when the company had only four employees. From our origins in the RV rental business, we have grown to become the largest RV consignment dealership in the country, and I feel so fortunate to have been a part of this great team."

LeBlanc, who took the helm as PPL President in 2010, now has over 140 team members among three locations in Houston, Cleburne, and New Braunfels, Texas. An active mother and grandmother, LeBlanc loves the RV lifestyle and has served as President of the Texas RV Association from 2011 to 2013. LeBlanc now currently serves on the board of the Texas Association Of Campground Owners. In addition to overseeing day-to-day operations at all three PPL locations, LeBlanc writes a bi-monthly newsletter for RV enthusiasts, hosts a monthly customer appreciation event for RVers (Tuesday Tips with RV Nana) and is the founding sponsor

and regular guest on the nationally-syndicated radio show "The RV Show USA" with Alan Warren.

"Over the past 40 years, I've met some wonderful people," LeBlanc continued. "The RV industry is truly one big family and I love being a part of it. A big thank you to all my friends and family who have been there for me through the years." ★



*Founded in 1972, PPL Motor Homes is a full-service RV dealership and the largest RV consignment dealer in the nation. For additional information, visit [www.pplmotorhomes.com](http://www.pplmotorhomes.com).*





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Social Media Links – <a href="http://www.TexasCampgrounds.com">www.TexasCampgrounds.com</a>	1	1	1
Tile Banner Ad – <a href="http://www.TexasCampgrounds.com">www.TexasCampgrounds.com</a>	Target – 6 months	Find A Park ad – 6 months	Find A Park ad – 12 months
Banner Ad – TCR	Find A Park – 6 months	Find A Park – 12 months	Home Page ad – 12 months
Highlighted Listing	On <a href="http://TexasCampgrounds.com">TexasCampgrounds.com</a>	In the TACO Guide	On <a href="http://TexasCampgrounds.com">TexasCampgrounds.com</a> & in the TACO Guide
Press Releases	Two times a year	Three times a year	Four times a year
Rich Media Banner	1	1	1
SEO Package	SEO Report and Consult	SEO Report and Consult	SEO Report and Consult
TACO News E-Newsletter	2 Editions	4 Editions	6 Editions
Google AdWords™	1 month + Admin. Support	2 months + Admin. Support	3 months + Admin. Support
Branding Package - Readables, Wearables, Drinkables	\$500.00	\$750.00	\$1,000.00
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4x6 Branded Custom Welcome Mats	N/A	1	1

## Why selecting a package makes good sense

### ▶ RV SHOW INSERTIONS

TACO hands out the RV Travel & Camping Guide at four key shows in Texas. It begins with the Rio Grande Valley Show in Mercedes, where you can reach a huge concentration of Winter Texans. Then February sees show appearances in Houston, where we reach campers early in the season. TACO inserts member literature into 1,000 guides, which are bagged up and handed out at each show.

### ▶ CO-OP MAIL

TACO markets the RV Travel & Camping Guide through a myriad of Internet promotions. The result of spending tens of thousands of promotional dollars is receiving hundreds of weekly mail requests for the TACO Guide and the Texas Saver Card. TACO members that consistently report increased business year over year make sure their literature is included with every TACO guide mail request.

### ▶ RACK CARD PRINTING

The majority of members who participate in TACO RV Show Insertions and Co-op Mail use custom-printed rack cards. TACO is pleased to include FREE rack cards in each package and a great discount on printing additional high-quality four-color, 2-sided, glossy rack cards.

**TACO Marketing Package participants at the Tampa RV Show!**



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# TACO NEWS

## Did You Know?

As traditional campers coast through retirement and spend less time at campgrounds and RV resorts, a new breed of camping enthusiast is embracing the outdoor lifestyle. Get acquainted with Gen Z – the oldest of whom will be turning 24 this year! Gen Z is currently made up mostly of teens and tweens, they heavily influence their parents, and all of them are about to mature into budding careers with travel budgets of their own.

Here's the great news for TACO members. Did you know that 3 out of every 5 teens say they are VERY enthusiastic about camping? They are also known as the iGen because they grew up with the internet and are considered digital natives. Being environmentally conscious, they want to connect with and conserve nature; this urge, if played right, can lead them right into your campground!

The key to keeping up with the iGen (they are always on the move!) is to be where they are. Already, 70% of travel research is done on mobile devices and 80% of camping reservations are made online. The iGen trust peer reviews more than any marketing pitch because they are community driven and two times more likely than other generations to watch videos on mobile devices. With all that said, having a great online and mobile presence for your campground is critical. Whether through an engaging social presence, a simple video, a convenient booking app, or ensuring your website is responsive and open for community reviews, be authentic with this audience and be where they want to be.

You can learn more about the campground market and consumer trends with this infographic: [AspiraConnect.com/TACO-iGen](https://AspiraConnect.com/TACO-iGen)


#### Sources:


1. The North American Camping Report, KOA, 2018.
2. Google Data, [www.thinkwithgoogle.com/consumer-insights](http://www.thinkwithgoogle.com/consumer-insights)
3. Google Analytics, [www.ReserveAmerica.com](http://www.ReserveAmerica.com)
4. Upfront Analytics: [www.visioncritical.com](http://www.visioncritical.com)

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