

CENTER FOR ECONOMIC RESEARCH & POLICY ANALYSIS

PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
July 27, 2020

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Researchers seek business owner input about COVID-19 impacts

Faculty researchers at Appalachian State University are requesting business owners provide information about the impacts of COVID-19 on their business. The researchers are examining the extent to which the pandemic has affected businesses in all industries, how businesses responded to this challenge, and approaches to community engagement and support since the statewide “Stay at Home” Order became effective in late March.

“Our multi-disciplinary faculty team will use the data gathered to provide local, state, and national leaders a robust picture of our business landscape as the result of COVID-19. This work should assist in developing strategies for recovery, while also highlighting community strengths as evidenced by the transformation of many businesses to serve on-going needs,” says Professor of Religious Studies Sandie Gravett.

Specific research objectives are to: (1) understand how regional businesses responded to the pandemic; (2) develop a geographically-specific input-output model to estimate COVID-19-related changes to regional economic activity, employment levels, labor income, and local taxes; (3) examine the level of government that has been the best advocate for an economic recovery; and (4) analyze current expectations of future business interruptions. The multidisciplinary research group includes faculty members from the Departments of Government and Justice Studies, Geography, Economics, Philosophy and Religion, and Psychology.

“We hope all businesses in our region respond to this survey. Rural regions such as ours not only have limited representation in national data, but the availability of that limited data also tends to lag months behind actual events. Our effort is focused on providing local businesses, community leaders, and elected officials with the vital data they need to make decisions in this unprecedented time,” said Ash Morgan, Director of Appalachian State’s Center for Economic Research & Policy Analysis (CERPA).

To meet these objectives, the group has developed a brief online survey of businesses across the five counties of Ashe, Avery, Caldwell, Watauga, and Wilkes. The survey is prepared and administered in accordance with the requirements of Appalachian State University's Institutional Review Board, and no individual businesses will be identified. The survey is being distributed by email, but is open to all business owners in our region and may be accessed at https://appstate.az1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_50croLnpM4jIVXL.

The survey is also available on the CERPA website at <https://cerpa.appstate.edu>.

The group will provide a full report of the survey results, including details on the impacts of COVID-19 in our region, and make it publicly available to all interested parties at <https://cerpa.appstate.edu> later this Fall.