GBC in the News:
March 2020 - April 2020

2020 GBC Media Highlights

Valued Member:

During this unprecedented time full of questions and uncertainty, the Greater Baltimore Committee (GBC) has stayed committed to providing support for our members. The COVID-19 pandemic has impacted the business community in unexpected ways. However, I am confident that if we remain positive and adapt to changes needed in the work environment that our businesses will rebound over time and our employees will remain safe. There are positive changes that can emerge from this pandemic that has significantly impacted business.

During this crisis, many of our members have been recognized in the news for gracious philanthropic efforts to their communities. I encourage you to visit our Member News page on our website (www.gbc.org) where we highlight these efforts.

Normally, the GBC receives requests from local and national media outlets to provide insight, comment or perspective on a pressing topic or issue. This has been no different during the COVID-19 pandemic. Reporters, editors and producers solicit our input because the GBC provides the unique private sector angle and enjoys a reputation for providing informed and well thought out perspectives on important issues facing our state, region and city.

Additionally, as part of the effort to be an influential voice in the region, I also publish commentaries in The Daily Record, Baltimore Business Journal, and on WBAL News Radio 1090 AM/101.5 FM, as well as other outlets.

To ensure that you and other members are kept informed of the GBC's presence in the media, we are pleased to provide you with this edition of GBC In The News.

As always, I welcome your feedback and questions.

Be safe, stay healthy and remain positive.

Sincerely,
March 2020

Media Coverage

March 4 Baltimore Sun: Police Commissioner Harrison discusses 'squeegee kids' and his 5-year crime plan with Baltimore's business leaders
Speaking with the Greater Baltimore Committee, Harrison said he would like to see more resources directed toward helping teenagers and young adults get good jobs and a better education. He also touted his five-year crime-fighting strategy meant to reduce violence and increase community engagement while complying with reforms required under a federal consent decree.
Read the article.

March 4 BBJ: Why Baltimore's police commissioner takes officers to the Center Club each month
Harrison wants to work with the business community on more professional development for his officers. "I need help in figuring out how to change their thinking so that we run this 3,500-person organization much like you run your organizations," Harrison said.
Read the article.

March 4 The Daily Record: Harrison seeks to reassure business leaders of progress in reducing crime
During an appearance at a Greater Baltimore Committee-sponsored event, Harrison stressed that police are focused not only on reducing homicides that have exceeded more than 300 each of the past five years but on combating lower-profile crimes as well. For instance, he noted, the department is seeking to reduce problems associated with "squeegee kids" who wipe the windows of cars stopped at traffic lights.
Read the article.

March 7 The Baltimore Sun: Baltimore-area buses break down more than in most other cities, partly because the MTA forgot to buy new ones
Del. Brooke Lierman is circulating a slideshow highlighting the state's high rate of public transit breakdowns as she pushes for increased funding for capital transit projects. She has submitted legislation, backed by the pro-business Greater Baltimore Committee and area county executives, that would require a minimum funding level of $500 million per year for the Maryland Transit Administration's capital budget over the next six years — an increase of more than $100 million annually.
Read the article.

March 12 BBJ: What Dr. Leana Wen says businesses should do right now about coronavirus
Wen offered updates and advice on the global pandemic to a handful of local business leaders seeking guidance on making decisions around coronavirus threats and fears in their own organizations, during a meeting at the Greater Baltimore Committee on March 12. She knows people may be feeling overwhelmed by the constant stream of news and advisories regarding the novel coronavirus, or COVID-19, but said the influx is not likely to slow anytime soon.
Read the article.

March 12 WBAL-TV: Empty tables show sign of times at local restaurants, businesses prepare
Former City Health Commissioner Dr. Lena Wen met with Greater Baltimore Committee members March 12 to help businesses navigate the new coronavirus world. She said
March 13 WYPR: How will coronavirus impact local business?
With Gov. Larry Hogan banning large gatherings of people here in Maryland, business owners are wrestling with the prospect that COVID-19 might severely impede both their customers and their employees. Listen to the Midday Podcast from March 13, 2020, featuring GBC President and CEO Donald C. Fry, with an update on the economic fallout of the outbreak in Baltimore and the region here.

March 17 BBJ: 'This session has been stressing me out': Md.'s General Assembly adjourns with mixed results for businesses
Baltimore City schools will receive $584 million in additional state funding in 2030 under the new law. The city will also have to spend $152 million, but that's a reduction from $330 million in the original bill. Lawmakers amended the legislation to take some of the burden off of poorer jurisdictions. "Having a strong education system is important to business because we want to have a strong workforce moving forward," Fry said.

March 23 The Daily Record: Regional business leaders urge federal stimulus package — now
"We support those efforts, and we urge you to work quickly, in a bipartisan manner, to protect workers, businesses and the broader economy from the impacts of this crisis, both near-term and long-term," the letter urged. "Failure to act now and with haste will have a far greater long-term cost to our economy."

March 23 Maryland Reporter: All non-essential businesses must close by 5 p.m. on March 23, Hogan orders
Donald Fry, president and CEO of the Greater Baltimore Committee — a coalition of business leaders in the city — called the governor's decision to close non-essential businesses "an unfortunate but necessary move to help stop the spread of the coronavirus (COVID-19)."

March 24 WBAL NewsRadio: Donald C. Fry on economic impact of COVID-19 crisis
Fry discussed Governor Hogan's decision to shut down non-essential businesses. "These are extraordinary circumstances and they call for extraordinary measures," he said. When Lang asked if this hits Baltimore harder, Fry said, "Obviously Baltimore has a number of challenges that it's been dealing with over the last couple years. But Baltimore has been a very resilient city."

March 25 Pressbox.com: Supporting the Orioles, the future of Pimlico and sports betting
Fry discussed ways to continue to support The Orioles, Preakness Stakes and Pimlico Race Course legislation, sports betting and the future of Baltimore's arena. When asked what his message to business owners would be at this time, Fry said, "Remain as positive as possible. We are a very resilient society. We're trying to be a resource and let businesses know of laws that have been passed and where they can go for resources."

March 26 The AFRO: Newsmaker Speaker Series: The Novel COVID-19 Outbreak
Around March 12, there were no reported cases of COVID-19 as of yet in Baltimore City as the Greater Baltimore Committee held their Newsmaker Speaker Series: State of the Novel COVID-19 Outbreak. The session's keynote speakers included former Baltimore City Health Commissioner Dr. Leana Wen and Dawn O'Neill, Vice President of Population Health at Saint Agnes Hospital.

March 26 The Daily Record: Md. jobless claims soar to unprecedented

levels
"The unemployment numbers reveal that the business closures and other restrictive measures being taken to curb the spread of COVID-19 are creating economic hardship for many and that is unfortunate but not unexpected," said Donald C. Fry, president and CEO of the Greater Baltimore Committee.
Read the article.

March 30 The Baltimore Sun: Gov. Hogan issues stay-at-home order for Maryland to stop spread of the coronavirus
Donald C. Fry, president of the Greater Baltimore Committee, said while he understands the governor's new order will create more hardship for businesses, employers and employees, "it is meant to ensure that Maryland can respond aggressively to the COVID-19 pandemic and enable us to bounce back when the crisis subsides."
Read the article.

March 30 Maryland Reporter: Hogan orders residents to stay home effective 8:00 on March 30
Donald Fry, president and CEO of the Greater Baltimore Committee — a nonprofit organization that represents 500 businesses and other institutions throughout the Baltimore region — said that although Hogan's order might present difficulties for businesses, it is nevertheless necessary.
Read the article.

April 2020

Don Fry Commentaries

April 24: Don Fry Commentary: New General Assembly leadership shone in first year
Talk about trial by fire. The presiding officers of the Maryland General Assembly, Senate President Bill Ferguson and House Speaker Adrienne Jones, had their plates full during this year's legislative session even before the outbreak of COVID-19.
Read the commentary.

April 24: Don Fry Commentary on WBAL NewsRadio: Coronavirus delayed mayoral race but doesn’t diminish its importance
The COVID-19 pandemic dominates the media and public’s attention each and every waking hour. But there's a transformative and pivotal election on the horizon for Baltimore City.
Read the commentary.

Additional Media Coverage

April 1 BBJ: City panel approves 'spy plane' agreement, allowing surveillance planes over Baltimore
Baltimore business leaders have vehemently endorsed the program as another tool to help fight crime in a city plagued by violence. Last fall, the Greater Baltimore Committee called for the pilot program to be implemented, with CEO Don Fry telling the BBJ in an interview, "If it needs to be tried somewhere, why not Baltimore? Particularly recognizing the challenges we have had in stopping violent crime."
Read the article.

April 8 BBJ: Johns Hopkins Medicine chief shares how his system is preparing for COVID-19 surge at webinar hosted by GBC and its Health Care Committee
"But we have not yet met our surge," Sowers told a group of business leaders April 8, 2020, during a special web event hosted by the Greater Baltimore Committee. He noted that Hopkins is laying out plans for addressing capacity and equipment shortages as an impending spike of coronavirus cases quickly approaches.
Read the article.
April 8 The Baltimore Sun: Maryland sees spike of 1,100 new coronavirus cases, but most hospitals aren't yet at capacity
During a Zoom presentation to members of the Greater Baltimore Committee on April 8, the president of the Johns Hopkins Health System said Hopkins has confirmed 1,048 cases of COVID-19 since the beginning of the pandemic, with 186 patients in the hospital system as of that morning.
Read the article.

April 8 BBJ: When will this be over? — Johns Hopkins doctor weighs in on the big question at GBC hosted webinar
A group of local business leaders aimed the million-dollar question at Johns Hopkins' Dr. Josh Sharfstein, during a web event hosted by the Greater Baltimore Committee April 8.
Read the article.

April 9 Greater Greater Washington: Should Baltimore have a regional transit authority?
And with proponents as disparate as transit advocacy groups like the Baltimore Transit Equity Coalition (BTEC), civic/business groups like the Greater Baltimore Committee and even some of Baltimore's more prominent mayoral candidates supporting the idea, it's worth taking a closer look at why so many people think an RTA could hold the key to many of Baltimore's transit troubles.
Read the article.

April 21 The Daily Record: Cardin, Van Hollen: New PPP funding unlikely to be the last
Sen. Chris Van Hollen and Sen. Ben Cardin, during a Greater Baltimore Committee webinar April 21, said changes to the program in this round of funding should boost disadvantaged businesses’ access to those federal funds. The lawmakers, however, acknowledged the $320 billion in new funding does not completely fix the program’s shortcomings.
Read the article.

April 22 The Daily Record: Md. lawmakers to GM: Build ventilators at closed White Marsh plant
Ramping up the testing, Sen. Ben Cardin said, is the key to loosenng "stay at home" orders that have hurt businesses. The nation's still a long way from getting to that point, Cardin said on April 21 during a Greater Baltimore Committee webinar.
Read the article.

April 28 BBJ: Here's how Baltimore, Hopkins, UMMS and CareFirst are fighting Covid-19 with data
Dzirasa joined Matt Gallagher, CEO of grant-making organization the Goldseker Foundation, as well as the CEOs of Hopkins, UMMS and CareFirst, to discuss the progress and purpose of the ongoing data collection efforts during a webinar event hosted by the Greater Baltimore Committee April 28.
Read the article.

April 29 BBJ: CareFirst CEO 'implores' businesses to continue remote work, even after economy reopens
Pieninck spoke directly to city business owners during a webinar event hosted by the Greater Baltimore Committee April 28, which drew 170 attendees. CareFirst is part of a public-private partnership with city officials, the University of Maryland Medical System and Johns Hopkins Health System, aimed at bolstering Baltimore’s Covid-19 resources and response. Leaders of each organization gave updates on the progress of the partnership efforts during the webinar.
Read the article.

April 30 BBJ: Aerial surveillance planes to begin flying over Baltimore Friday
A number of Baltimore business leaders, including the Greater Baltimore Committee, have pushed for the surveillance program as a solution to reduce violent crime that has hampered Baltimore’s "vibrancy and economic potential.”
Read the article.
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