

April 6, 2020 - 2:00pm ET
Georgia Manufacturers Alliance - Task Force

Host: Jason Moss, Founder and Executive Director GMA
Guests: Bert Brantley, COO, GA Dept of Economic Development

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Welcome by Jason Moss - Today's topic is Manufacturing Task Force

This is our second Task Force call. Our goal is to rally resources and available tools in the State of Georgia to combat the Corona COVID-19 virus, whether it be materials, supplies, resources, labor or creativity. The purpose and mission is to find out how we can work together to win this battle. As a result from our first call, I have invited Bert Brantley to give us insights. The Georgia State government is overloaded already but we as the Georgia Manufacturers can bring a lot to the table as well.

GMA is considered an essential business in the area of providing essential news. Please register online for these calls so we can send you the show notes as well as any other resources and links. For participant contact information, see member directory at GMA website.

Participants online at this moment, their names, company, industry type and resources:

Kim Falkenhayn, Task Force team coach

Company: Okabashi Brands, Buford, GA

What: Manufacturing and distribution of footwear

Comments: Joined to help understand what resources are available. Okabashi can help in injection moulding, warehousing etc. Has supply chain and project management background, will "connect the dots".

Thomas Smith

Company: J&S Chemical, Canton, GA

What: specialty lubricants for automotive parts suppliers

Comments: As some of our customers have converted to produce ventilator parts, J&S will supply in-process lubricants for their ventilators. We know chemicals for manufacturing and liquid lubricants, we now put our expertise together to make hand sanitizer. Through GMA we connected with Joe Paolini from Bobby Dodd Institute to repackage and distribute our new hand sanitizer - we need to be FDA compliant. Michael Smith can provide more info too. We are thrilled with our connection to Joe through GMA. It is good to keep employees busy. (Jason: love that!!)

Amanda Gray

Company: Georgia Expo Manufacturing Corp., Suwanee, GA

What: Manufacturer of Pipe & Drape for events and exhibits.

Comments: Our video about sewing surplus went viral. We now sew pipe/drape for portable field hospitals. We also sell our surplus of masks and gowns. We need sewers with their own sewing machines!

James Nesmith and Joe Freedman

Company: Peachtree Tents and Events, Atlanta, GA

What: Tents and event services

Comments Joe: We have always done disaster work. However, our primary business is social and weddings. We have 1000s of structures and tents. We have eight operations in seven states. Right now we are supplying outside temporary break rooms, wellness and screening areas. Temporary structures with social distancing guidelines. We have restrooms, restroom trailers, and lighting to be used outside of the facility. We have hand sanitation stations and recently gained access to KN95 masks as we have 300 employees. We are doing testing centers so need masks for our, and our customer, employees.

Comment James: my wife sews, will connect with Amanda

Comment Jason Moss: restaurants drive by pickups may be another application for Joe. We conducted a Town Hall meeting this morning about the status of today.

Sloan MacKarvich

Company: Tie Down Engineering and Manufacturing, Atlanta, GA

What: Metal processor, injection moulding, assembly, machining.

Comments: We can build. Right now we are making strikers for hospital beds. Metal tubes.

Comment Jason: if you want to pair wants with needs, see our webpage for Statewide needs posted by the government.

Gene Kim

Company: Exporter in Kennesaw, GA

What: Food packing industry. Non-woven, open mesh

Comments: Manufacture open mesh structure packaging, think onions, potatoes and produce bags. Breathable items such as hair nets, shoe covers, aprons. Have mask materials on hand.

Windell McGill

Company: ePac Flexible Packaging, Norcross, GA

What: Flexible packaging converter in the food industry.

Comments: We have pouching capability for food and industrial packaging. We do powdered milk packages for FEMA and food banks. We are also making masks right now.

Our guest speaker today: Bert Brantley, COO, GA Dept Economic Development.

We have two State Responses:

1. Identify critical supplies - who has them, who is making, who can shift production?
This information is only for GEMA purchasing process.
 - a. Our workflow process is to review input received, assign a score based on:
 - Supplies available, warehoused and ready to send
 - How quickly can you switch, what is available and timeframe of availability
 - b. GEMA gets this Excel spreadsheet every afternoon and gauges the needs of items and projection of availability.

Comments:

- GEMA is only interested in large quantities.
- The last couple of weeks GEMA has purchased from on-hand supplies.
- Next, we will start to figure out who can shift production or add shifts to expand current production.
- GMA is a partner to find manufacturers to produce these needs and who can produce additional supplies
- Only Tier 1 emergency customers will benefit from these purchases such as hospitals, nursing homes, home health companies and first responders. If you are a dentist who needs 20 masks, even though you are a Tier 1 entity, you will have to buy them somewhere else.

Key facts:

1. GEMA, pays upon receipt, no prepayments!!! If GEMA issues a PO, they will pay.
2. All supplies that need FDA approval, must have it! No international approval, only FDA approval in order for GEMA to purchase.

2. CISA Guidelines, Dept of Homeland Security:

Since the Shelter in Home was put into effect on April 2nd, we need to determine who is critical infrastructure. If you are not one of the businesses that have to be closed and are not critical you MUST follow 20 recommendations.

For instance: a North Georgia retailer sells coins, collectibles, antiques but also water, beverages and food staples. Brent's department helped him to stay open. Industry trade associations such as GMA have been very helpful. Thanks, Jason!

Comment Brent:

Regarding SBA programs available, they are co-hosting webinars with UGA SBDC. You can find a lot of resources and webinars.

Question Jason: Most manufacturers can do small volumes

Answer Brent: need high volume, ready to buy.

Question Jason: Can GEMA call manufacturers back to communicate how or where they fit in? This way, I will not send non-qualified requests to you.

Answer Brent: we have not been able to do 2-way communication between Dept Econ Dev and GEMA. GEMA does not say what they will be needing, so that doesn't help for the future. When we hear from GEMA, we will tell GMA. So far, GEMA has been focused on immediate availability. Know that states and cities have been in a race to supply their stock. Immediate availability has now been claimed, so now GEMA will need to find out who can deliver when, for long term supply. So, information sharing hopefully will be going both ways in the next week or so.

Comment Jason to Brent - Georgians supplied by Georgians!

We have Peachtree Tents and Events for popup tents for hospitals, and Amanda from GA Expo Manufacturing who can supply dividers. I would rather be proactive so these companies will be available to buy when needed and manufacture now instead of sending workers home.

Brent answer: Ashley is our Director of Advanced Manufacturing - large scale projects. We have 12 regions in GA.

Jason: Please identify materials and supplies that you will need in the future so we can produce.

Give us top 5 or 10 items to start manufacturing. We can manufacture about anything, but we need direction on what to manufacture - let's supply Georgians with items made by Georgians.

Brent: will do

Kim Falkenhayn:

1. Prioritization is the biggest need right now.
2. Our suppliers can get you masks. Are they still needed, which type, how do we validate FDA approved and which quantity. Is the cost of air freight supported?
3. We need a link of priorities, quantities, and is the cost of manufacturing supported?
4. Jason: if masks are in demand, will they still be in 2 weeks?

Amanda Grey:

- We are doing a lot of quotes; raw goods and in stock; We'll be out of stock so need domestic suppliers. Supply chain is getting narrow, we'll run out of stock. We want to secure materials before we run out.
- If there is a need for hospital dividers here in GA then we need to secure materials now instead of these orders and shipments going to other states.

Gene Kim:

- Food package is the biggest business for us. We are getting inquiries for items such as produce bags from out of state who were not customers before.
- There is a fear factor, people are stocking up.
- Several large global customers have started to order which is a sign for increased amounts of material for their production of medical products.

One of the easiest ways is to look at anything that is made of Tyvec, we can replace those items at a much lower cost. Think body suits, filters for hospitals.

Joe Freedman:

We are doing a fair amount of temporary structures. So anything you need a structure for, we can provide. We need resources as well.

Question by Joe to Brent: do masks have to be licensed. We can not take them away from hospital workers. The KN95 mask is ok with CDC but they do come from China and it is the only thing I can get my hands on.

Answer Brent: not heard back from GEMA, ordered 1.5 million KN95 masks. The state is trying to build volume supplies. Joe, if CDC says they are good, we are using them! Brent, will look into it.

Jason, action items:

- Add your capabilities on our website!
- List your resources!
- Bert, we need the top 10 list
- From Kim: instead of high volume, lots of businesses do not have mask connections. Where/how can we get non-hospital quality masks that are available in smaller qtys. Where can we post that?
- From LD DeKatch, FastSigns Snellville: is reaching out in the community to supply masks. Also doing countertop shields. Is joining with other FastSigns to make them.
- From Joe Freedman: the frontline doctors/nurses say the biggest problem is unpreparedness. It will be a while before N95 are available. Joe will send link to website for small qty that he uses.
- We need links to known suppliers who can still supply and are good resources.

Tuesday, tomorrow's Zoom call is HR and Safety: the latest and greatest best practices. Please go to Facebook and LinkedIn, like our post and enter a comment about your favorite part of this call. Thank you all !!!