



# WISCONSIN CHEESE MAKERS ASSOCIATION

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## Coronavirus Information and Resources

Bulletin Distributed: February 4, 2021

*WCMA distributes member bulletins focused on coronavirus information on Thursdays and as breaking news warrants. WCMA delivers electronic newsletters with broader content on Tuesdays. Please contact [WCMA staff](#) with any questions.*

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### OSHA Issues New Employer Guidance

At the direction of President Joe Biden, the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) has released [updated employer guidance](#) on COVID-19 safety protocols.

The guidance, which OSHA officials note is "not a standard or regulation" and "creates no new legal obligations," direct employers to implement a COVID-19 prevention program, detailing how to evaluate workplace hazards, isolate workers and clean and disinfect workplaces.

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### Evers Issues New Mask Mandate, After GOP Vote

Wisconsin Governor Tony Evers today issued a [new public health emergency order](#) and [statewide mask mandate](#), just an hour after Wisconsin Assembly Republicans [voted to strike down](#) the previous orders. This means a mask mandate remains in effect.

Republicans may choose to restart the legislative process, and again vote down the Governor's order, but leaders have yet to comment on their plans. A challenge to the Governor's emergency powers is also before the Wisconsin Supreme Court, though justices have yet to indicate when a ruling may come.

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### Wisconsin GOP Moving Toward Final Approval of COVID-19 Bill, But Evers May Veto

Wisconsin Assembly Republicans today approved a new amendment to a coronavirus relief package, designed to [preserve access to federal food aid](#), the

latest development in weeks of back-and-forth over the bill between the Assembly and Senate.

This morning, Senate leader Devin LeMahieu (R-Oostburg) announced [his members will approve](#) the Assembly's amendment tomorrow. The Senate had been set to meet next week, but new analysis shows Wisconsin will lose [enhanced federal unemployment benefits](#) if the measure is not signed into law by Sunday, February 7.

Wisconsin Governor Tony Evers may also [veto the package](#), which includes measures he has described as "poison pills." Some of the more controversial provisions include legislative oversight and approval of the use of federal COVID-19 aid, limitations on the authority of county public health officials, and a ban on employers requiring vaccination of their employees.

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## USDA Study Shows Rural Residents More Vulnerable to Severe Cases, Death From COVID-19

The U.S. Department of Agriculture has released the [results of a new study](#) showing residents of rural communities have suffered higher rates of serious COVID-19 infections and morbidity than those living in suburban or urban communities.

The study points to four factors contributing to rural communities' heightened vulnerability: an older average age, a higher rate of underlying medical conditions, a lack of health insurance, and a lack of nearby intensive care hospitals.

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## SBA Reports PPP Loans of \$72B in New Round

The U.S. Small Business Administration this week is reporting it has issued nearly [900,000 Paycheck Protection Program \(PPP\) loans](#) totaling \$72.7 billion in the latest round of funding, which opened January 11.

Congress has approved \$284 billion for PPP loans in this cycle, meaning \$211.3 billion remains available. To be eligible for a second PPP loan - which cannot exceed \$2 million - a business must have 300 employees or fewer, have used or will soon use all of the money from its previous PPP loan for authorized uses, and can show at least a 25 percent decline in gross receipts between comparable quarters in 2019 and 2020.

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## Wisconsin Committee Advances PPP Fix

Today, the Wisconsin Senate Committee of Financial Institutions and Revenue [approved a proposal](#) designed to ensure businesses can deduct expenses paid for with Paycheck Protection Program loans in their state filings.

Both the full Senate and Assembly would still need to approve the bill, before Governor Tony Evers could consider signing it into law. WCMA is advocating for this legislative change as part of a coalition of business leaders and trade associations.

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# Coronavirus Headline News

## Dairy Industry

- WAOW-TV: [USDA temporarily suspending debt collections and foreclosures](#)

## Wisconsin

- Wisconsin Public Radio: [Wisconsin surpasses 600K COVID-19 vaccine doses administered](#)
- WISN-TV: [Walgreens to administer 18,000 COVID-19 vaccines in Wisconsin](#)
- WKBT-TV: [Eau Claire County adopts mask order](#)
- Wisconsin State Journal: [Rock County issues mask order](#)

## National/International

- Reuters: [U.S. Senate Democrats set for first step on road to new COVID-19 relief](#)
- Washington Post: [Some states are racing ahead of others with their coronavirus vaccine rollouts. Their secret? Keeping it simple.](#)
- USA Today: [U.S. aims to expand hunt for coronavirus variants](#)
- MarketWatch: [U.S. death toll tops 450,000 but hospitalizations decline for a 23rd straight day](#)
- WGN-TV: [U.S. unemployment claims fall to 779,000 but job cuts grind on](#)

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## Visit [WisCheeseMakers.org](https://www.wischeesemakers.org) for More Resources

WCMA's coronavirus resources page on [WisCheeseMakers.org](https://www.wischeesemakers.org) is updated daily, featuring information on employee safety, regulatory flexibility, operations guidance, federal and state support, and ways to salute your critical, essential staff.

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## WCMA Key Contacts

Members with pandemic-related questions or concerns should feel encouraged to contact WCMA staff at any time. Here are ways to get in touch.

- WCMA Executive Director John Umhoefer: [jumhoefer@wischeesemakers.org](mailto:jumhoefer@wischeesemakers.org) or 608-225-7130
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