

Downtown is
Calling

Good
Times
Await



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In keeping with recommended
protocols for dealing with the
COVID-19 virus aka Coronavirus, RDP
luncheons and most meetings are
canceled until further notice.



January 2021

Bulletin

Riverside Downtown Business Improvement District

RDP News

Annual Meeting Canceled

The Riverside Downtown Partnership regrets to announce that it will not be holding its Annual Meeting and Awards Ceremony on February 24, 2021 as originally scheduled. It is anticipated that with the current level of the pandemic, large indoor gatherings will not be allowed at that time. The event has been rescheduled to February 16, 2022 and will once again be held at the Historic Mission Inn Hotel & Spa. RDP looks forward to celebrating downtown achievements and notable individuals at that time.

Passing of Doug Shackelton

We were saddened by the sudden passing of Doug Shackelton on November 27, 2020. Doug was a past Chair of the Riverside Downtown Partnership from 2002 to 2003 and a recipient of the Roy Hord 'Volunteer of the Year' Award in 2005. He along with Tim Maloney were the driving force behind RDP's Concerts at the Courthouse which featured the legendary Etta James in 2001. Our sincere sympathies are extended to the family.

Supporting Downtown Businesses

Thanks to an unexpected grant, RDP was able to fund radio commercials on both KOLA and KFROG to encourage Riverside residents and visitors to support downtown businesses with the following message;


Downtown Riverside is the safe and merry place to run your essential holiday errands. You can even support your favorite downtown businesses while observing the current stay at home order. Grab some takeout from your favorite restaurant, or make a quick trip to your favorite retailer for some gifts. The Riverside Downtown Partnership and the downtown businesses you love are ready to make your spirits bright with seasonal specials and health and safety measures to keep you and your family safe. To learn more, find Riverside Downtown Partnership on Facebook or visit www.riversidedowntown.org.

The radio ads ran from December 14th to December 27th. In addition, RDP ran a social media campaign on Facebook and Instagram until December 31st.

RDP is continuing to share posts on Facebook and to encourage its followers to support downtown businesses.

Riverside Dickens Festival News

The 2021 Riverside Dickens Festival will be a virtual festival on February 20th and 21st, 2021. The theme for this festival is "The Great Exhibition of 2021". Modelled after the Crystal Palace exhibition of 1851, the festival hopes to spotlight innovation, technology, and international trade as the original event did.

For more information on the event, check www.dickensfest.com or Facebook/dickensfest. 

Arts Corner: P.L.A.C.E. Performance

Ten years ago, a group of 15 dance artists and educators met to brainstorm how they could give the local dance community more access to classes and performance opportunities. P.L.A.C.E. Performance was the result.

"P.L.A.C.E. stands for Possibility, Location, Artistry, Collaboration, Evolving," said Sue Roginski. "There

have been quite a few local dance artists who have worked on behalf of P.L.A.C.E., but currently the working members are Tracy Tom-Hoon, Megan Fowler-Hurst and myself."

The group began with a dance performance at a restaurant in Hemet before moving on to a performance in
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a coffee shop in Banning. Their third performance was at downtown Riverside's iconic Back to the Grind. Wanting to include more dance at the Grind, longtime barista, baker and organizer of Saturation Fest, Talene Beuche, came up with the concept of "between the tables."

"'between the tables' creates an environment where dancers and audience can casually communicate before, during and after a performance," said Fowler-Hurst. "The event highlights local dance artists by providing space and opportunity to share work while also bringing in guest artists from all over southern California to expand our audience and community."

Normally taking place every third month on the third Sunday at 3:00 pm, "between the tables" has been on hiatus due to the pandemic. But Fowler-Hurst is currently working out the details for a virtual version in February.

In 2011, Jean Isaacs from Jean Isaacs San Diego Dance Theater contacted P.L.A.C.E. about bringing their trademarked event "Trolley Dances" to Riverside. It came as part of a push from the Irvine Foundation to bring projects inland.

"We then moved forward to receive non-profit status, shadowed Jean Isaacs for one year and premiered 'Trolley Dances Riverside' with institutional partner Riverside City College Dance Program in 2012," said Roginski. "Since this event moves audience from one site to another, we immediately partnered with the Riverside Transit Agency who provides the trolley cars each time."

"Trolley Dances Riverside" has been held five times; however the 2020 event was postponed. The group is



working toward a filmed version this year.

"The event provides opportunities for local dancers and choreographers," said Fowler-Hurst. "It highlights the city's transit system and allows audience members to appreciate different attributes and landmarks of the city."

Tom-Hoon added that both "between the tables" and "Trolley Dances Riverside" are important because they open people's minds to the capabilities of making art.

"They give a different perspective of what a performance space is and what it could be," said Tom-Hoon. "Dance is important to a community because it creates community. In a broad sense, it brings people from all walks of life together."

For more information visit placeperformance.org.

*Contributed by Patrick Brien,
Executive Director - Riverside Arts Council*



RDP Welcomes New Businesses to Downtown

Articulations Pilates Studio

Dtown Smoke Shop • Earlybird Vintage

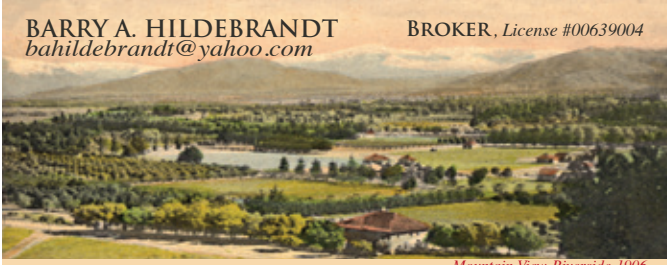
Hotz Kitchens/Cocktails, LLC • Lsj No Limit Tax

Refunds • Luis Solis • Sumabi

The Alley Collective

Downtown Businesses -
Stay connected with email alerts from RDP. Send your email address to janice@riversidedowntown.org to be added to our listing.
And remember to follow us on Facebook.


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4197 BROCKTON AVENUE RIVERSIDE, CA 92501
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CITY OF RIVERSIDE
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RiversidePublicUtilities.com



COUNCIL CORNER

Ward One Council Update

Contributed by Councilwoman Erin Edwards

Happy New Year! The start of 2021 comes with a renewed sense of hope for what the year holds for our community.

With over 70,000 **COVID-19 tests** administered between November 10th-December 17th (and 100,000 tests anticipated by the end of the calendar year), it is clear that expanding our testing capacity is vital to aggressively tracking the spread of COVID in our community. The City has expanded our testing sites to UCR, as well as the former Sears building. By the beginning of 2021, the City anticipates that all Curative sites will be operating seven days a week. We also anticipate the roll-out of the COVID vaccine, which will be administered in phases, starting with critical healthcare workers.

After spending \$3.6 Million to fund grants for 360 businesses across Riverside, **the City re-allocated an additional \$1.5 million to businesses still in the queue.** An estimated total of \$5.4 million is expected be awarded. I am grateful for the relief these grants have offered to local businesses, and I know that the need is far greater than one grant opportunity can fill. Visit riversideca.gov/press/covid-19-business-resources to learn more about **additional resources for business owners.**

Despite the challenges of 2020, our Downtown continues to be a hub of innovation for the City and the region. **Kaz Ramen** opened on December 18th, and the long-awaited vegan restaurant, **The Roots**, will open in January. Swing by **Mi Cafecito**, a **Pomona-based coffee shop now at the Food Lab**, for its soft-opening on weekends.


The Riverside Community College District (RCCD) is putting Riverside on the map! In November, Bank of America announced a **\$1M grant award to Riverside City College to help students of color successfully enter the Southern California workforce.** Additionally, Council's Economic Development committee recently recommended a **mixed-use housing project developed by Overland Pelican Riverside for RCCD**—directly

across from the new Main Library at 3911 University Avenue and 3774 Fairmount Boulevard. If approved by the full Council, this project would be 380+ beds of student housing, affordable housing, 12,000 square feet of retail, 16,700 square feet of office space, a library plaza café, public parking, and a new location for the RCCD campus police.

Adding even more art to the Downtown core, **Ruhnau Clarke Architect's new mural** is a stunning addition to the City of Arts and Innovation. The new year also brings increased momentum for **The Cheech**, which will come before the Financial Performance & Budget Committee on January 7th and before City Council by the end of January 2021. A recent economic impact study estimates that The Cheech will generate \$23M in our city each year.

My office has worked with the Riverside Downtown Partnership, the Riverside Police Department, and the City Attorney's office to bring forth an amendment to the municipal code that will prohibit bathing in public fountains. This amendment will be discussed at City Council on January 12th.

Thank you for your hard work and resilience over the last year. To see a list of this year's legislative accomplishments, take a look at the **Ward 1 Office's 2019-2020 Annual Report**, which can be found at riversideca.gov/council/wards/ward-1. Further, Mayor Patricia Lock Dawson will deliver her first **State of the City Address** this January 28th at 5 pm. You can tune in through Facebook, YouTube, and local TV Channels this January 28th at 5 pm.

As always, don't hesitate to reach me at (951) 783-7811, or by e-mail at eedwards@riversideca.gov. I look forward to working together in 2021. 



Ward Two Council Update

Contributed by Councilman Andy Melendrez

Happy New Year!

CURATIVE Mobile Van Test Sites: The City of Riverside has partnered with Curative to help provide additional COVID-19 test site locations throughout our neighborhoods. All tests are completely free and results come back on average within 24 hours. For testing information or to schedule your appointment visit www.curative.com. If you or someone you know needs help with transportation services, the Coalition for Black Health and Wellness has partnered with the Black Chamber of Commerce to provide local residents free transportation services to COVID-19 testing sites throughout the area. To schedule your appointment please reach out to Chynna Clarke at chynna@riversidecountybcc.org or call (951) 877-0179.

Riverside Arts Academy: The Riverside Arts Academy successfully hosted its annual Flash Mob performance on December 3rd and honored a selected military family from the March Air Reserve Base with gifts and amazing performances from our RAA students. BUT, we still need your help!! 2020 was a year full of challenges and our Riverside Arts Academy stepped up to the plate and was one of the first music programs in the Nation to provide online music lessons for our community. Please consider becoming a member or donating to help us continue to serve our youth. To become a member or



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donate visit: www.riversideartsacademy.com/make-a-donation.

Miracle on Main Street Tres Reyes/Three Wise Men Event: The Miracle on Main Street Christmas Event was held on Saturday, December 12, 2020 at the Stratton Community Center. The Greater Riverside Hispanic Chamber of Commerce and several of our local businesses sponsored this event and we were able to provide hundreds of gifts for our needy families. Several of our local families that were unregistered asked for assistance and this amazing collaborative will be stepping up again to help our local residents in need. The Greater Riverside Hispanic Chamber of Commerce and Arcis Party Supply will host Los Tres Reyes/Three Wise Men Holiday event at Arcis Party Supply. If you have families that are in need of gifts, contact us to have them attend our event. If you would like to help by sponsoring or volunteering at the event call (951) 826-5419 or (951) 295-5968.

Ward 2 Business Spotlight: As we look for ways to strengthen our economy, provide better quality of life, and build on local assets, we look to our partners and community members to help us create the appropriate atmosphere. During these challenging times we had two local businesses that saw the need of our local residents

and decided to donate funds to help provide toys for needy families.

- **Artisan Sand & Gravel:** is a Veteran owned and operated business that has been in operation in the Eastside of Riverside for over 10 years. They offer transportation services of aggregate materials, as well as the materials themselves throughout the Inland Empire, Orange County and Los Angeles to commercial sites, recreational and residential sites as well. For more details visit www.artisansandgravel.com or call (951) 941-9367.
- **Arcis Party Supply:** located in the heart of the Eastside community on the corner of Park and University at 2870 University Avenue. Arcis Party Supply is a wholesaler that offers local community members the opportunity to purchase items like, candy, baking goods, chips, decorations, ice cream and other wonderful items for any event. They now offer the opportunity to call in your order and pick up in store for ease of accessibility. You can call in your orders at (951) 275-0135.

Wishing everyone a Blessed and Happy New Year!



Business Spotlight: DragonMarsh Celebrates 30 Years in Downtown Riverside

January 7, 2021 will mark the 30-year anniversary of the opening of DragonMarsh.

DragonMarsh is a small family-owned spiritual gift store. DragonMarsh supplies Loose Tea, Spices, Oils, Herbs, Crystals, Candles, Tarot cards, and so much more to the Inland Empire and beyond.

The history of the store is that Mora and Eric, founders of the store, met at a Society of Creative Anachronism (SCA) event. They sold at Renaissance Faires, and SCA events until opening the shop on January 7, 1991. Over the years the shop has grown and moved a few times before finding a home in the historic Jackson building at 3643 University Avenue.

DragonMarsh is the store the community didn't know they needed! DragonMarsh brings Classes, Events, Passionate/Knowledgeable staff, and well-curated Positive Life Affirming Supplies to Riverside.

They share outside of Southern California through outside events such as faires, festivals, conventions, and historical events. Through their website, they share with the world.

However, they still sponsor and co-sponsor charity and free city events such as the Marshmallow Peep Show, The Zombie Crawl craft area, and (catnip) Mousy Making Madness for the Pet adoption center. DragonMarsh supports Artists and other small businesses through concerts, events, and artist spotlights.

Over the years DragonMarsh has changed and adapted



while keeping the quality Mora and Eric require of their store. They started with hand copied newsletters and mailers and progressed to email newsletters (Oohh computers!) to modern social media!

By request of their customers the family discovered Loose Tea Blending, Spice Blending and learned lost arts such as broom making, chainmail and costuming. Many of the displays, stock and even the logo was created, painted or designed by their family.

DragonMarsh has seen and survived many changes and events Downtown. The Mission Inn reopening, Downtown Wednesday Nights, Orange Blossom Festivals, the walking mall changes and repairs, buildings created and taken down and the continuing change of the footprint of Downtown.

These days Mora prefers to work behind the scenes leaving her daughter and son-in-law to help Eric run the store. Misty-Morigianna

and Sage are the second generation. Other family, staff, and friends make up the "Marshies". One of the newest kin is the store cat - Pepper Jade.

"As you have watched us grow, we have watched 3-4 generations of customers come through our doors. We cherish our clientele & feel so honored to be a part of their lives, family and tribe."

Find DragonMarsh Apothecary & Teas at 3643 University Avenue, on the web at www.dragonmarsh.com, on Facebook/DragonMarsh, or call (951) 276-1116.



BUSINESS BUZZ

How Small Businesses Can Budget for a Tumultuous 2021

by Donna Fuscaldo, Senior Finance Writer, business.com staff

Creating a business budget for the new year is challenging when it's not clear when the pandemic will end. Here's how to budget for an uncertain 2021.

Many small businesses are heading into the new year with a lot of fear and uncertainty. Amid the COVID-19 pandemic, a struggling economy and a new presidential administration, planning for the coming year is much more complicated than in years past.

Nobody knows how long it will take for the virus to get under control or what's in store for business owners. Against that backdrop, businesses are preparing for the worst but hoping for the best.

"We built two budgets for 2021," Adam Witty, CEO of marketing and publishing company Advantage|ForbesBooks, told business.com. "We have a worst-case budget if the uncertainty continues and business performance stays consistent with what it's been in the past months and a more aggressive budget reaching toward the goals we originally set."

Witty is just one of the many business owners who are budgeting and planning in a period of unprecedented upheaval as we near the end of 2020. Thousands of business owners have shut their doors for good during the pandemic, and surviving businesses need to plan without a clear idea of what life will look like and when more-normal times might return. Budgeting in the current environment may seem futile, but it's an important part of preparing for your business's future.

"Acknowledging next year will be different is the first step in budgeting for 2021," said Michelle Wright, group sales executive at Capital One. "It has not been a normal year in 2020, and it won't be that way as we move into 2021."

How to plan your 2021 budget.

Planning your budget for the next 12 months amid a pandemic and a teetering economy can be difficult, but it's not impossible. Our sources offered the following advice for small business owners who are looking to prepare for a tumultuous 2021:

Ask yourself key questions about your business's performance.

The pandemic hit businesses differently depending on their industry and their ability to pivot and adapt. As such, some businesses can plan for growth in 2021, while others need to remain conservative in their forecasting.

But there are questions that all business owners should ask themselves, said Paula McMillan, a member of the AICPA (American Institute of Certified Public Accountants) Personal Financial Specialist Credential Committee. Your answers to these five questions will dictate the type of budget you create:

1. In 2021, where are sales expected to be compared with in 2019: above, below or about the same?
2. In a normal environment in 2021, how important

are your products and services to customers: less relevant, more relevant or about the same?

3. What was your level of customer service and engagement during the pandemic: more engaged, less engaged or about the same?
4. How important is growth to your business in 2021: critical or a nice-to-have?
5. How much did you invest in infrastructure and your people based on expected growth: not enough, too much or the right amount?

The answers will reveal whether you're planning for growth or need to rein in costs. Your sales figures provide an obvious example: If you project they will be lower, you may need to prune your budget; if you expect them to be up, you can plan for more growth.

One company focusing on the latter strategy is tech consulting firm TxMQ, which serves the banking, financial and manufacturing industries, all of which have held up during the pandemic. Sales are up year over year, and TxMQ is in hiring mode. For 2021, the company is tweaking its budget to allocate more to marketing, said Chuck Fried, president and CEO of TxMQ.

"We normally spend a rather significant amount of money on travel and attending conferences," he said. "Some of that is going into online marketing, since we can't physically get out and meet customers."

Create scenario budgets.

The key to a successful budget is having enough cash flow. That's particularly important in 2021, as forecasting with so many uncertainties requires finessing. Ben Richmond, country manager at Xero, urged business owners to create worst-case and best-case budgets and determine how much cash flow is necessary in both instances.

"Scenario budgeting allows you to think about what your cash flow looks like and if you need more funding," Richmond said. "It gives small businesses confidence. They know there are things to be done in each scenario."

With COVID-19 vaccines on the horizon, Richmond said business owners have to determine what it will cost to get through the winter. If there's a budget shortfall, Richmond urged expediency with tasks such as taking out a business loan or applying for a business credit card, because you don't want to be scrambling at the last minute to access capital. "We're seeing a lot of liquidity in the system," he said. "It's cheap to get funding, whether its overdraft or a loan."

Take a big-picture view of your business.


For many small businesses, budgeting is all about the minutiae. It gives you the opportunity to plan the financial details of the business on a month-to-month or year-to-year basis, and that helps you plan inventory, pricing and

continued on next page

cash flow.

However, Matt Baker, senior vice president of corporate development and international at FreshBooks, said a budget should also include a big-picture view of your business. "A lot of people are focused on the microscopic, but equally important is the telescopic," Baker said. "Sometimes, it's helpful to think beyond the year to where you're trying to go with the business. When you put yourself in both mindsets, it helps your budgeting." Attaching your budget to your growth drivers, whether it's getting more customers or having existing customers buy more, will aid you in reaching those goals, he said.

If 2020 has taught us anything, it's to expect the unexpected. That doesn't go away as we head into 2021. Small business owners who plan for different scenarios will be in a better position to weather the storms than those who eschew planning and budgeting or stick to one plan at all costs.

"The biggest piece of advice is that nothing is set in stone for 2021," Witty said. "You've got to be 100% adaptable. In a normal year, you set a budget, and come hell or high water, you've got to stay on plan. Now, you have to be open to your budget changing every month or even every week." 

SECURITY CORNER

Pandemic Era is Ripe for Scams: Consumers have reported more than \$153 million in losses and counting.

by Diccon Hyatt, business.com writer

*Note: At the time this article was written, the Pfizer-BioNTech and Moderna COVID vaccines had not been approved. Statements to that effect have been italicized and noted with an *.*

The COVID-19 era has created a world of new opportunities for scammers to exploit unprecedented fear, stress, and financial strain, fraud experts say.

Scammers have sold unauthorized COVID-19 cures and tests (*there is no government-approved vaccine or treatment**), offered people fake jobs they have to pay to get, and adjusted their swindles to match shortages of critical goods and a surge in online shopping. Some have pretended to be the Internal Revenue Service and invented fake businesses to claim government stimulus money. At every step, fraudsters have sought to take advantage of people's desperation amid both a public health and economic crisis.

Key Takeaways

- Scam tactics have evolved with the COVID-19 pandemic.
- The Federal Trade Commission has received more than 113,000 fraud reports related to COVID-19 or stimulus, alleging \$153.6 million in financial losses. The median loss is \$300.
- The biggest single source of pandemic-related fraud has been online shopping, based on complaints to the FTC.
- Con artists prey on fear and stress, of which there is plenty to go around right now.

"They are always looking for an angle," said Anthony Pratkanis, an emeritus professor of psychology at University of California Santa Cruz, whose research focuses on fraud and persuasion. "People are afraid of the disease, so you pitch phony cures. People are afraid of the disease, so you sell fraudulent testing equipment. People are looking for money, so you pitch, 'I've got a company that's found a cure that you can invest in.'"

U.S. consumers have filed more than 113,000 COVID-19-related fraud reports alleging \$153.6 million in financial losses (with a median loss of \$300), according to online data from the Federal Trade Commission, which tracks fraud complaints. Because the data relies on self-reporting, it's likely just a slice of what's actually happening, the FTC says, but it's nonetheless telling. The single biggest category is online shopping fraud, accounting for over 31,000 of those reports and \$21.7 million in losses.

Another roughly 4,600 complaints were about mobile text scams. "People are at home, so this is how marketers are reaching them," said Monica Vaca, associate director for the Division of Consumer Response and Operations at the FTC. "Some of them are totally fine legitimate marketers, but a lot of them are scammers."

The FTC tracks pandemic-related fraud complaints by mentions of COVID-19, stimulus, N95 (a reference to a type of medical-grade mask) and related terms. The pandemic hasn't moved the needle much in terms of overall fraud complaint numbers—they represented 10% of overall fraud reports through the first half of the year, when there were actually fewer complaints than in the same period last year—but the trends show just how quickly scammers can shift their tactics.

When the pandemic hit, scam phone calls declined in favor of online scams, not only because consumers switched to buying more things over the Internet, but because scammers likely shut down their international call centers during the global stay-at-home orders, Vaca surmised.

More specifically, phone calls typically account for around 75% of all fraud attempts, Vaca said, but by the second quarter of 2020, that figure had dropped to 48% and email accounted for 23% of contact attempts (up from 8% of attempts in 2019). Similarly, fraud through websites jumped to 17% from 9% in 2019.

In fact, in April and May, more people reported problems with online shopping than in any other months on record,

the FTC said. A major trend: websites selling hard-to-find supplies like facemasks, sanitizer, and toilet paper and simply never delivering them.

Con artists preyed on unemployed workers by advertising for jobs that did not exist. The goal: get applicants to pay fees for equipment, training, or supplies. One scam robocall invited job seekers to “work with Amazon from home and make \$400 in one day” with no sales or technical experience required.

Text messages have been another common category of COVID-19 scam reported, leading to nearly \$2 million in financial losses.

In one example of a bogus text scam, consumers got a message saying “IRS COVID-19 News.” It included a link to “register/update your information in order to receive the economic impact payment regardless of your status,” according to the Federal Communications Commission. Recipients who followed the link were asked to enter a debit or credit card number to “verify” their identity. Another example was a text purporting to be from Netflix offering five months of free service.

The Psychology of Scams

The pandemic has provided low-hanging fruit for those looking to take advantage of others. Fake COVID-19 cures are addressing an urgent need, which is typical of scams, said Pratkanis, the psychology professor. What’s more, the COVID-19 era perpetuates an atmosphere of disinformation. And according to Pratkanis’ research, people become especially vulnerable to fraud when they are experiencing stress in life.

“When you’re under that kind of stress, you don’t have full cognitive capacity, because you’re busy looking for a solution,” Pratkanis said.

The move to work-from-home also offers a target-rich environment for computer criminals, he said, since so many people are downloading unfamiliar software and needing technical support outside their usual offices.

It is typical, too, for skilled con artists to profile their targets and make themselves more likeable and trustworthy to the victims, according to Pratkanis. For example, someone selling a fake COVID-19 remedy might pitch it to a known right-wing audience as being something the government doesn’t want you to know about, while to liberals, they might sell it as an “all-natural” cure.

Government Has Also Been Targeted

It’s not just individuals that have been targeted by fraud, but government programs initiated as emergency relief too.

The state of California recently received hundreds of thousands of suspicious unemployment claims. And the U.S. Department of Justice has launched a steady stream of prosecutions accusing people of ripping off the Paycheck Protection Program, which made more than \$525 billion in potentially forgivable loans to small businesses to help keep people employed.

According to prosecutors, loan proceeds have been fraudulently used to buy things like jewelry and boats.

While the FTC logged a surge of COVID-19-related fraud reports in the spring, the weekly numbers peaked in April

and have precipitously declined since. In the final week of September, there were 725 reports, down from over 5,000 in some weeks in the spring.

One reason for the dip is a decline in the numbers of consumers who reported ordering protective equipment online and never receiving it, Vaca said. “It’s gotten a lot easier to acquire facemasks, hand sanitizer, and toilet paper in stores,” she said.

She also credited FTC warning letters and enforcement action with suppressing robocalls, multilevel marketing schemes, and marketers selling COVID-19 treatment products.

While travel/vacation complaints were the second-biggest category of COVID-19-related fraud complaints (there were about 25,000 alleging \$45.4 million in financial losses), those numbers may be misleading. Because of categories established prior to the pandemic, those numbers include complaints by consumers that airlines and hotels didn’t give them refunds when the virus disrupted travel.

Unfortunately, the decline in reported scams isn’t likely to mean they’re going away any time soon, Vaca said. As the uncertainties triggered by the pandemic move away from supply shortages and toward prolonged economic hardship for many, scammers are likely to be increasingly focused on the unemployed and those in debt.

“We are going to wind up seeing more and more scams about things like jobs and debt relief,” Vaca said. “Whenever something is in the news, it is tailor-made for scammers.”

Tips for Avoiding Common COVID-19 Scams

- *The Food and Drug Administration has yet to approve any vaccine or treatment drug for COVID-19, so don’t fall for any products that claim otherwise.**
- Before buying from an unfamiliar online store, check out the company by searching for its name alongside words like “scam” or “complaint.” Pay with a credit card and dispute the charges if the seller doesn’t deliver the goods.
- Screen your calls to filter out scam robocalls. Call screening is simple to set up on Android and Apple phones.
- Scammers sometimes pose as contact tracers. Real ones need health information, the con artists want money or financial information. The FTC has published tips on how to tell the difference.
- Emails that seem to be from the Centers for Disease Control or the World Health Organization may not be. Don’t click on links if you’re not sure and only visit trusted sites such as coronavirus.gov for reliable information.
- The IRS will not call you about stimulus money. If you have questions about your payment, visit www.irs.gov.

Don’t be embarrassed to report a scam if you were a victim.





3666 University Avenue
Suite 100
Riverside, CA 92501

Ph.: (951) 781-7335
Fax: (951) 781-6951
Email: rdpoffice@sbcglobal.net
www.RiversideDowntown.org

Submit press releases to:
Janice Penner by email at
Janice@riversidedowntown.org
or fax at (951) 781-6951.

Press deadline is the 15th of
each month prior to publication.

For Downtown News Alerts email
Janice@riversidedowntown.org

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RDP Facebook Page

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THE NEW SMART METERS FOR DOWNTOWN RIVERSIDE ARE HERE!

The City of Riverside has installed new multi-space smart meters throughout Downtown Riverside. This equipment upgrade aims to provide a better customer experience for parking customers by providing touchless payment options and having the ability to pay for your parking at any smart meter. The new meters will accept cash, coins, credit cards and Smartphone payments for a contactless payment system.

The installation started on Monday November 30th, 2020 and was deployed in phases starting with 12th and 13th Streets to minimize disruption or inconvenience while parking in Downtown Riverside.

For more information please contact Republic Parking Systems at 951-682-3167.

