

Big Sky Resort Area District
(406) 995-3234
PO Box 160661, Big Sky, MT 59716
www.ResortTax.org
info@resorttax.org



BigSkyRelief.org

Operational Partners Coordination Meeting, No. 17 – 7/28/20

On Tuesday, July 28, the 17th BigSkyRelief.org Operational Partners Coordination Meeting kicked off at 12 p.m. and lasted approximately 32 minutes.

The purpose of the virtual bi-monthly meeting is to consolidate regular updates for the Big Sky Community as well as to identify and coordinate needs.

Big Sky Resort Area District Board Chairperson Kevin Germain coordinated the meeting.

Updates in order of presentation:

Kevin Germain, Chairman of Big Sky Resort Area District Board of Directors (BSRAD):

- Letters sent to Congressional Delegation shared with the group (include links). Regrouping about how to work on getting test kits to our community for sentinel testing by winter season. Will continue to work with the Congressional delegation to get the state kits, then work with the state to get kits to Big Sky.

Taylor Rose, Director of Clinical Services & Operations at Bozeman Health Big Sky Medical Center (BHBSMC):

- **Dr. Kathryn Bertany** (President of Big Sky Medical Center & Bozeman Deaconess Hospital) is on the call with Taylor today.
- **Sentinel Surveillance Testing:** We have received all of the results from the Sentinel Surveillance Testing performed on July 1st. Out of the 694 tests run, only 5 were positive. That was close to a month ago, so this is not the current state.
- **Ongoing Sentinel Surveillance Testing:** MSU to begin processing asymptomatic COVID-19 tests for Montana. We are actively working with the county health department & the state to find out how Bozeman Health fits into to this testing.
- **Testing:** We are seeing more testing being done and the state prioritizes these tests based on certain criteria, (like first responders, patients, etc.) Asymptomatic testing is at the bottom of the list and the state is not able to do these in a useful time.
- **BSMC Capacity:** We are seeing more patients coming through our Emergency Room and our Viral Triage Clinic. We do not feel overburdened at this time in Big Sky. We are still prepping for a potential surge of patients. We have 8 inpatient rooms that are fully equipped and useable.
- **Viral Triage Clinic** is open 7 days a week. We are currently evaluating these days/hours based on staffing. Patients will still be able to be seen in our other areas of the Big Sky Medical Center if the Viral Clinic hours change.

- **Supplies:**
 - BSMC added on a liquid manifold system for oxygen
 - Ventilators – 2 of the 8 larger more complex functioning ventilators are being delivered next week. One will be in Big Sky and one will be at Bozeman Deaconess Hospital. A respiratory therapist will be available to monitor via telehealth. We have not received the transport ventilators that were ordered (currently have one in Big Sky). We have ordered 2 AdultLife PRO Ventilators as a solution and they will be here in less than 2 weeks.
- **Surge Capacity:** We may take advantage to discharge patients to BSMC for swing beds or post-acute care. Bozeman Deaconess Hospital has had 3- 5 inpatients with COVID-19 for the past couple of weeks. As that number increases, we can open beds in Big Sky to support our communities in a combined way. Bozeman Health has the ability to expand to a capacity of 120 inpatients, where currently we cap out at 83, and 8 ICU beds. On Aug 25th, we will open the new critical care unit with 20 beds. We feel confident in our combined ability to support needs in Big Sky and regionally.
- **Question:** With Testing on State Level, who is our main contact?
 - **Answer:** DPHHS (Department of Public Health & Human Services) is our main contact
- **Question:** If we have a surge in our area but not in other areas of Montana, are we able to partner with other hospitals like Billings Clinic?
 - **Answer:** Dr. Bertany has a relationship with the State Department of Emergency Services (DES). If we had a surge that exceeded our capacity, Dr. Bertany would partner with the DES for services like an open exchange of equipment from other areas in Montana. Dr. Bertany feels confident that we are in good shape and we would get the support if needed.

Chief Greg Megaard, Big Sky Fire Department (BSFD):

- No updates currently

Sergeant Brandon Kelly, Gallatin County Sheriff's Office (GCSO):

- No updates currently

Sarah Gaither, Program Coordinator of Big Sky Community Food Bank (BSCFB):

- Have gathered a behavioral/mental health committee to better understand the needs of Food Bank customers. The committee includes members of the advisory council, Jean Behr and a practitioner from WIA, the Big Sky Youth Corps summer intern, and Rachel from Amplify Montana (a group that helps people in poverty advocate for themselves.) The group will be meeting in the coming weeks and they aim to start with conversations with Food Bank customer focus groups.
- The Big Sky Youth Corps intern, Katrina Lang, will be completing, publishing, and distributing the Big Sky Resource Guide which has been a collaboration with WIA and BSCO. We hope to provide it as a 'welcome to Big Sky' resource for food bank customers new to town, and anyone else who is interested. Will include an 'emergency contacts' business-sized card with numbers local to Big Sky (poison control, police, fire, ambulance, hospital, mental health emergencies, etc.) Katrina's internship lasts through August.

Jean Behr, Executive Director of Women In Action (WIA):

- WIA's partner practitioners have provided 62 hours of counseling to 18 Big Sky residents in July
- Low-cost, confidential, in-person or tele-health counseling appointments are available on a sliding fee scale for those who qualify
- WIA, and a group of non-profit and community leaders have formed a Behavioral Health Workgroup with the long-term goal of identifying and addressing gaps in behavioral health resources in Big Sky.
 - Short term goals include:
 - Reaching new and seasonal residents with information regarding existing resources
 - Supporting educators, children, and families through the upcoming school year
 - Communicating this work to the community

David Kack, Coordinator of Big Sky Transportation District (BSTD):

- Running a normal bus schedule but have been dealing with potential delays caused by the bridge construction.
- No needs from the group currently.

Candace Carr Strauss, CEO of Big Sky Chamber of Commerce (BSCC) & Visit Big Sky (VBS):

Big Sky Chamber

- The Big Sky Chamber and VBS have secured another 100,000 masks for our local Big Sky businesses to assist them with compliance on both the [Governor's](#) statewide and [Gallatin City-County Public Health Department's](#) mask mandates. Coupled with the VBS Montana Tourism Safety Grant of \$225,000 we will continue to support public health messaging to our visitors as well as our local residents, business owners, and their employees.
- [The state has allocated \\$800M of it \\$1.25B received from the CARES Act, but only distributed \\$160M](#); Mt Adaptability Grant re-opened per Governor's announcement last week – now eligible for an additional \$5K, so up to \$10K total. PPP Loans are still available. Here is where you can see who has received what by County: <https://commerce.mt.gov/Montana-Coronavirus-Relief/Awarded-Grants>
- Big Sky Chamber *Eggs&Issues* | Joint County Commission Meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, November 18 from 8:30am-12noon – “Issue” which will be focused on is Behavioral Health and the report released with research conducted by Buz Davis earlier this year.
- Morningstar is currently looking to hire more staff members, spread the word if know anyone with childcare experience looking for employment

Visit Big Sky

- The draft of the next coronavirus relief bill, the **HEALS Act**, was just released by the U.S. Senate. It seeks to secure relief, protection, and stimulus for travel businesses across all sectors of our industry in the final bill. Most notably, the bill:
 - Expands eligibility for the Paycheck Protection Program (PPP) to all destination marketing organizations (DMO), including any 501(c) nonprofit, quasi-governmental organization, or political subdivision of state or local government, with 300 employees or less
 - Extends the PPP through the remainder of the year

- Provides limited, temporary, and immediate safe harbor for businesses that follow proper health and safety guidelines
- Creates temporary tax credits and deductions to provide much-needed tax relief, including allowing full deductibility of meal expenses, which will restore activity in the meetings and events sector
- Supports improvements in testing and reporting practices, as well as boosting our national contact tracing abilities
- Big Sky visitation for July/August is very strong; bookings in the week for the week are commonplace and our “drive market” is nationwide. Flights are picking up with BZN predicting July to come in at 40-45% of last year, and as high as 60%. Talks on the forthcoming Winter 20/21 season and what it will look like continue. Staffing with the impacts of COVID-19 virus and contact tracing with the Gallatin City-County Health Board’s [“Isolation” requirement](#) is impacting local businesses. The Big Sky & Yellowstone Visitor Information Center is currently closed.
- The President signed **The Great Outdoor Act** ([S. 3422](#), [H.R. 1957](#)) earlier this week, it will secure \$9.5 billion in needed funds to address priority infrastructure and repair projects in national parks and public lands, including the deferred maintenance backlog facing our national parks—a high priority for U.S. Travel. It will also support an [estimated](#) 100,000 jobs and \$17.5 billion in economic output per year, as well as contribute \$9.6 billion to U.S. GDP. This funding will be critical to the future of our national parks, particularly as we work to recover from the coronavirus pandemic. As the U.S. slowly reopens, travelers continue to indicate their preference for outdoor recreational activities, and our parks and public lands are an excellent way to get Americans moving again safely.
- The Custer Gallatin National Forest Plan Revision is out for public comment. Two virtual events were held on Thursday, July 23. More information can be found here: www.fs.usda.gov/custergallatin
- On July 9, a [proposal](#) for an East Crazy Mountains and Eglise Peak Public Access, Recreational and Resource Improvement Land Exchange between the Yellowstone Club and the Custer Gallatin National Forest. It is currently out for public comment with a virtual event slated for here in Big Sky on Thursday, August 6.

Ciara Wolfe, CEO of Big Sky Community Organization (BSCO):

- No updates on volunteers and county knows support is available
- Busier with Parks and Trails than ever. Hired an additional part time staff person to keep up on maintenance and sanitation

Dustin Shipman, Superintendent of Big Sky School District (BSSD):

- The school district is continuing to work on plans for returning to school in the fall.
- School registration is up 18 students with 38 who have pending paperwork to register for school for fall. Looking at 430 students for the fall. Looking for additional staff to support the enrollment growth.
- Planning documents on [website](#), hope to have a decision on August 14 for what school will look in the fall. Task force meets 3x per week to work on plan.

A cohort of Resource Partners was also invited to the virtual meeting. Those names and organizations included:

Daniel Bierschwale, *Big Sky Resort Area District*

Taylor Middleton & Troy Nedved, *Big Sky Resort*

Matt Kidd, *CrossHarbor Capital Partners*

Kevin Hinkle, *Lone Mountain Land Company*

Hans Williamson, *Yellowstone Club*

Heather Morris, *Moonlight Community Foundation*

Ania Bulis, *Moonlight Community Foundation, Women in Action*

Loren Bough, *Yellowstone Club Community Foundation*

John Haas, *Spanish Peaks Community Foundation*