



VIRUS

Utah Gov. Gary Herbert is feeling “frustrated” with the state’s rising coronavirus numbers. State health experts are projecting that the numbers will continue to rise dramatically and overwhelm the state’s hospitals if people don’t modify their behavior. Utah’s virus positivity average has increased from 18.1% to 19.5%, according to state data. A high positivity rate indicates the number of infections is far higher. Source: [Washington Times](#)

And why is that important [Insights Collective] ... Frustration led to the declaration of a state of emergency, and a statewide mask mandate. Several of the state’s largest counties already required masks, but Herbert, a Republican, had resisted extending the rule to the entire state despite a two-month surge of cases. Herbert said in a televised address night that **the time to debate masks had passed**, while saying his orders won’t shut down the economy.

REOPENING

Vail, Colorado will mandate outdoor mask wearing in the town’s resort villages. The move is a reversal from sentiment in August when a mask mandate vote failed to pass, though there has been a sharp rise in Covid-19 cases since then. Council members said they’re now convinced of the need for an outdoor mandate. Should cases continue to increase the entire town may need to shut down. Source: [Vail Daily](#)

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And why is that important [Insights Collective] ... Destination town governments walk a fine line between placating local sentiment around restrictions and ensuring the continued sustainability of the primary function of the destination town, which is tourism. While mask mandates may create local challenges, our research clearly show that how a town is managing the pandemic is a primary factor in whether consumers are willing to consider it for travel. **Proactive towns that acknowledge, tackle, and effectively socialize pandemic management likely create a competitive advantage.**

ECONOMY

New Mexico Gov. Michelle Lujan Grisham has proposed a \$25 million stimulus package for the state's tourism industry to offset the consequences of the coronavirus pandemic. The tourism proposal comes after a recent employment report said the state's leisure and hospitality industry has lost 24,500 jobs this year. Source: [U.S. News and World Report](#)

And why is that important [Insights Collective] ... New Mexico has a strategic advantage coming out of COVID-19 due to its strong outdoor recreation assets and abundance of open spaces. However, **this advantage cannot be realized if New Mexico is not competitive with other states actively investing stimulus funds for tourism promotion.**

LODGING

Red Roof Inn is promoting its exterior corridors in emails to members of its loyalty program, RediRewards. Guests who visit Red Roof's website will see messaging about the safety of exterior-corridor properties and can view exterior photos of each property on individual property pages. Source: [HNN](#)

And why is that important [Insights Collective] ... In the second quarter of 2020 alone, Red Roof's exterior-corridor properties had 14% higher occupancy than those without this type of design. **Exterior-corridor hotels have a situational**

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advantage during the pandemic, by giving the guest the ability to reduce touchpoints, avoid elevator rides, and be a more self-contained traveler.

NEW REALITIES

Amazon has saved nearly \$1 billion in travel expenses this year, a result of ordering employees to avoid non-essential travel. Despite the cost savings from travel and marketing, Amazon says expenses are increasing in the current quarter. Coronavirus-related costs are expected to rise to \$4 billion in the period, up from \$2.5 billion last quarter. Source: [CNBC](#)

And why is that important [Insights Collective] ... The longer the pandemic lasts, the longer these types of new behaviors have time to become cemented. **Plus, the \$1 billion is savings that can continue even when mitigation efforts can be phased out.** On the other hand, while businesses are saving money employees are now shouldering more of the overhead costs through increased electric bills and food expenses at home.

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