

## TELEVISION QUARTERLY ISSUES-PROGRAMS REPORT

Station: WFGX  
Location: Fort Walton Beach, FL  
Quarter ending: June 30, 2020

ISSUE/description: 4. THE ECONOMY. The continuing effects of COVID-19; unemployment; impacts on food assistance; utility price breaks, plus current economic trends.

How Issue was treated (Program, PSA, etc.):

<u>Title</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Time/Duration</u>	<u>Program type</u>	<u>Description</u>
1. Channel 3 News at 9PM on WFGX	04/03/20	9:00PM/2.3 min.	News	*
* 6.6 million Americans filed for unemployment benefits last week. That doubled a record set the week before. This comes as more businesses lay off and furlough workers amid the pandemic. Governor DeSantis addressed Florida's unemployment website issues yesterday. He says the system was completely overwhelmed and the state is working to boost manpower and technology to ensure people can file claims.				
2. Channel 3 News at 9PM on WFGX	04/03/20	9:00PM/3.5 min.	News	**
** Executive Director of the Florida Department of Economic Opportunity, Ken Lawson, joined state lawmakers in a Zoom meeting today. They asked him about the problems people have had trying to file. He says of the 1.5 million calls his office took last week, a third were to reset pin numbers, which are needed to log in and apply. Lawson says they've now hired a call center to handle pin resets. They're also working on a mobile friendly version of the website and even creating a paper application people can mail in.				
3. Channel 3 News at 9PM on WFGX	04/10/20	9:00PM/1 min.	News	***
*** Florida SNAP recipients will soon be able to order groceries online. The state has submitted a waiver to take part in a pilot program run by the U.S. Department of Agriculture. The Department of Children and Families is now working on a plan to implement an online purchasing program. Right now, federal regulations prohibit SNAP recipients from using their EBT cards to buy groceries online.				
4. Channel 3 News at 9PM on WFGX	05/04/20	9:00PM/4.2 min.	News	****
**** More than a third of people living in Escambia County fall into this category. ALICE is an acronym that stands for ASSET LIMITED, INCOME CONSTRAINED, EMPLOYED. Keep in mind, these are the workers we typically see every day; the landscapers, restaurant employees, and hairdressers, just to name a few. They are also the ones hit hardest by COVID-19 closures. Laura Gilliam with the United Way says these are the people struggling for basic necessities, just one financial emergency away from serious financial hardships. They are working hard trying to make ends meet. They don't make enough to put aside for emergencies. They typically don't have savings accounts. Over the past ten years, Gilliam says the reports show the number of people in this category isn't dropping. Now, she fears the pandemic could make it worse. "Our work, what is funded in the community is now geared to those in the ALICE population." The United Way is working hard to change the trend by working with these families through tax and debt assistance and their COVID-19 response fund.				

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5. Channel 3 News at 9PM on WFGX	05/06/20	9:00PM/2 min.	News	*****

\*\*\*\*\* One in nine working Floridians have now filed for unemployment. With the state saying it's making progress in processing claims. Governor Ron DeSantis says the numbers are improving after a change in leadership on April 15<sup>th</sup>. Since that time, four hundred, thirty-eight thousand claims have been paid. That is ten times more that the previous month, but that hasn't stopped people from taking to social media to express their frustrations with the system.

6. Channel 3 News at 9PM on WFGX	05/06/20	9:00PM/2.6 min.	News	*****
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\*\*\*\*\* Attorney John Morgan is offering to go after the company that created Florida's troubled unemployment computer system, for free. He says then-Florida Governor Rick Scott bought the system for 77 million dollars and it's been broken since the beginning. The system called "Connect" hasn't been able to keep up with the increase in claims stemming from layoffs caused by the coronavirus. Yesterday, Governor Ron DeSantis ordered an investigation into the faulty system.

7. Channel 3 News at 9PM on WFGX	05/07/20	9:00PM/1 min.	News	*****
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\*\*\*\*\* In March we told you about the one-time 40 percent decrease Gulf Power customers will see in their bills this month. However, not everyone is eligible for this discount. A spokesperson says this discount is for residential and business customers. "Fixed Rate" customers, however, will not see the discount in this month's bill. These customers pay the same amount each month throughout their 12-month agreement. Their bills are not subject to fluctuations, including the discount.

8. Channel 3 News at 9PM on WFGX	05/07/20	9:00PM/1.5 min.	News	*****
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\*\*\*\*\* Unemployment claims surpass the 170 thousand mark here in Florida. Many of you calling our newsroom are still having trouble getting onto the site or getting anyone on the line. Tonight, we take a look at the impact on small businesses. It's a story of survival as the state slowly reopens, but for some, the reopen plan may be too late.

9. Channel 3 News at 9PM on WFGX	05/15/20	9:00PM/3 min.	News	*****
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\*\*\*\*\* America's retail sales hit a historic low last month. The census bureau says U.S. Retail sales plummeted by 16.4 percent in April. The Bureau says that is the largest drop since 1992. It is significantly higher than the more than 80 percent sales drop in March. Clothing and accessories stores saw the biggest hit in April. Several retailers filed for bankruptcy in recent weeks, including Neiman Marcus and J-Crew.

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10. Channel 3 News at 9PM on WFGX	05/20/20	9:00PM/2.5 min.	News	*10

\*10 Florida has paid out more money in unemployment claims over the last five weeks, than all of the last four years combined. Tens of thousands of people applying for unemployment remain in limbo today. The number of people answering phones at the state unemployment headquarters has gone from forty to six thousand in just a matter of weeks. Still, the man in charge says he cannot keep up.

11. Channel 3 News at 9PM on WFGX	05/21/20	9:00PM/4 min.	News	*11
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\*11 The decision to reopen short term rentals in Escambia County has reportedly had a major impact on tourists visiting this weekend. We've had several reports of resorts and short-term rentals starting to fill up ahead of the Memorial Day Holiday. County officials tell us traffic is significantly lower than this time last year, with 20,000 fewer cars passing through the Bob Sykes toll in May 2019, but tourism officials are confident this holiday weekend will be a significant boost in tourism numbers from previous weekends, despite fears of another coronavirus outbreak.

12. Channel 3 News at 9PM on WFGX	06/18/20	9:00PM/3.5 min.	News	*12
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\*12 County governments throughout Florida are coming to grips with the revenue drop surrounding the COVID-19 pandemic. In Northwest Florida, the loss of tourism is a major factor. The biggest difference between this year's Santa Rosa County budget and previous years' budgets is the significant decline in property tax and tourism tax revenues. For the month of March, the tourism development tax dollars were down about 80%, according to County Administrator Dan Schebler. That's due in large part to closed beaches and vacation rentals suspended by the governor's executive order. Schebler explained Thursday why some major projects are under construction, but others were put on hold. "There were several projects planned in this coming year to be funded with that source or to be considered for funding that we've already decided we know it's not gonna be there," he said. "We're going to balance this budget with the revenue that we have by holding everybody to the current spending levels. That's our primary approach." One of those projects not included with the tourism development tax is the Pea Bridge Connector -- the new four-lane highway that is funded and already included in the budget that will connect Hwy. 90 and Hamilton Bridge Road to help alleviate traffic congestion in the Pace area. As far as any projections go for the county's future budget, Schebler says under the current circumstances, officials are in a "wait and see situation."