

TELEVISION QUARTERLY ISSUES-PROGRAMS REPORT

Station: WEAR-TV
Location: Pensacola, 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 Dayside	04/03/20	11:00AM/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 10PM	04/03/20	10:00PM/3.5 min.	News	**
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** 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 10PM	04/10/20	10:00PM/1 min.	News	***
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*** 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 5PM	05/02/20	5:00PM/2.3 minutes	News	****
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**** Ride sharing company Lyft announced its plans to layoff nearly one thousand staffers, and furlough almost three hundred more. In addition, the company is reducing salaries for employees, including a 30 percent cut for executives. People aren't using its services as much during the pandemic, so Lyft says it is trying to curb operating expenses. Lyft's rival, Uber, is also considering layoffs.

5. Channel 3 News at 10PM	05/02/20	5:30PM/3 min.	News	*****
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***** Walmart says it has made good on its promise to hire 200,000 people during the pandemic. The company says it has hired thousands of employees to work in stores, distribution and fulfillment centers since March 19th. It claims it also paid 180 million dollars in cash bonuses to hourly workers. Full-time employees received 300 dollars and part time workers received 150 dollars.

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

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6. Channel 3 News at 10PM	05/04/20	10:00PM/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. "The first round of grants were give to 15 agencies and they're responding to the food, housing, utility needs and childcare needs that people are seeking help with." Another thing to note about this growing population, Gilliam says they typically don't qualify for benefits that cover housing or food support.

7. Channel 3 News at 5PM	05/06/20	5:00PM/2 min.	News	*****
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***** 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 15th. 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.

8. Channel 3 News at 10PM	05/06/20	10:00PM/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.

9. Channel 3 News at 6PM	05/07/20	6:00PM/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.

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10. Channel 3 News at 10PM	05/07/20	10:00PM/1.5 min.	News	*10

*10 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.

11. Channel 3 News at 6PM	05/15/20	6:00PM/3 min.	News	*11
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*11 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.

12. Channel 3 News at 4PM	05/20/20	4:00PM/2.5 min.	News	*12
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*12 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.

13. Channel 3 News at 6PM	05/21/20	6:00PM/4 min.	News	*13
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*13 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.

14. Channel 3 News at 5PM	05/31/20	5:00PM/4.5 min.	News	*14
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*14 The Pensacola Blue Wahoos continue to position themselves much better than most minor league teams, but the financial realities of a lost season are still stark. Minor League Baseball was facing a tough time before the pandemic. A number of franchises were expected to be eliminated. The Wahoos made double sure they wouldn't even be in that conversation. Upgrades to the facilities in the off season fulfilled requests by the Minnesota Twins creating an even better environment for the players. Then, we have the postponed, almost certainly soon to be cancelled season, but the Wahoos have been amazingly creative.

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15. Channel 3 News at 6PM	06/18/20	6:00PM/3.5 min.	News	*15

*15 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."

16. Channel 3 News at 5PM	06/29/20	5:00PM/3.2 min.	News	*16
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*16 Governor Ron DeSantis has vetoed more than 600 specific appropriations from the state budget that takes effect Wednesday. Just over \$1 billion was cut from the \$93.3 billion plan crafted by lawmakers, but it could have been worse. State employees will see their first pay raise in six years. Correctional officers will see an even bigger bump. And teachers will get to keep the \$500 million raise the Governor promised. "We wanted to take Florida from the bottom half of the country in average teacher minimum salary to the top five," said DeSantis. K-12 per-pupil spending is up by a \$137 per student. Colleges and Universities will see increases as well. "And we did not increase tuition," said DeSantis. Historic funding for the Everglades and water projects continue. "And this is two years in a row that the Legislature has stepped up and put their money into these key initiatives," said DeSantis. In all, more than 600 different items were vetoed. Big ticket items include \$41 million to train non-sworn school guardians. The Governor even vetoed his own job growth fund. "So the one billion in vetoes, over 550 million are vetoes that I included in my Governor's recommendations in the fall," said DeSantis.