


<i>Weather Record</i>							
Date	1-5	1-6	1-7	1-8	1-9	1-10	1-11
High	41.4	38.7	39.3	35.6	30.6	33	34.1
Low	25.5	24.6	29.7	30.6	28.4	21.9	19.6
Prec	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Reporting period for each day runs from midnight to midnight. Statistics from Kentucky Mesonet's Bengal Station.							

Relief for businesses, workers harmed by pandemic needed now

COVID-19 has hit us hard. It has taken the lives of far too many and it has upended our economy, damaging Kentucky's small businesses and hurting our workers. I've seen that hurt and that sacrifice, but I've seen our small businesses doing it willingly, knowing that it's protecting the health and the lives of their customers, their employees and their community. That's why we have a duty to help them. I have submitted a bill (HB 191) to the state legislature that, if passed, would immediately provide \$220 million of aid to small businesses and \$20 million to nonprofits. It is the most significant aid package from Kentucky in generations, and it needs to pass quickly as possible. The money is there. Thanks to the hard work of my administration, we have a better budget forecast than initially anticipated. The Rainy Day Fund is at its highest level ever; we have added \$100 million to protect it; and we have more than \$600 million in one-time money available to invest in our future. The budget also does not rely on tax increases or new revenue measures, and there are no spending cuts. We should not let these dollars sit when our small businesses are suffering and need help now. In fact, a recent poll by Politico and the Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health showed that almost all Americans agree, with 95% of Democrats and 92% of Republicans

Andy Beshear

Kentucky Governor



saying relief for small businesses should come from government. Instead of spending the first part of the legislative session trying to fight between branches – trying to pull power from the courts or the executive branch – we should help our businesses and our people. In addition to small business relief, I am authorizing \$48 million in CARES Act funding for approximately 24,000 workers who have waited too long to receive unemployment benefits and another 60,000 who missed out on the federal government's Lost Wages Assistance Program because they made too little. I am also allocating \$47.5 million to correct a legacy of underfunding the unemployment insurance (UI) system after my administration inherited a UI operation running on an IT system that has been in operation since the 1970s and is functionally obsolete. In the years leading up to the pandemic, lawmakers and the previous administration closed in-person offices, cut 95

Brenda's Flowers opens in new location



Photo by Angelina Alcott

Brenda Beams cut the ribbon Friday morning at the January 8-9 Grand Re-Opening of Brenda's Flowers & Gifts at the new location on the Greensburg square. Everyone enjoyed cake and punch at the new location at 111 N. Public Square, which is next to their previous facility. The event also celebrated their 25 years in business.

employees and slashed the UI budget by \$16 million. This, coupled with a once-in-a-lifetime, 1,300% year-over-year increase in claims meant many Kentuckians have had to wait too long for their payments during a difficult time. I am providing funding to restore employees to help with unemployment claims at the 12 career centers throughout the commonwealth. This plan is part of my Better Kentucky Budget proposal I unveiled last week. In addition to relief, we are prioritizing our people by investing in

their education, health care and retirements. My proposal includes raises for educators and state employees; \$100 million to build or repair our schools; support for our law enforcement and retired military; increased funding for K-12 and higher education; and full funding for our retirement systems and Medicaid while providing money for additional social workers. To make sure we lead in the post COVID economy, I am proposing bold investment in our future

including \$50 million to expand broadband to make sure that everyone who needs it has it. To further support education, we are going to provide assistance to more than 6,300 Kentuckians to attend college or earn a certificate through the Better Kentucky Promise scholarship program. This is the bold agenda we need now. State leaders have no excuse for not seizing this moment. We can have a fiscally responsible budget at

the same time we help Kentucky families break free of this global crisis. It will take courage. It will take vision. It also will take Kentuckians everywhere raising their voices, calling and emailing their elected officials telling them we need to pass relief and invest in our people and our future. Now is the time for all Kentuckians to demand we take our rightful place as leaders in the post-COVID world and pass the Better Kentucky Budget.

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