

## Non-essential services = more babies

by BRIAN LOCKHART

When the provincial government announced the list of essential services allowed to remain open during the current COVID-19 pandemic, many people scoffed and said they should have reversed it and saved time by creating a list of services that must remain closed.

I think the government did a good job of going over the list of businesses and determining which should be able to keep operating to at least make life bearable during the current situation.

If anything, it is giving people time to examine their lifestyle and find out what really is important and necessary to get by in life.

Although, by now you have probably realized that just getting by doesn't have the same zest as when the frivolous things that add to our daily lives are still going on.

Of course the two main essential services are food and healthcare.

Unless you want to end up like a 1930's cartoon character and boiling an old boot for dinner, the grocery stores have to remain open.

That means food production centres must also continue to operate. Along with that is the transportation industry.

Those grocery store shelves don't get full on their own ? all that food arrives by trucks from all over North America, so transportation is key to keeping us all from starving to death.

Trucks don't run on water so everything related to fuel figures into the mix.

When it comes to health care, it is obvious that this is one area where it is essential - including front line workers, support personnel and related businesses like pharmacies.

After you eat that old boot for dinner, you may require something from the local drugstore for indigestion.

Our health care workers are doing an outstanding job during the crisis, working long hours in a stressful situation.

Banks are remaining open although with limited hours. In this day and age, let's be happy that you no longer have to visit a bank to get money, thanks to debit transactions. If financial institutions were to shut down, you would have a lot of difficulty convincing your neighbourhood grocer to accept your hand-painted rocks as payment or trading in your Royal Dalton figurine for a loaf of bread.

Of course liquor stores, beer stores, and cannabis stores are still open. I guess even during times of strife, a vodka martini, shaken, not stirred, could be considered essential for some people.

If you've ever experienced a line-up at the beer store in the hours before closing on a long weekend, you will understand how important a cold brewski is to people in this country ? whether we like to admit it or not.

Some people questioned why hardware stores were considered essential. If you suddenly have a home-based problem and need nails, screws, fasteners, or a new float for your toilet because the old one broke, suddenly your local hardware store is indeed essential.

Media and news outlets have been deemed essential. Without them, how else would you find out where you can and cannot go?

On the flip side, it seems that everything that is fun has been cancelled.

No sporting events, concerts, movies or music lessons. Unfortunately, many events that are big fundraisers for local charity groups have been cancelled.

Playgrounds are off limits. Even hiking trails at local parks now have a sign restricting entrance.

Forget about going to your local pub or favourite restaurant.

I think maybe the restaurant industry is going to take the hardest hit from all this. Banks may be putting on a brave public face when it comes to helping the public defer some charges, but the reality is, when their profits start to decline, explaining you can't pay your mortgage this month because you've had no customers, won't be an excuse.

Some restaurants will be forced to close shop for good.

We can all get by without some frivolous entertainment in life for a few weeks. Hopefully, that's all it will take to get the virus under control and we can back to some normalcy.

I'm guessing that the year 2025 will need an increase in school space when they register kids for kindergarten that year.

With all this down time and people remaining home from work, I think the next baby boom generation will be making an appearance this coming December and January.