

March 30, 2020

To the men and women of the Tampa Bay Times,

The coronavirus brings us to a key moment in history, for the country and the Times. A month ago, it was tempting to regard the pandemic as a distant story, happening somewhere else. Then it showed up here.

We have seen nothing like it. The virus set off a cascade that canceled events and closed businesses. No movies. No March Madness. No Mickey Mouse.

At the Times, the pandemic sent advertising sales into a plunge. In just the last two weeks, cancellations have cost us more than \$1-million, and there is no sign of quick recovery on the horizon. We must act now.

Starting next week, and until business recovers, we will print and deliver the Times only on Sunday and Wednesday, our two biggest days for circulation and advertising. With less work to do, some staff will go on furlough — unpaid leave — for the next eight weeks, and others will see their hours reduced. Supervisors are informing those staffers this week.

I wish there was another way. We all hope the crisis passes, that we can restore print days we are suspending, that we can bring colleagues back to work.

In the midst of this great hardship, there is also rare opportunity. The crisis has stoked huge interest in the news, and readers are turning to us for honest, thorough and up-to-date reporting. The traffic on our website is double or triple its previous volume, and sales of digital subscriptions are accelerating. We are relentlessly promoting the electronic edition of the Times, and thousands more subscribers are already using it.

Even on days when we do not print the Times, we will absolutely keep delivering for our readers. Their trust and loyalty is the bedrock of our business.

Time and again, I have seen the Times rise to big challenges and do what others would say is impossible. This crisis is as big as any challenge we have faced. And when we come through to the other side, we will know that we did something truly historic.

May God bless you and your families, and keep us all healthy and strong.

