MEDIA RELEASE

OFFICE OF COUNTY MAYOR GLENN JACOBS

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Small Business Series Features Balter Beerworks

KNOXVILLE, Tenn.—Knox County Mayor Glenn Jacobs interviewed Blaine Wedekind, co-owner of Balter Beerworks on South Broadway, as part of his latest video series highlighting small businesses.

During the series, the Mayor has conducted interviews with small business owners and operators, providing them the opportunity to talk about how the COVID-19 pandemic has impacted their families and employees, and helping them share any plans they hold for the future.

A new vignette runs each week on the county and Mayor's various social platforms. The media is free to upload the videos.

"It has certainly been an interesting time to be a brewpub owner in 2020, that's for sure," Wedekind told the Mayor in a sit-down interview in his restaurant. "We knew on-premise (services) was going to have to cease, and that's 99 percent of our revenue."

Mayor Jacobs inquired more about what happened to the restaurant during at the beginning of the outbreak and discovered that Wedekind had what he called a "mass layoff."

"It was a super hard day for us," Wedekind said, adding that his business initially had 75 employees before the pandemic hit and now has about 55.

Wedekind also noted significant changes in the food supply chain and emphasized the rising costs of goods as well as the scarcity of ground beef—a necessity for the large quantity of burgers sold at the restaurant. Looking forward, Wedekind said the restaurant's curbside, to-go, and to-go beer programs are going to be a crucial component of their operation.

"We are so glad that you are here supplying people with jobs, and also with really good food," says Mayor Jacobs, who commended Wedekind for his continued ingenuity.

To hear more of what was said, check out the video.

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