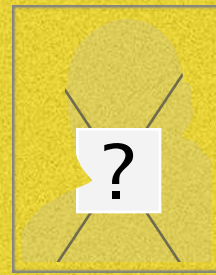


THE EXTRA POINT

BY JERRY ROBERTS



551 How Do We “Re-Open” Guam? – Part 1

While we’re not yet ready to make moves toward restarting our economy the way everyone would like, we can begin to talk about it. I’m Jerry Roberts and we’ll do that, next on The Extra Point.

Let’s be clear about where we stand right now. Guam’s COVID-19 numbers are trending in our favor, and that’s it. The virus isn’t gone. It’s not any less dangerous than it was last week. Nothing has changed, except that our efforts to slow it up have been succeeding.

If the trend continues for a few weeks more and the rate of new infections falls even further, we can say that we’ve made it through the first wave of the virus with lighter casualties than anticipated. Still, we lost five members of our community and we pray for the families involved.

In the first part of this discussion on restarting our economy, the first question is how can we plan this transition so we have the best chance to succeed, and we don’t find ourselves falling back when we’re impacted by the second wave of the virus? Let’s assemble a broad-based team from GovGuam, business, and military circles.

First things first, we played catchup during the last couple of months as we weren’t prepared for any of this. Right now we need to stockpile resources, get more medical people in place, and prepare for whatever activity comes our way. This process will be slower than some people want, and faster than others will be comfortable with.

Second, we can be smart and briefly be a spectator, seeing how other places roll out their economic recovery plans. There won’t be a one-size-fits-all approach. Some will move faster than others, mistakes will be made, and we’ll see surprising successes. If we’re patient we can plug into a lot of data and model the strategies that work best.

One thing I can tell you is that among the countries and U.S. states that are now in the process of planning their recovery, not one is thinking of just letting every private- and public-sector organization open their doors at the same time. That’s a recipe for disaster and a return to lockdown status. Thus, item three is to analyze the data from these other markets and then decide what makes the best sense for us.

We also have to be prepared for the potential downside that by allowing thousands of workers to come together, we could see a significant spike in new infections. That’s already happened in Mainland China, South Korea, Japan, and Hong Kong as they relaxed restrictions. What can we learn from those people in order to improve our chances?

Do we let people who can work from home do that? Do we maintain maximum social distancing between employees? Does everybody wear a mask at all times? Do we take the temperature of every employee, customer and vendor? What else?

What about testing? While President Trump suggests that widespread tests aren’t necessary, everyone I’ve come across in the medical and scientific communities has said it loud and clear: we need to test as many people as possible. Are we prepared for that?

Tomorrow, we’ll discuss more about economic recovery and focus on the preparations being made by several states.

That’s The Extra Point. Stay home and make something good happen today. For 93.3 and the Ray Gibson Show, I’m Jerry Roberts.

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