



Orange County economic boosters roll out Save Our Restaurants Plan to help those that are struggling

**Chapel Hill, NC – (December 17, 2020)** - Restaurants need your help — that is the plea from one local restaurant owner as he says many are dangerously close to closing their doors. Save Our Restaurants and #takeoutpledge are organized by Orange County economic development agencies, including the Chapel Hill/Orange County Visitors Bureau, the Chamber for a Greater Chapel Hill-Carrboro, Chapel Hill Downtown Partnership and Economic Development departments throughout Orange County.

“Everything counts. Whether its soup containers or full menu items to go or a seat on our patio with carefully monitored spacing. One thing we value is the community. They are the reason why our staff still can pay their utilities and we are profoundly grateful because of them,” said Yung Nay, IZA Whiskey & Eats in Carrboro.

Local restaurants have been some of the hardest hit businesses during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Now local agencies are encouraging diners to take the #Takeoutpledge, a commitment to order meals to-go at least once or twice a week. With that, restaurant owners believe they can make it to sunnier weather.

Tommy Stann, owner and operator of Hillsborough BBQ is uneasy about the colder winter months when people tend to eat out less, even in good times. “Without take out for the last 9 months our doors would be permanently closed. The continued support will be even more important during the typically slow restaurant months of January and February. Please pledge to get takeout with local restaurants.”

"We sure do appreciate all the support we've received these past several months, and just wanted to remind everyone that these are really lean months for restaurants even under normal circumstances, Mandey Brown, Imbibe and Zog's in Chapel Hill.

Last week, Gov. Roy Cooper moved North Carolina into a [modified stay-at-home phase](#), restricting activities from 10 pm to 5 am. Dining rooms will now close early, and last call was moved up to 9 pm.

Chef Ron Spada, owner and operator at House of Gatewood is trying to stay open. But this week the popular Hillsborough restaurant experienced one of their worst days since opening and he's worried. "The good news is that locals love the smoked beef brisket and our two weekly hot soups are very popular during these colder nights. They love what we are cooking. The challenging news is that we lost all weddings, Christmas parties and New Year's events because the curfews and alcohol restrictions. I don't know if we will make it. I am loyal to the local staff and community and ask folks to please order take out in the coming weeks."

“We are making a plea to residents to order take out once or twice a week. With a firm take- out pledge, we strive to help restaurants survive and employees feed their families and pay their mortgage. Let us please work together and give back. Pledge to take out twice a week,” said Matt Gladdek, Executive Director of the Chapel Hill Downtown Partnership.

“We all know someone in the restaurant industry, which was the first to be shut down and has been one of the hardest hit throughout the nation,” said Aaron Nelson, CEO of the Chamber for a Greater Chapel Hill-Carrboro.

Kevin Callaghan, Chef and owner of Carrboro’s Acme Food & Beverage Company added, “The only bridge for local restaurants between now and the post-covid era will be built by the support of local diners. None of us can do this alone. But together we have hope. And that may be the most important thing of all.”

The National Restaurant Association released the results of their [December 2020 survey of members](#).

- 85% of NC restaurant operators say their total dollar sales volume in October was lower than it was in October 2019. Overall, sales were down 34% on average.
- 61% of operators in NC expect their sales to decrease from current levels during the next 3 months. Only 2% of operators expect their sales will increase from current levels during the next 3 months.
- 88% of operators in NC say their restaurant’s profit margin is lower than it was prior to the COVID-19 outbreak.
- 42% of NC operators say it is unlikely their restaurant will still be in business six months from now, if there are no additional relief packages from the federal government.

For a list of local restaurants, visit:

<https://www.visitchapelhill.org/restaurants/>  
<https://visithillsboroughnc.com/where-to-eat/>  
<https://visitcarrboro.com/carrboro-eats/>  
<https://downtownchapelhill.com/>

### **How to #takethepledge**

Now is the time for everyone to try to do their part to help save our restaurants. Here’s what to do:

1. Take-out from a local restaurant once or twice a week
2. Post a pic of you wearing your face mask and getting your food at the restaurant
3. Use the hashtag #takeoutpledge

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