



Dear INLA Members Past and Present,

I wish all of you the best, as we work through this ever-evolving pandemic known as COVID-19.

As many of you know, my career path in the industry started in 1974 at Hobbs Nursery (C.M. Hobbs & Sons). In all my years in this industry that I have a deep (obsessive) passion for, I have never seen a situation like the one we now find ourselves in.

The coronavirus (COVID-19) has the potential to affect the health of everyone — ourselves, family members, and employees — not just our businesses or jobs. This unknown monster, as a dear friend termed, could have an even longer-term affect. In a very short timeframe of approximately 10 days, our industry went from normal springtime jitters, to travel restrictions, stock market in full reverse mode, and perhaps the most concerning, feeling the short- and long-term uncertainty of this pandemic.

To assist our members find information regarding health, business, and government services at both the state and federal levels, INLA has created dedicated page of Coronavirus Resources — <http://inla1.org/coronavirus/>. In this ongoing and developing pandemic, INLA will make every effort to keep this page updated and relevant.

Working in the green industry has offered us the ability to work outdoors, and in most cases, not in restricted cubicles and designated areas. We work outdoors in a variety of elements that most agree builds a better health regime. This also is a great time to take a moment, a deep breath, and realize you are not alone in these times of uncertainty. Communicate with family, business associates, friends, and your employees regarding their welfare and that of their family as well.

Our industry has always been involved in some shape or form, as a service industry. Please reach out to your local community and offer assistance to help those that might be less fortunate, if you feel so inclined. Many unfortunately have either been laid off temporarily, or even worse case scenario, have outright lost their jobs entirely. Is there currently an opening that needs filled in your company?

As of this note there has not been a statewide stoppage of work for employees in our industry, if someone has been told to stop work immediately or if your company has decided to cease operations, please call, text, or email me with such information. If you have been forced to stop, please let me know by whom, such as the agency that asked you to cease operating and time frame, if given to return.

In these uncertain times, perhaps there is some comfort in Hobbs Nursery's long history. Over the course of many generations Hobbs Nursery survived the depression, two world wars and other battles for freedom of its citizens, many, many Mother Nature related occurrences, and several plant, pest, and other pathological restrictions/quarantines. My point is, this industry is a survivor. We will get through this, and likely be stronger and more unified through supporting one another.

Rick Haggard

INLA Executive Director
rhaggard@inla1.org