



For Immediate Release

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*Fireworks Entertainment Industry Urgently Needs Help Now
Labor Day and Fall Festivities Mostly Cancelled - Congress Needs to Enact RESTART
To Save these Small Family-owned Businesses*

Bethesda, MD, August 31, 2020 – The professional fireworks entertainment industry has been almost completely shut down since the COVID-19 pandemic hit the nation. The vast majority of Independence Day celebrations were cancelled along with all sporting events, festivals, fairs, and concerts, resulting in little to no income for these family businesses. Now over 95% of all Labor Day events, college and high school football and homecoming events have been cancelled eliminating the false glimmer of hope that the industry held post-Fourth of July to generate some revenue in the Fall to make up for the devastating loss of income in 2020.

“Because our industry requires large public gatherings, we will be one of the very last industries to fully reopen, sometime in mid-2021. This has resulted in tremendous financial hardship to professional display fireworks entertainment companies,” said APA Executive Director, Julie L. Heckman.

The American Pyrotechnics Association (APA) is urging Congress to enact the Reviving the Economy Sustainability Towards a Recovery in Twenty-twenty (RESTART) Act. The APA endorsed the RESTART Act on July 15, 2020, in both the Senate and the House. There has been widespread support from 40 trade organizations across the country that the bipartisan RESTART Act can help small businesses and restart the economy. “The fireworks entertainment industry needs this relief immediately or many display fireworks companies may not be able to survive,” added Heckman.

The primary Senate co-sponsor, Sen. Todd Young of Indiana, held a [press conference call](#) on July 2, 2020, with Mike Cartolano, President of Indiana-based fireworks events company Melrose Pyrotechnics. “The fireworks display industry has experienced particular hardship during the coronavirus pandemic. The industry’s sales and revenue are centered around events on July 4, and businesses are struggling to find a way to survive until next year. A loan program created by the RESTART Act would help provide a lifeline to the hardest-hit industries, including the fireworks entertainment industry, for the remainder of 2020,” said Cartolano.

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Congressman Mike Kelly of Pennsylvania and Congressman Jared Golden of Maine introduced the RESTART Act in the House. On August 13, 2020, Rep. Kelly met with Stephen Vitale, CEO of Pyrotecnico, at Pyrotecnico's New Castle, PA facility. Vitale explained that the financial relief provided under the CARES Act, served as a temporary lifeline by providing small businesses with eight weeks of PPP, but it didn't address the 38 weeks until next summer's Independence Day season, causing companies to implement additional personnel layoffs and salary reductions in an attempt to survive the financial hardship caused by the extreme lack of income.

“We really appreciate Representative Kelly’s leadership in introducing the RESTART Act. Out of everything we’ve looked at, this is exactly the type of assistance we need to survive this unprecedented time in our industry. RESTART would allow us to stay in business for 2020 and keep our employees without having revenue for the rest of this year. It’s not just going to help Pyrotecnico and the fireworks entertainment industry, it’s going to help thousands of small businesses who have suffered irreparable harm and it’s going to help the entire country heal if this goes through,” said Vitale.

The time for Congress to act is now. The fireworks entertainment industry urgently needs a lifeline as the short-term assistance received from PPP has run out and these small family businesses require longer-term support from Congress in the next round of COVID-19 relief legislation if they are going to survive.

About the American Pyrotechnics Association

The APA is the leading safety and trade association of the fireworks industry representing manufacturers, importers, distributors, retailers, suppliers, and professional display companies. Founded in 1948, APA's mission is to encourage safety in the design and use of all types of fireworks, to provide industry information and support to its members, and to promote responsible regulation of the fireworks industry. Additional information about the fireworks industry can be found on APA's website at <http://www.americanpyro.com>

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