More COBOL Programmers needed for new jobless data

TRENTON, NJ (BDPA-NJ) — “New Jersey needs COBOL Programmers.” At a press conference today, governor Phil Murphy asked for the help of volunteer coders who still know how to program in COBOL.

In New Jersey and perhaps other states with “legacy systems”, experts are urgently needed to fix COBOL-based unemployment insurance systems—some at least four decades old—that are overwhelmed due to COVID-19 related job losses.

The state recently experienced a 1,600% increase in claims volume in a single week, said labor commissioner Robert Asaro-Angelo during today’s briefing, stating that “over the prior two weeks we saw more than 362,000 people apply for unemployment as a result of this public health emergency.”

Tech industry and cybersecurity experts feel such “volunteers” are likely well over 60 years old, making them especially vulnerable to COVID-19. Whether they would risk venturing out to work or volunteer to update legacy systems that should have been updated decades ago remains an open challenge if they cannot remotely perform these emergency upgrades.

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— Sources: New Jersey Department of Labor, Quartz, and BDPA-NJ

Photo graphic courtesy NASA and National BDPA
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All,

The circumstances surrounding the coronavirus are continuing to develop each day. This is a rapidly evolving situation and we encourage our members to exercise safety and caution. We are closely monitoring developments and offer the following information and guidance.

What to know about COVID-19 (Novel Coronavirus):

The general risk remains low; however, there have been several confirmed cases across the country including two confirmed cases in Georgia (Our conference location).

In confirmed COVID-19 cases, reported illnesses have ranged from mild symptoms to severe illness and death. Symptoms can include:

- Fever
- Cough
- Shortness of breath

According to the CDC, older adults and those with chronic medical conditions are at higher risk for serious illness from COVID-19.

Please follow guidance from Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, World Health Organization and U.S. State Department for recommendations and travel advisories.

Person-to-person spread is occurring, although it’s unclear exactly how it is transmitted and how easily the virus spreads between people.

The CDC does not recommend that people who are well wear a face mask to protect themselves from respiratory diseases, including COVID-19.

We could be in this state for an extended period of time and encourage you to plan accordingly for student and adult programming. Crisis ultimately breeds innovation. This is a unique opportunity for us to re-evaluate how we may still nurture and develop working professionals and future STEM leaders, all while being mindful of our members’ health, safety, and being intentionally inclusive of those without resources.

The National Executive Committee and Conference Team are working closely to assess the situation and consider the potential options for the conference. We are evaluating the development of a virtual conference experience. Our goal is to create an unmatched experience that retains the same energy, value, and diverse experience for all participants no matter the format the conference takes. Rest assured, we are continuously monitoring this developing situation and will continue to keep you all updated on plans for the conference experience as we move forward.

Sincerely,

Terry J. Morris, BDPA President

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bdpatoday (ISSN 1946-1429) is a periodical published monthly and weekly by participating local BDPA Chapters of National BDPA (NBDPA) within their respective media markets by local BDPA Chapter Communications Committees.

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