



Governor to announce reopen date for restaurants this week, as the advisory board wraps up

LOCAL NEWS

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DAYTON, Ohio (WDTN) – Governor DeWine says he'll announce sometime this week when Ohio restaurants will be allowed to reopen. He says the restaurant advisory group he appointed has nearly finished its work.

Three dozen leaders in the restaurant and bar industry have been working furiously over the past few days to put together the safety protocol that will allow their businesses to reopen.

Adam Rammel is the Co-Founder of Brewfontaine. He says, "It was a pretty aggressive timeline. Our first call was Friday evening." Several more calls came Saturday and Sunday, and even more still on Monday. Now the 36 members of the restaurant advisory board are nearly ready to share their recommendations.

Rammel says, "Our voice is being heard. They're adamant on all voices being heard. It's not a one-size-fits-all kind of situation." Rammel says the advisory group was broken into three subgroups, focusing on keeping employees, customers, and the physical spaces safe. "We modeled that after some of the other sectors that already have some guidelines in place, and also looking at the requirements, what are the recommended items, and what are the best practices."

Rick Malir is the CEO & Founder of City Barbeque. He says, “We’re able to share what worked and what didn’t.” When in-person dining was banned in Ohio, Malir’s City Barbeque team immediately created a playbook. “We literally updated it two to three times a week as things changed. We really focused on CDC guidelines, we focused on government health departments.”

And several days ago, three City Barbeque locations fully reopened in Georgia. Malir is sharing the lessons learned there with the advisory group here. “We’ve had a weekend behind us, so there’s a tremendous amount of learning from that. What diners do and how the employees can interact with them.”

On Monday Governor DeWine said, “Within the next several days we’ll be rolling out that protocol and at the same time we will be able to announce the date.”

So the advisory group is almost finished, but the clock is ticking for many restaurants, and the team members know they have to get it right the first time. Rammel says, “Another blow is certainly going to be RIP for any business that would have to go through this twice.”

Despite all the challenges facing restaurants right now, Rick Malir said there’s a good problem at City Barbeque right now. Every \$5 donation from customers provides a meal for a healthcare hero. Thanks to those donations, City Barbeque is delivering 24,000 meals, and counting.