

# Rising To The Challenge: Giving During A Crisis In The Permian Basin

What a world we are living in today! We are witnesses to – and participants in – an event that will touch every person globally. We are part of a rare opportunity for a shared experience between fellow humans from every race, religion, culture and geography. Here, in our own backyard, we're not immune to the effects of the crisis the world is battling. But the Permian Basin is no stranger to challenges—we are a bold and brave community that bonds together.

The global pandemic has introduced a new kind of challenge in the Permian Basin. In early March, as we began to feel the health and employment impacts of COVID-19, oil prices began dropping. As a community heavily tied to the oil and gas industry, we rode the rollercoaster and settled into our new normal, making hard adjustments to work and home life. Fast forward just six weeks, and oil prices entered negative territory – something that no generation has ever seen. And now as the rest of the nation begins to return to normal, our return will be cautious as we closely watch oil prices.

Because of the strong presence of the oil and gas industry in our region, every business and nonprofit organization in West Texas and Southeast New Mexico feels the effects of oil prices. We feel the highs and lows, and we experience prosperity and strain as prices fluctuate. Our neighbors in the oil and gas business play an important role in our regional economy, and they're stepping up to the plate to continue supporting our communities even during uncertainty. They are focusing their dollars where they are needed most. ExxonMobil responded with a \$100,000 donation to the Carlsbad Municipal School District to facilitate the transition to online learning, and a \$100,000 donation to West Texas Food Bank, the largest nonprofit hunger relief organization in the Permian. These were quickly followed by additional donations by XTO Energy, Shell, Concho, Diamondback, New Mexico Gas Company and others to support hunger relief in West Texas and Southeast New Mexico. To support the frontlines, these companies and other organizations have shared personal protective equipment and medical grade hand sanitizer with first responders. Chevron has made significant contributions to nonprofit agencies in the Permian Basin who have volunteers working tirelessly to respond to the impacts of the pandemic.

The generosity in this time of uncertainty is overwhelming, but not surprising. The people of the Permian Basin are hearty and strong, and the companies that are linked arm-in-arm with us have demonstrated their commitment to our communities.

We've heard it said that one thing the pandemic may offer to the U.S. is the upbringing of another "greatest generation." If that is true, nowhere is that more possible than here in the Permian Basin. Now is our chance to take what we learn about resilience, generosity and strength during this unprecedented time and set an example for our future leaders. Whether you are a healthcare worker on the frontlines, a teacher or student working online, or families checking on your neighbors, you are what makes our communities so strong. To the individuals and companies in West Texas and Southeast New Mexico who are leading by example, thank you.