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Cross Plains' Kolb among 9 DOR staff working to get protective equipment to emergency staff on COVID-19 frontlines

Cross Plains resident Linda Kolb is one of nine Wisconsin Department of Revenue (DOR) employees working to get personal protective equipment (PPE) in the hands of Wisconsin medical personnel on the frontlines of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The nine came to the State Emergency Operations Center (SEOC) at the Department of Military Affairs in Madison late last month to join staff from several state agencies forming a PPE triage team. The team processes offers coming into the SEOC from businesses and individuals wanting to help fill critical shortages caused by the pandemic.

"People are coming up with new and innovative ways to contribute to fighting this virus," says Kolb explaining how individuals and companies are selling back and donating needed items they have on hand. "They're offering their services and facilities. Manufacturers are retooling their machines to make needed supplies and equipment."

Offers coming into the SEOC are a mix of donations, proposals to sell and manufacturers willing to retool their production lines to make PPE. The triage team has processed several offers so far, but more is needed. The biggest needs are for gloves, foot coverings, thermometers, Tyvek coveralls, face shields, isolation gowns, face-surgical masks and N-95 particulate respirators.

Demand is constantly changing, but Kolb says the team is upbeat and ready to adjust as needed.

"Everyone is very adaptable and responsive. If there is a problem or if we suggest an improvement to the applications and website we are working with, changes usually get made in minutes."

Kolb and her DOR co-workers do initial vetting of offers coming into the SEOC. Offers go through the vetting process to verify credibility. Those approved go to the procurement team for further vetting. There are individuals impersonating real businesses and using other means to take advantage of the current situation, making the vetting process a vital first step.

Once they approve an offer and complete any purchasing requirements, the PPE is shipped to a central warehouse. At the warehouse, staff inspect the PPE before shipping it to locations throughout the state for circulation. They expedite smaller PPE offers—for example, 20 or fewer boxes of gloves—by directly connecting donors with healthcare providers and emergency personnel near them. Bypassing the warehouse and fast-tracking these deliveries means PPE gets into the right hands sooner, which is especially critical as COVID-19 case numbers continue to rise.

Anyone with PPE to donate, sell or manufacturers able to modify their production lines to make PPE can contact the SEOC at the [COVID-19 Supply & Resources Offers website](#).

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