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From the San Antonio Business Journal:

<https://www.bizjournals.com/sanantonio/news/2020/07/08/pandemic-response-holds-lessons-to-combat-future.html>

## Green technologies provide a pathway for businesses to prosper post-pandemic

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The Covid-19 pandemic has caused global firms to rethink their strategies for conducting business and, ultimately, for survival. The world economies have already lost trillions of dollars in economic activity and many businesses are scrambling to regroup.

Bexar County has lost more than 1,500 clean energy jobs due to the pandemic, the San Antonio Business Journal reported.

However, we can recover these jobs in other areas. Green technologies — those that minimize or reverse the impact of human activity on the environment — are becoming ubiquitous and the costs of adoption has decreased in many industries. Firms forced to reevaluate their business models can find success using green technology as a survival and growth strategy while simultaneously reducing their carbon footprints. Given the pandemic situation, green technologies find use in contactless delivery, cleaning and sanitizing restaurant environments, in lumber products and in approaches to reducing perishable food waste.

H-E-B, for example, seeks to use green technology and recycled materials in their buildings, reduce harmful emissions in their trucks, and recycle plastic bags to the extent possible to foster a green environment.

### Eco-friendly delivery

Contactless delivery for food has become the survival strategy for restaurants. One San Antonio firm, Aerial Vehicle Automation, is among those already offering solar-powered drone technology. Combining contactless delivery with drone technology to make deliveries of food and other products safely while promoting the use of green technology helps all stakeholders.

### Green cleaning

Restaurants and grocery chains can consider cost-effective green technology cleaning products to keep their environment healthy. Local firm Matera Paper Company stocks commercial and industrial cleaning supplies from green manufacturers and offers them to local firms.

More generally, while Plexiglas barriers protects customers' and employees' health, installing Plexiglas made with recycled materials can also help the environment. Another option is far-ultraviolet lighting that can brighten a business environment while killing germs and viruses. These products are available locally.



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## **Reducing waste**

Other local firms are utilizing materials that would otherwise be wasted. Greenwood Milling Company, for instance, offers finished wood products made from discarded wood, diverting it from the landfill.

These wood-based products may be more critical now than ever. Some businesses will need to remodel their work environment to practice social distancing for employees and customers. In addition, restaurants are now considering outside dining tables to ensure safe distancing. These remodeling plans can easily include products made from wood and mulch that would otherwise have made its way into a landfill.

## **Farmers markets**

Because of business lockdowns, farmers who previously sold to restaurants lost as much as 80% of their revenue during the pandemic. Farmers were able to recoup some or all of their losses by using farmers markets to sell their produce, thereby reducing perishable waste. According to a PBS report, farmers markets may be a safer food shopping option during a pandemic. This is presumably in part because the outdoor market environment offers greater opportunities for social distancing than inside grocery stores while still allowing shoppers to view produce quality before purchasing.

Local businesses allowing farmers markets to flourish in parking lots and green spaces outside their businesses in a healthy environment may also increase traffic flow into their stores. According to the Project for Public Spaces, 60% of farmers market shoppers also visited nearby stores.

The health and economic crisis caused by Covid-19 can motivate firms to make desired safety changes to their products while simultaneously promoting the use of green technology. Evidence suggests that consumers are willing to pay more for green products and a healthier business environment adds more value — a win-win strategy for consumers, businesses, their employees and the planet.

A pandemic is a game changer for everyone. It also serves as an opportunity for businesses to adapt their business models while adopting green technologies that provide value to all stakeholders.

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