

# Businesses during the pandemic

## WESTMINSTER

### Amy's Laundry owner learned numerous 'fantastic lessons'

Amy's Laundry, located at 271 E. Main St. in Westminster, had been open and building a client base for more than a year when COVID-19 struck Carroll County.

It caused Amy Doody, the facility's owner, to adapt to a different set of needs from customers and the business became what is believed to be the first full-service laundromat to provide contactless pickup and delivery dry cleaning to Carroll County residents at no additional charge.

We caught up with owner Amy Doody to see how Amy's Laundry made it through the pandemic.

#### When did your business open and what is it most known for?

We opened in December, 2018. Our business is known for being friendly, well run, and vital to the community.

#### What role does your business play in your community?

We are a full service laundry center so we serve the walk-in customer, the client who drops their laundry off, the customer who needs their laundry picked up and delivered, and the commercial customer.

#### How did the COVID-19 pandemic impact your business?

Like so many small businesses, COVID was a challenging time. It afforded us the opportunity to review our sanitation procedures, expand our offerings, and review Best Practices so that customers and attendants stayed safe during a very uncertain time.

#### What steps did you take to help your business survive the pandemic? Did you secure state/federal grants?

We did secure a first round PPP loan, which was a lifesaver, but did not apply for other grants or loans. And we were determined to stay open, even if that meant manning the store myself for 16 hours a day, 7 days a week. Thankfully I sought and found advice from several experienced business person (including my dad and neighbor, Keith, who owns Ron's Automotive next door) and quickly had a plan in place. The plan outlined how long we could survive and still keep everyone on payroll, when we would have to make radical changes, and what they would have to be. It was very sobering but also reassuring to have a plan in place.



Amy Doody is the owner of Amy's Laundry in Westminster. PHOTO BY JEFFREY F. BILL

#### As a business owner, what did you learn about yourself, your employees and/or your customers during the pandemic?

We always knew we were essential, but thankfully in the early days of the pandemic the government acknowledged our essentiality which allowed us to stay open. We learned that we were doing a great deal very well, but that there were still areas that could be improved. We learned that customers were scared but so thankful that there was a safe place to go and wash clothes. We learned that without a dedicated staff, there was no business. And we were reminded that God is in control, and that while we always do what is logical and prudent, we do not have the final say. We learned that even when we were OK, that just outside our doors there was loss and pain. Most importantly, we learned to love this community even more, because while our concern was for them, their concern was for us.

#### Once we began to emerge from the pandemic, what changes made out of necessity did you do away with and what changes worked so well you will continue?

Our Best Practices already included gloving up before handling dirty laundry, and using a hospital grade disinfectant to wipe all hard surfaces multiple times a day. What we added that will continue is masking while sorting dirty laundry, and disinfecting the machines after every use, disinfecting folding tables multiple times a day

and disinfecting carts.

#### After a most uncertain 15 months for businesses, how do you feel your business is positioned for the future?

We owned the store for just a little more than a year before COVID hit, so our growth was stunted. But we have a clearer picture of who we are and the role we play in the community, and we know what we can survive and how to navigate. Amy's Laundry is well positioned for a full recovery and a bright future.

### MAYOR AND COMMON COUNCIL

Elected by voters to 4-year terms

**Mona Becker, mayor, 2025**  
**Kevin Dayhoff, 2023**  
**Ann Thomas Gilbert, 2023**  
**Gregory Pecoraro, 2023**  
**Tony Chiavacci, 2025**  
**Daniel Hoff, 2025**

The Mayor and Common Council meet at 7 p.m. the second and fourth Mondays of every month at City Hall, 1838 Emerald Hill Lane.

**Administrative Offices**  
45 W. Main St., Westminster, MD 21157  
410-848-9000, 410-876-1313  
info@westgov.com  
www.westminstermd.gov