



**VENTURE
NORTH**

PRESS RELEASE

For Immediate Release: December 3, 2020

Contact: Steve Brower
Manistee Industrial Development Corporation
Sbrower54@gmail.com
231-499-3854

Contact: Laura Galbraith
Venture North Funding & Development
laura@venturenorthfunding.org
231-357-6776

**WEST SHORE BANK DONATES \$10,000 – FOUR MORE MANISTEE CO. BUSINESSES RECEIVE GRANTS
THROUGH PARTNERSHIP WITH IDC & REGIONAL RESILIENCY PROGRAM**

MANISTEE, MICHIGAN – As they have done so often, West Shore Bank has contributed a philanthropic shot in the arm with a \$10,000 donation, matching \$10,000 provided by the Manistee IDC, providing four more Manistee County businesses with “lifeline grants” in the face of the largest pandemic in over a century.

“In making this donation, I am calling on others with a philanthropic interest in the economic well-being of Manistee County to join us in stepping up to contribute,” said Raymond Biggs, President and CEO of West Shore Bank. “Making our way through COVID-19 requires a partnership of organizations helping wherever they can. With Venture North as the administrative arm of the Regional Resiliency Program and the IDC as the local catalyst, we are collaborating to get funding to businesses impacted by COVID to help get them through winter and into 2021.”

“The Manistee Industrial Development Corporation has donated \$50,000 to the program with the condition that others match our contribution,” said Steve Brower, Vice President and Commercial Loan Officer for West Shore Bank in Manistee County. “Last week, the IDC joined the Manistee County Community Foundation and Venture North in awarding grants to ten small businesses. We can now award four more – and we still have \$20,000 remaining that requires a match of \$20,000.”

“This is fantastic for the Conservatory of Dance and our students,” said Shelli Golembiewski, co-owner of the dance studio along with Tarah Fancher. “I don’t know where we’d be without West Shore Bank! It has been a really rough year in which we lost almost half of our regular students but our 30-year old business will make it one way or another through the pandemic. We owe West Shore Bank and others with the Regional Resiliency Program a big debt of thanks and gratitude.”

“One thing that makes West Shore Bank different is its commitment to have an integral role in the communities it serves,” said Brower. “This often occurs through philanthropy, with bank members serving as volunteers on nonprofit boards or donating funds to important worthy causes. In the case of the COVID pandemic, we made a commitment to help small businesses access Federal stimulus funding regardless of their size. When the Regional Resiliency Program was created, we again contributed financially and with volunteer time by bank representatives. In this case, our dollars and time will help sustain important small businesses with nine employees or less, the heartbeat of Manistee County’s economy from one County line to another. We can take pride in knowing that we fill an important role as we step up to fill critical gaps during these most difficult of times to keep businesses alive while supporting jobs and families.”

The Regional Resiliency Program began in May 2020 with a \$200,000 grant to Venture North from the Consumers Energy Foundation. To date, the Regional Resiliency Program has secured over \$550,000 and made grants to over 165 small businesses in their ten-county region.

Venture North Funding and Development is a 501(c) 3 nonprofit certified Community Development Financial Institution (CDFI) that specializes in supporting economic growth and jobs by making capital available to small businesses. Venture North administers the Regional Resiliency Program that provides grants of up to \$5,000 to northwest lower Michigan businesses with nine or fewer employees.

Donations to the fund can be made online by clicking the “**Donate to the Fund**” button at <https://www.venturenorthfunding.org/regional-resiliency-program> or by contacting Laura Galbraith at 231-357-6776.

The 14 Small Business Grant Recipients Include:

(Are the additional four grant recipients because of the West Shore Bank donation.)*

* Conservatory of Dance

* Dempsey Manor Bed & Breakfast

* Glenwood Market

* Pleasant Valley Motel (Arcadia)

J Catlett & Company

Happy Owl Book Shop

Diner 31, LLC

The Baca Agency

Kathleen’s House of Style

Krista LeAnns Studio of Hair Design

Betty’s Beauty Salon

Transitions Women’s Wellness Center

Jennifer’s Hair Studio

M-22 Grill

###