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13 ANTRIM COUNTY BUSINESSES AWARDED GRANTS FROM REGIONAL RESILIENCY PROGRAM

BELLAIRE, MICHIGAN – A total of \$47,000 has been awarded to 13 small businesses in Antrim County through the Regional Resiliency Program (RRP). The RRP began in 2020 with a \$200,000 seed grant from the Consumers Energy Foundation to Venture North Funding and Development to help businesses with nine employees or less recover from the COVID-19 pandemic in the ten-county region. Another \$200,000 was awarded by Consumers Energy Foundation along with other donations for the 2021 program. In Antrim County, the Bellaire Area Chamber of Commerce Foundation promoted the program, raised funds to support it and helped organize a local team to review grant applications and make grant recommendations that were followed by Venture North in awarding funds.

“The work of the Bellaire Area Chamber of Commerce Foundation was crucial in making the Antrim County grant round a reality,” said Laura Galbraith, President of Venture North. “They raised \$24,000 for the grant program which is a tribute to them and the donors.” Galbraith said that an additional \$3,000 was allocated to the Antrim County RRP grant round from a \$15,000 award to Venture North from the Urgent Needs Fund of the Grand Traverse Regional Community Foundation. Venture North contributed \$20,000 which brought the total of all grants to \$47,000.

There were a total of 22 grant applications from businesses seeking \$104,500.

“We ended up making grants to a diverse group of businesses which was great,” said Louise Wenzel, Chair of the Bellaire Area Chamber of Commerce Foundation. “It included nine women owned business and one owned by a military veteran; and ranged from a yoga studio to lodging to restaurants, health and wellness centers and much more. It reflects the fact that small businesses are the anchors of most of the communities in Antrim County. We also want to encourage potential donors to the program to consider a gift so we can reach even more of the applications that were received.”

Galbraith said applications that could be funded with additional financial support included Antrim County small businesses that sought grant funds for inventory, retaining staff, payroll, operating materials and supplies, insurance and mortgage payments, website redesign, target marketing, outdoor seating and supplies to ensure safety. “As much as we may want to focus efforts on recovery, many small businesses that have urgent needs are at risk of being left behind,” Galbraith said.

Any organization or individual may donate funding to increase the amount available for grants to Antrim County small businesses. Funds may be donated online by going to “Donate to the RRP” at www.venturenorthfunding.org or by calling 231-995-7115.

Venture North Funding and Development provides business financing and technical assistance to support business growth and job creation in the ten-county region, often in partnership with other financial institutions. As a certified Community Development Financial Institution (CDFI), Venture North also focuses on providing support for underserved populations such as minority, women and veteran owned businesses in low-income communities.

“We hope many of the RRP grantees will approach us in the future for growth capital which is our primary mission,” said Galbraith. “We have the capability to offer flexible terms and like to partner with other financial institutions. We look forward to playing an instrumental role in supporting businesses that are vital to the betterment of communities in all of Antrim County.”

Antrim County Small Business RRP Grant Recipients

- A Matter of Taste at Tap., Inc. - Ellsworth
- Bachmann's Store – Central Lake
- Bellaire Bed and Breakfast- Bellaire
- Central Lake Pharmacy, Inc. – Central Lake
- Danu Hof LLC. - Mancelona
- Hello Vino- Bellaire
- Inspire Health Chiropractic and Wellness- Bellaire
- JLB Tree Service – Rapid City
- Shirley's Café- Mancelona
- The Iron Skillet- Mancelona
- The Place Promotional Products & Apparel- Elk Rapids
- Vista Ridge Vineyards- Alden
- Yoga Bellaire LLC- Bellaire

