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**REGIONAL RESILIENCY FUND AWARDS GRANTS TO LEELANAU TOWNSHIP BUSINESSES**

*Leelanau Township Community Township funding to support small businesses impacted by COVID-19*

**NORTHPORT, MICHIGAN –** Seven small businesses impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic in Leelanau Township have received grants from funds provided by the Leelanau Township Community Foundation to the Regional Resiliency Fund administered by Venture North.

“This was a special opportunity for us to provide aid and encouragement to our business community in a time of extraordinary distress,” said Joan Moore, Executive Director of the Leelanau Township Community Foundation. “Venture North was established as a nonprofit to offer financing to grow businesses and jobs in our region. It just makes sense that they are serving our small businesses during the COVID-19 pandemic to connect business owners with support, such as the grants made available with funding from our Foundation. This crisis is far from over, and we all need to pull together to sustain the character and economic base of our community.” Moore said the Foundation awarded a $25,000 grant to Venture North for their Regional Resiliency Fund solely to help Leelanau Township small businesses with nine or fewer employees.

“It’s a wonderful statement about the importance of community and people working as neighbors to help one another during this great financial and health crisis,” said Laura Galbraith, executive director of Venture North. “Because of the Community Foundation, we were able to award $21,800 to seven applicants who own businesses that encompass catering, art education, retail sales of northern Michigan products, specialty ice cream, and more. It is this sort of business mix that holds communities together and forms a destination for thousands of visitors. As with all of our Regional Resiliency Fund grants, we relied on local leaders; in this case, the Community Foundation board members, to review grant applications and provide recommendations for funding. We fully expect there will be additional grant rounds when Township businesses can seek grants through the Program.

Galbraith said that since the Regional Resiliency Fund was formed in June, over 307 grant applications have been received from small businesses in Benzie, Grand Traverse, and Leelanau Counties seeking $1.4 million. $304,800 has been secured by the program and awarded to 114 applicants. Nine organizations have made grants to support the program, including Consumers Energy Foundation, Cherryland Electric Cooperative, DTE Energy Foundation, Brookby Foundation, Leelanau Township Community Foundation, Grant Traverse Regional Community Foundation through the Urgent Needs Fund, Chemical Bank, Fifth Third Bank, Huntington Bank, and three private donors.

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“On behalf of the thousands of small businesses in northwest Michigan that need help surviving the COVID-19 pandemic, we hope that foundations, corporations, individuals, and others will support grants and charitable donations to the Regional Resiliency Fund,” Galbraith said. “All funds received will be passed through in grants directly to small businesses with nine or fewer employees.

About Venture North:

Venture North provides small business loans and resources in Northern Michigan for economic and community development. As a Community Development Financial Institution (CDFI) Fund, Venture North makes capital accessible to entrepreneurs who might not have other avenues to start or grow their business. Venture North serves low-income and rural communities across Emmet, Charlevoix, Antrim, Kalkaska, Leelanau, Benzie, Grand Traverse, Manistee, Wexford, and Missaukee counties in Northern Michigan. Venture North has financed nearly $7 million in small business loans; more information is available at [www.venturenorthfunding.org](http://www.venturenorthfunding.org)

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**Regional Resiliency Fund, Leelanau Township Grantees**

**Abundance Catering LLC**

**The Boutique**

**Karyn’s Beauty Salon**

**Myrtles of Northport and Studio 106**

**Pennington Collection LLC**

**The Tribune Ice Cream & Eatery**

**Woodruff Designs**