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PRESS RELEASE

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PETOSKEY-HARBOR SPRINGS AREA COMMUNITY FOUNDATION TO HELP SMALL BUSINESSES IN EMMET COUNTY

Community Foundation Leads Partnership with Regional Resiliency Program: Grant Applications Available Now

PETOSKEY, MICHIGAN – Emmet County’s small businesses have a new source of financial support thanks to a new partnership between the Petoskey-Harbor Springs Area Community Foundation and the Regional Resiliency Program (RRP). The Community Foundation is investing \$50,000 in the program, which will be awarded to Emmet County businesses with nine or fewer employees that have been impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic.

The RRP is a new initiative administered by Venture North Funding & Development that began in May 2020 with a \$200,000 award from the Consumers Energy Foundation, originally established to help small businesses in Benzie, Grand Traverse and Leelanau Counties. Since then, the program secured additional funding and has made 140 grants amounting to approximately \$400,000 with no grant exceeding \$5,000. The RRP has also expanded to include Antrim and Manistee Counties and now, Emmet County as well.

“Our entire community has been hit hard by the pandemic,” said David (DJ) Jones, Executive Director of the Community Foundation. “While we’ve worked to provide financial support to our partner nonprofits, the Community Foundation has also been looking for ways to support our small business community. These small businesses which employ our friends and neighbors are a vital part of the fabric of our community. They are the small mom and pop shops as well as the burgeoning entrepreneurs, and their success makes our community stronger. Partnering with Venture North and the Regional Resiliency Program offered a turn-key way for us to help.”

“Congratulations to the Petoskey-Harbor Springs Area Community Foundation for launching Emmet County’s participation in the program,” said Laura Galbraith, Executive Director of Venture North. “Because of an additional grant from the Consumers Energy Foundation to administer the program, it is being provided at no additional cost to participating communities.”

Grant applications are now available online at www.venturenorthfunding.org. Emmet County employers with nine or fewer employees that were impacted by COVID-19 have until November 20 at 5 p.m. to submit grant applications. Funds have been used by grantees for a variety of needs, ranging from new on-line sales programs that support resiliency to purchases of personal protective equipment, inventories, advertising and much more.

The grant application takes about 30 minutes to complete. A team of local representatives will review the applications and recommend funding in making grants. Grants arrive as a direct deposit into the bank account of awardees. Questions from applicants may be directed to Betsy Evans at 1betsyevans@gmail.com or 231-383-2798.

“We are honored to partner with the Community Foundation and all donors to the program and to see first hand how these relatively small grants make big changes in the sustainability and resiliency of small businesses,” Galbraith said. “Working together with funders and small businesses is important now more than ever. We are focused on the priorities and needs of small businesses and welcome them to apply for the funds they need to adapt and survive

these trying economic times. If Congress extends the Paycheck Protection Program, we look forward to helping these small businesses avail themselves of those resources as well.”

Galbraith and Jones encouraged foundations, corporations and individuals to consider contributing to the program. Donations can be made online by going to “Donate to the Fund” on the RRP page at www.venturenorthfunding.org or by calling Venture North at 231-357-6776.

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 also administers the Regional Resiliency Program that provides grants of up to \$5,000 to northwest Michigan businesses with nine or fewer employees.

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