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Startup Martinsville-Henry County, Virginia, awards over \$29,000 in startup grant funds
~ Seven companies poised to open or expand in Martinsville-Henry County ~

MARTINSVILLE, Va. (May 22, 2018) – The Chamber’s Partnership for Economic Growth (C-PEG) awarded a total of \$29,825 in grant funds, rent and utility subsidies and discounted Chamber member dues to seven participants of “Startup Martinsville-Henry County, Virginia,” an intensive eight-week entrepreneurial boot-camp program for startups and four-week boot-camp for growing companies, which culminated into a business plan competition held on April 26.

Partners include C-PEG, City of Martinsville, Henry County, George W. Lester II fund through the Martinsville Area Community Foundation and the Campbell Family Group. Additionally, American National Bank is the small business sponsor for Chamber and C-PEG events.

Award recipients included:

Cocoa Trail Chocolates (Alan and Brittany Agee) - \$10,000.00
Red & Maes (Kim Mason) - \$6,000.00
Junior's Music (Lloyd and Toni France) - \$4,000.00
Rockbottom Athletics (Jomo and Yvette Luca) - \$3,400.00
Intervention Life Services (Shabazz Chelley) - \$ 3,460.00
PropHR Consulting (Terence Carter) - \$1,200.00
IRECS LLC (Larry Wallace, Jr.) - \$1,700.00

According to C-PEG’s guidelines, award recipients have to open or expand their businesses by September 30 in Martinsville-Henry County and must participate in C-PEG’s mentoring program.

“This is truly a day to celebrate in our community. Twenty-four area entrepreneurs completed the Startup Martinsville-Henry County classes and are poised to either open or expand their businesses in our community. “While 23 of the 24 ultimately competed, we feel confident that all of them have the potential to be successful with their new business venture,” said Lisa Fultz, executive director of C-PEG.

The City of Martinsville and Henry County contract with C-PEG to administer its small business and entrepreneurship development programs. C-PEG is the Martinsville-Henry County Chamber of Commerce's charitable affiliate. Fultz is also the president of the chamber.

"Our Startup Martinsville-Henry County program has great momentum going, and we will continue to build on the program to add value to our entrepreneurial resources," said C-PEG President John Parkinson. "Our partners share common goals and are working collaboratively to make our community thrive," he added.

As a serial entrepreneur, Patrick Henry Community College President, Dr. Angeline Godwin, is ideal to lead this training and test the business ideas, as she has started, owned and operated a number of retail, technology and service companies. Dr. Godwin serves on the Emeritus Advisory Committee of the National Association for Community College Entrepreneurship and currently serves on its. All classes were held at PHCC's Dalton IDEA Center in uptown Martinsville. Dr. Godwin shared, "Through this program, our community has flipped the switch on its entrepreneurial power source. We are very focused on the entrepreneurs themselves as innovators, community leaders and success-oriented individuals. Now we must support these businesses with our commitment to spending our dollars here in our local community."

Mayor Gene Teague said, "I congratulate the award recipients and look forward to celebrating their grand openings or expansions over the next few months. We are pleased with the progress of our business development efforts and Startup Martinsville-Henry County is just another example of how our partnership with CPEG is yielding benefits to our entire community."

Jim Adams, Chair of the Henry County Board of Supervisors said, "Henry County is pleased to be a part of this exciting small business initiative. The program has successfully demonstrated that it supports the development of startups and newly formed businesses in our community." He shared, "I offer congratulations and sincere wishes for success to each entrepreneur."

Twenty entrepreneurial ventures have received funding assistance since the program's inception with over \$160,000 awards to be leveraged with the entrepreneurs' personal funds. Planning for the next "Startup Martinsville-Henry County, Virginia" event is in the works.

Martinsville-Henry County Chamber's Partnership for Economic Growth (C-PEG) is an independent, yet closely aligned, charitable affiliate of the Chamber of Commerce. C-PEG is charged with funding and supporting the area's efforts to improve economic growth.

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