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Transylvania Tomorrow Fund Makes a Difference for Small Businesses in Time of Need

Brevard, NC – Thirty days into the new Transylvania Tomorrow Small Business Emergency Relief Fund initiative the impact is being felt by businesses across the county. Grants totaling \$99,000 have been awarded to fifty-six Transylvania County small businesses in the first two rounds of the funding.

The program started strong with funding from the Transylvania Business Support Task Force members and the founding sponsors: Heart of Brevard, Transylvania Economic Alliance, Brevard/Transylvania Chamber of Commerce, Transylvania County Tourism (TCT), Blue Ridge Community College Small Business Center, Comporium, Duke Energy, Historic Toxaway Foundation, and the City of Brevard. Momentum continued as the fund was the featured non-profit in Oskar Blues new Makin' a Difference Mondaze virtual concert series. To bring even greater attention to the cause, the Task Force released a video featuring images from around Transylvania County with recording artists Woody Platt of Steep Canyon Rangers and Shannon Whitworth performing the song *Tomorrow* from the musical *Annie* to encourage donations to ensure a tomorrow for local small businesses.

The initiative received a big boost at the May 18 Brevard City Council meeting where the council voted unanimously to provide an additional \$25,000 to the fund. City of Brevard City Manager Jim Fatland stated, "The loss of small businesses would be irreparable, and not just for the people whose livelihoods depend on them, but for the community as a whole." Fatland added, "The City of Brevard is pleased to announce two grants totaling \$30,000 to Transylvania Tomorrow Emergency Relief Fund."

This donation put the total funding for the program at more than \$149,000. "We commend the City Council and staff for taking decisive action to support our local business community with additional funding," shares Heart of Brevard Executive Director Nicole Bentley, "These funds will help ensure that we have dollars for our next round of awards and get us closer to our goal of \$300,000."

In many cases, these grants have provided critical relief as businesses move toward reopening. "The Transylvania Tomorrow funding we received will be a great help to Quixote Fine Cuisine," says owner Victor Gomez. "We will use the funds to purchase the supplies we need to reopen."

Jessica Whitmire, Director of Operations at Headwaters Outfitters adds, “These funds will help us offset the expense of the PPE and cleaning supplies we need, in order to protect our families, staff, and customers, allowing us to be prepared and ready to go once we reopen.”

“Though we are pleased to be able to provide some financial support to 56 small businesses throughout the county, we know from the 110 total applications that we’ve received there are still businesses that can use help,” says Clark Lovelace, Task Force member and executive director of Brevard/Transylvania Chamber and TCT. “We want to help as many qualifying businesses as possible and plan to continue to do so as long as we can.”

Funds will continue to be awarded every two weeks, with the next deadline on May 22. Any new applicants or past applicants who provide updated information are eligible. To learn more about the program, visit brevardnc.org/transylvaniatomorrow

About the Transylvania Business Support Task Force:

The Transylvania Business Support Task Force was formed in response to the COVID-19 pandemic with the mission of working together to support the business community as they work through and recover from times of crisis. The group is made up of Transylvania Economic Alliance, Brevard/Transylvania Chamber of Commerce, Heart of Brevard, Blue Ridge Community College Small Business Center and Transylvania County Tourism. Since its inception, the group has collaborated to provide key resources, conducted two surveys, hosted three town hall meetings, held industry specific reopening meetings and created the Transylvania Tomorrow Small Business Emergency Relief Fund.

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A document containing testimonials is included with this press release as well.

