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## **LOCAL ASSISTANCE COMING FOR JASPER COUNTY SMALL BUSINESSES**

Small business owners in Jasper County now have access to local funds during this difficult time.

A joint effort between the Newton Development Corporation (NDC), Jasper County Economic Development Corporation (JEDCO), the City of Newton, Jasper County and the Jasper Community Foundation (JCF) will assist Jasper County businesses with their rent/lease/mortgage and utility costs based on payments made for the month of April 2020.

"It's great to see everyone in the County cooperating and working together on such an important project," Jeff Davidson, Executive Director of JEDCO stated. The Newton Development Corporation will accept applications, and the Jasper Community Foundation will administer the program.

"The Newton Development Corporation Board of Directors has agreed to take the lead in raising money and administering this assistance program," said Adam Otto, Chair of NDC. "We are targeting reimbursement of expenses for April, but if money permits, we could extend that into next month too."

Small businesses that want to apply for the grants must be independent, locally owned businesses with under 25 employees, and not received another form of assistance from the state or federal government. Companies can be for-profit or non-profit, and those ordered closed by the State of Iowa and Governor Reynolds during the State of Emergency will receive priority.

"We are living through perhaps the most challenging times of our lives," Newton Mayor Mike Hansen said. "The COVID-19 pandemic has changed everything we took for granted, including our ability to gather together for work, play, and worship. But one thing that hasn't changed is our desire to help those who are in need. This crisis has created enormous hardship for private businesses and their employees. All of them are struggling to keep their heads above water. Small businesses, the lifeblood of our economy, were hit the hardest, and those here in Newton and Jasper County are no exception."

"That's why, as Mayor, I am so proud of our local non-profits like Jasper Community Foundation, Newton Development Corporation, and JEDCO," Hansen continued. "Along with members of our City

staff, these hometown heroes have taken the initiative to raise funds for the small businesses in Jasper County. They saw businesses that fell through the cracks of federal and state government aid programs and felt compelled to act."

"Jasper County and the Board of Supervisors are pleased and excited about the idea of a local Small Business Assistance Program. Our small, locally owned businesses are a major part of our local economy and our communities. Many of them have been hit hard during the COVID-19 shutdown. The Board of Supervisors is pleased to partner with all the communities in the County to help our small businesses in any way we can. We are one County and one Community," said Brandon Talsma, Chair of the Jasper County Board of Supervisors.

"We are pleased that the Jasper Community Foundation is assisting us with this program," said Frank Liebl, Executive Director of NDC. "By going through the Jasper Community Foundation, your donation is tax-deductible. With Jasper County, the City of Newton, and the Jasper Community Foundation all pledging \$25,000 our fundraising efforts are off to a good start. However, we have a short time to raise additional funding. We plan on issuing checks the week of May 18 to those who qualify," added Liebl.

Any business or individual wishing to make a tax-deductible contribution to this fund may send a check to the Jasper Community Foundation, PO Box 924, Newton, IA. 50208. Please include "Business Assistance Fund" on the memo line of the check.

"The goal of the Jasper Community Foundation is to assist our community through the negative economic impact of the COVID-19 disaster," Dan Skokan, chair of the foundation said. "We are hopeful that our partnership with the City and County to spearhead the project will help the small business community survive and experience a faster recovery. We encourage anyone with the ability to help to send their contribution to JCF."

For those small businesses interested in applying, the program guidelines are as follows:

- The applicant cannot have received another form of assistance for their business from the available State or Federal sources.
- The program is for independent, locally-owned businesses located in Jasper County with under 25 employees.
- A completed application is not a guarantee of financial assistance. However, those who receive the grants will receive the funds the week of May 18.

Applications are available on the web sites of Jasper County, City of Newton, Newton Development Corporation, JEDCO, Jasper Community Foundation, Newton Area Chamber of Commerce, and Newton Main Street.

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