

Businesses receive revolving county loans

The Van Buren County Economic Development Board, in conjunction with the Van Buren County Board of Commissioners, has distributed two new loans to help stabilize local small businesses in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic. In the fall of 2020, the board issued loans for 10 Van Buren County businesses to support job retention efforts in the wake of COVID-19 restrictions. The most recent round of loan approvals adds two more businesses to this roster, including Paw Paw-based Creative Catering Services.

On Tuesday, April 27, Richard Godfrey, chairman of the County Board of Commissioners, met with the owners of Creative Catering Services and the Garden Griddle as they closed on their loan. The loan to Creative Catering Services will help support employee retention as they continue to recover from the impact that COVID-19 gathering restrictions had on their catering operations. "We would normally cater 30 weddings in a year, but last year we only had three," said Sarah Cox, owner of Creative Catering Services. "While the year 2020 definitely rocked our business, we are feeling optimistic and looking forward to a promising 2021."

The County Revolving Loan Fund was established through a Community Development Block Grant from the Department of Housing and Urban Development over 20 years ago and is currently administered by Market Van Buren, the economic development organization for Van Buren County. The Revolving Loan Fund is an alternative



financing mechanism for local businesses and municipalities. As loans and interest are paid, the funds return to the Revolving Loan Fund, which can then be reused to make additional loans throughout the community.

"The Revolving Loan Fund is a great resource for businesses and local governments in Van Buren County," said Richard Godfrey, chairman of the Board of Commissioners. "It is always a pleasure to meet the business owners supported by this program, and today was no exception."

In the past Revolving Loan Fund allocations have been focused on job creations and blight elimination within the county, but the focus of the fund shifted to job retention and business stabilization in the last year due to the impact COVID-19 had on local businesses.

"We've had to shift our approach to loans as the pandemic has taken hold of our community," said Zach Morris, executive director of Market Van Buren.

"Although restrictions are being lifted now, it's important to realize that the impact of a year of shutdowns and restrictions will be felt by business owners for years to come."

The Revolving Loan Fund is a program available to businesses and municipalities based in Van Buren County. If you are interested in learning more about the program, contact Morris at: morrisz@marketvanburen.org.

Lawton schools chosen to host CATCH

On April 22 and 23, Lawton Elementary and Middle School welcomed Duncan VanDusen and Brooks Ballard from the C.A.T.C.H. Global Foundation. CATCH is a non-profit dedicated to providing coordinated child health programs for schools.

One of the largest such organizations in the United States, CATCH creates behavior change by enabling children to identify healthy foods, and by increasing the amount of moderate to vigorous physical activity children engage in each day.

Lawton Elementary and Middle Schools were selected to be CATCH schools in a collaborative effort with the Van Buren the Van Buren Intermediate School District. "Student health and wellness has long been a priority for Lawton Community Schools and the CATCH program is our latest effort to provide relevant, engaging health programs to our students," said Lawton Community Schools Chris Rice. "Our CATCH guests were here to interview and videotape students, staff, and administration as part of a video



"Unleash the Beast" Physical Education at Lawton Middle School project that CATCH hopes to use to secure new funding for their student wellness programs."

For more information about CATCH? Visit www.catchinfo.org.

Winery, girl scouts sponsor virtual tasting

The latest in a series of events the two groups have worked on over the past few years.

During the one-hour Facebook event, Tony Strong and Brian Christofferson from St. Julian guided more than 100 participants through the pairings. Participants were given the option of choosing either dry or

sweet wines for the mouth-watering tasting experience.

"The wine and cookies pairing event with St. Julian was a blast," says Brenna Smith, Communications Manager for Girl Scouts Heart of Michigan. "Participants were thrilled to support Girl Scouts Heart of Michigan while indulging in

some scrumptious treats. All funds raised through this event support local girls and their opportunity to participate in the premier leadership organization for girls in the world."

Girl Scouts Heart of Michigan gives girls the chance to build lifelong friendships while growing into the confident, courageous person they wish to become. With a wide variety of events, activities, and opportunities that girls can't find anywhere else, Girl Scouting is a place where every girl belongs and every girl matters. "We are a farm-to-table enterprise and pride ourselves in community involvement with our growers, supply chain providers, distributors, customers, and employees," says St. Julian President, John Braganini. "We also have a strong female force here at the winery, so supporting programs that encourage girls to be confident leaders and team players as they grow into young adults is a logical partnership for us."

This partnership with Girl Scouts is just one of the many philanthropic endeavors that Braganini is involved in - others include the American Cancer Society, Big Brothers Big Sisters and local schools and universities like Northwood University, Bloomsburg University, and Grand Valley State University.

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MATTAWAN COMMUNITY CALENDAR

With COVID-19 safety precautions in place, some meetings may be held by remote, while others may be cancelled. To attend, call ahead for information.

May 10 Mattawan Village Council, 7 p.m. (Village Office Building)
Texas Township Board, 6 p.m. (Texas Twp. Hall)
Mattawan School Board, 7 p.m. (via Zoom)

May 11 Antwerp Twp. Board, 6:30 p.m. (Antwerp Twp. Hall)

May 12 Mattawan Lions, 7 p.m.

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The Mama Teapot Family would like to wish a blessed Mother's Day to all the wonderful mothers in your lives! We hope you all enjoy your celebrations! ~ April, Mike & Staff

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WEEKLY SPECIALS:

- Mon: Meatloaf; Lasagna
- Tues: 2 for Tuesday: 2 pancakes, 2 eggs, 2 bacon, 2 sausage links; Chicken & Dumplings
- Wed: Goulash; Country Fried Steak Dinner
- Thurs: Turkey Dinner; Pot Roast
- Fri: Ribeye & Shrimp Dinner; Seafood Platter

DAILY SPECIALS:

- Soups: Tomato Basil, Beef Noodle, Cream Potato, Chili, Vegetable Beef, Stuffed Green Pepper
- Breakfast Specials: Cornbeef hash skillet, Bacon & Veggie Quiche, Ribeye & Eggs, Fresh Blueberry Pancakes, Nutella Strawberry Waffles

Paw Paw domain names change

As of April 30, the Van Buren County government domain names, including its website and e-mail addresses, have changed from vbco.org to vanburencountymi.gov.

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