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Homes and Community Renewal

NEW YORK STATE HOMES AND COMMUNITY RENEWAL ANNOUNCES GRAND OPENING OF JONNY B'S CUSTOM BBQ IN LIMA

\$21,000 Award Helps Veteran-Owned Business Expand Operations; Part of \$200,000 Community Development Block Grant to Livingston County for Microenterprise "Dream-O-Vate" Competition to Assist Downtown Businesses

Investment Complements "Finger Lakes Forward" – The Region's Comprehensive Strategy to Revitalize Communities and Grow the Economy

New York State Homes and Community Renewal Commissioner RuthAnne Visnauskas today announced the grand opening of Jonny B's Custom BBQ in the village of Lima in Livingston County. The \$21,000 award to this veteran-owned business helped the owner expand from a popular food truck to a bricks-and-mortar restaurant at 1883 Rochester Street in downtown Lima. The award is part of HCR's \$200,000 New York State Community Development Block Grant to Livingston County to create a microenterprise competition for small businesses located near downtown districts.

"The \$200,000 Community Development Block Grant award to create a micro enterprise competition in Livingston County is part of Governor Cuomo's commitment to supporting local businesses that help create thriving downtowns and strengthen entire regions," **Commissioner Visnauskas said.** "We are proud to partner with the county's economic development team to help those with vision, drive, imagination and the entrepreneurial spirit realize their dreams and revitalize the community they love. In the wake of the pandemic, supporting small businesses, especially restaurants, has become an even greater priority. With this \$21,000 award to Jonny B's Custom BBQ, we are helping a veteran-owned business expand and succeed, bringing new visitors to Lima, and keeping the Finger Lakes economy moving forward."

Livingston County's "Dream-O-Vate" Business Competition utilized a \$200,000 Community Development Block Grant to support a microenterprise funding competition to attract new business and enhance and grow existing local businesses in the County's downtown districts. The goal of the program is to improve economic activity and increase local and visitor traffic. In total, nine local businesses were selected to receive funding.

Jonny B's Custom BBQ, owned by Jon Belec, received \$21,000 through the program to purchase restaurant equipment to establish a storefront kitchen that supports their food truck, catering, and counter service. This veteran-owned business features quality Southern cuisine with plans to expand into a sit-down restaurant and present live music when conditions permit.

Eight additional businesses in Livingston County received funding through the program:

- Sweet Arts Bakery, 95 Main Street, Geneseo, which has grown from "a coffee shop that sells baked good to a full-service bakery that sells coffee."
- Honeygirl Gourmet, 61 Main Street, Geneseo, features honeys, cheese, jams, syrups, spices, chocolate and gift basket items.
- Dublin Corners Farm Brewery Tap Room, 116 Main Street, Geneseo, Livingston County's first brewery has more than tripled in size since it opened in 2016.
- The Boriken Restaurant, 40 Main Street, Mount Morris, features Caribbean fare for lunch and dinner in a charming setting.
- Wendy's Pantry & Country Mouse Tea House, 82-84 Main Street, Mount Morris, features old-fashioned candy treats, scones, tea service and high-end food products emphasizing products made and grown in New York State.
- Sunrise Bouldering, 2 School Street, Geneseo, is an innovative rock-bouldering gym with plans to open a café.
- Trail Otter, 134 Main Street, Leicester, sells camping, hiking, and safety gear for outdoor enthusiasts, and also offers skill-building classes and outdoor adventure planning.
- The Livonia Inn, 17-19 Commercial Street, Livonia, offers contemporary dining in a historic setting and features Parker's Pub and Commercial Café coffee shop.

The New York State CDBG program provides funding to eligible cities, towns and villages to increase economic opportunity. The program supports activities or projects that: create job opportunities for low- and moderate-income people; prevent or eliminate blight; provide decent, affordable housing; or address an issue that poses a serious and imminent threat to the community's viability, health or welfare.

Senator Patrick M. Gallivan said, "I congratulate all of the businesses receiving funding through this unique program. Small businesses are the backbone of our economy and vital to the fabric of our communities, especially in the towns and villages throughout Livingston County. This creative use of Community Development Block Grants to support downtown business districts will increase economic opportunity and improve the quality of life for residents."

Assemblywoman Marjorie Byrnes said, “In this current economic climate, it is especially heartwarming to be in attendance at the grand opening of Jonny B’s. This is a wonderful addition to the Lima community.”

Chairman of the Livingston County Board of Supervisors David LeFeber said, “The State’s commitment to helping rural communities and small businesses is evident through initiatives like the Microenterprise Program. These nine awards throughout Livingston County’s Main Streets will provide opportunities for businesses to thrive and help transform our communities for the future. Congratulations to all the awardees.”

Lima Town Supervisor Michael J. Falk said, “It is a great day for Lima. Jonny B’s has rebuilt rundown historic commercial space into a deliciously fantastic business! The entire Town looks forward to having them knock it out of the park with their grand opening. Thank you to everyone at NYS HCR & Livingston County Economic Development who helped make this possible.”

Bill Bacon, Livingston County’s Director of Economic Development, said, “Many small business owners struggle through their first few years between overhead expenses and just the day-to-day details of managing a new business. The CDBG microenterprise program has been so important for our small businesses and our rural communities. It allows us to give these businesses the jump start they need, not only through financing, but through customized technical assistance. Our Historic Downtowns are such a treasure and I applaud the efforts of the building owners to restore this structure, while also adding a viable business that provides a great experience for our residents and visitors. This CDBG project complements the long-term partnership between Livingston County and New York State Homes and Community Renewal, which has resulted in over \$5,000,000 in funding for improvements and revitalization efforts across Livingston County’s downtown districts.”

Jonny B’s Custom BBQ Owner Jon Belec said, “Starting a business is challenging and the Dream-O-Vate Competition was a game changer when it came to getting our kitchen up and running to support our food truck, catering business and counter service. The technical assistance we received through the program and the network of providers we’ve built will be invaluable as we continue to grow into a sit-down dining establishment and ultimately a music hall. We want to be a destination, bringing more foot traffic into this community. We grew up here, this is a great community and I’m proud to have a hand in Lima’s revitalization!”

The downtown districts of Livingston County are the communities’ “Front Porches.” Livingston’s downtowns are filled with historic architecture and commercial buildings that are clustered together to create walkable, pedestrian-friendly districts. Details can be found at <https://www.growlivco.com/dreamovate>

Accelerating Finger Lakes Forward

Today's announcement complements "Finger Lakes Forward," the region's comprehensive blueprint to generate robust economic growth and community development. The State has already invested more than \$8 billion in the region since 2012 to lay the groundwork for the plan – investing in key industries including photonics, agriculture and food production, and advanced manufacturing. Now, the region is accelerating Finger Lakes Forward with a \$500 million State investment through the Upstate Revitalization Initiative, announced by Governor Cuomo in December 2015. The State's \$500 million investment will incentivize private business to invest well over \$2.5 billion – and the region's plan, as submitted, projects up to 8,200 new jobs. More information is available [here](#).

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