



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Perry Economic Recovery Task Force

Lynsi Pasutti | Executive Director, Perry Chamber of Commerce

(515) 465-4601 | lynsi.pasutti@perryia.org

Mark Powell | Director, Perry Chamber of Commerce Foundation

(515) 465-4641 | mpowell@fdplawfirm.com

Matt McDevitt | Community Pillar Chair, Perry Economic Development

(515) 465-3521 | mmcdevitt@raccoonvalleybank.com

Sven Peterson | City Administrator, City of Perry

(515) 465-2481 | sven.peterson@perryia.org

Perry Economic Recovery Task Force Launches Grant Program & Fundraising Campaign Business Modernization & Protection Grant Now Open; Deadline October 31st

Perry, September 22, 2020 – As a continuation of local business relief efforts, Perry’s Economic Recovery Task Force has secured initial funding to facilitate a grant program. The Business Modernization & Protection Grant provides an opportunity for businesses to invest in improvements they otherwise would not be able to, having been adversely affected by the economic disruption caused by the COVID-19 global pandemic. The Task Force is a collaborative effort between the City of Perry, Perry Economic Development, and the Perry Chamber of Commerce, each contributing to the grant fund and seeking additional funding sources.

“State and Federal relief programs have primarily focused on profit loss during closure, but little to no assistance has been available for adapting to new norms,” explains Lynsi Pasutti, Executive Director of the Perry Chamber of Commerce. “This is an opportunity to help businesses recover by becoming better-positioned for the future.”

The purpose of the Business Modernization & Protection Grant is to assist Perry-based for-profit businesses in becoming more resilient to unexpected economic disruptions, exemplified by the current COVID-19 global pandemic. Proposed projects may include updating systems or modernizing operations, such as website upgrades and e-commerce capabilities, automated inventory management and advanced communications systems, or implementing protective measures to safeguard against the spread of the virus.

“Mandated closures, adjustments to operations, and weakened consumer confidence have impacted local businesses and therefore our local economy,” states Matt McDevitt, Board Member of Perry Economic Development. “Businesses best able to weather the storm were those with technology already in place that allowed them to pivot their operations and offerings to better suit the needs and preferences of their customers. It is increasingly apparent that businesses must evolve and modernize in order to survive, yet need assistance to do so.”

Grants applications will be accepted until Friday, October 31, 2020 at 5:00 P.M. to the Perry Chamber of Commerce and will be reviewed by the Perry Economic Recovery Task Force. Grant requests should be \$1,500 - \$7,500 with at least 20% matching funds. Eligible expenses may include projects or systems already implemented before the application deadline or grant award, so long as incurred after March 1, 2020. Applicants will be notified of awarded grants on Friday, January 4, 2021. Total funding currently available for the grant program is \$36,000. Applications are expected to exceed available funding, but fundraising efforts will continue through the end of the year, allowing for additional granting capacity as available.

“Ultimately, the scope and capacity of the program will be determined by the success of our fundraising efforts,” explains Mark Powell, Board Member of the Perry Chamber of Commerce and Perry Chamber Foundation. “Minimally, the grant program will provide assistance to a handful of businesses, but our goal is to raise enough funding to support 15 Perry businesses in modernizing and sustaining their operations.”

In addition to seeking funding from several community foundations, the Task Force is launching a second Perry Pride Business Booster campaign to bolster community support of the grant fund. An earlier campaign to ‘boost business’ in the form of incentivized gift card purchases proved to be successful in providing cashflow to businesses while many were closed in the spring, generating more than \$200,000 circulating in the local community. To reach its total goal of \$100,000 for the grant program, the Task Force is also launching a fundraising campaign through A Community Thrives, a program of the USA TODAY NETWORK utilizing the MightyCause crowdfunding platform. Online donations before October 16 will allow for the Perry Chamber Foundation to compete for additional merit-based grant funding from the Gannett Foundation.

“We were able to harness the community’s desire to show their support for businesses this summer by providing a tangible platform to do so with the gift card program,” says City Administrator Sven Peterson. “We are hopeful we can do it again this fall, but this time with donations for the grant program, because our local businesses contribute to the vitality of our community and even losing just one due to the pandemic will have an impact on our local economy.”

Donations for the grant program – big and small – may be directed to the Perry Chamber Foundation, online at <https://acomunitythrives.mightycause.com/donate/Perry-Chamber-Of-Commerce-Foundation> through October 16, or by mail through the end of the year with Memo: Grant Donation to PO Box 472, Perry, IA 50220.

Additional information and application form for the Business Modernization & Protection Grant is available online <https://www.perryia.org/business-modernization-grant.html>. Questions and requests for emailed information can be directed to the Perry Chamber of Commerce at (515)465-4601 or Lynsi.Pasutti@PerryIA.org.

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About the Perry Chamber of Commerce & Foundation

The Perry Chamber of Commerce is a 501(c)6 non-profit organization that serves as the central business association in Perry, Iowa, with the mission to be an advocate to its membership by promoting and encouraging growth in the community, business, and tourism.

The Perry Chamber of Commerce Foundation, Inc. is a 501(c)3 charitable non-profit organization formed to support the Perry Chamber of Commerce in create a thriving, vibrant, and attractive community with diverse businesses and a self-sustaining economy.