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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Gloucester County Successfully Assists Local Business Community During Pandemic

Gloucester's Back to Business Grant Program processed 125 applications, providing over \$858,717 of Federal CARES Act monies to aid local business owners during this unprecedented time. The Federal Grant Program was supported and approved by the Gloucester County Board of Supervisors as a way for the County to assist its local business owners in a tangible way.

"We are so pleased that these dollars, allocated by the Gloucester Board of Supervisors, were able to assist so many of our businesses," said Sherry Spring, Gloucester's Economic Development Director. The Economic Development Department, alongside the Gloucester County Economic Development Authority and the Middle Peninsula Planning District Commission, worked to administer the grant program. "Our businesses have suffered too much, and this was one step we could take to help them out in a meaningful way."

The grant program was specifically designed to facilitate reimbursement costs incurred by local businesses as they have made investments to change business practices in response to the pandemic. The Gloucester County Board of Supervisors took an extra step to provide special funding for a Mortgage and Rent Assistance Program to support Gloucester businesses that may be facing foreclosure or eviction due to the financial impacts of COVID-19.

April Martinez, Chief Executive Officer of the Gloucester-Mathews Humane Society, said, small businesses and nonprofits such as GMHS have faced a myriad of challenges throughout COVID-19, and the help provided by the local government has been one of the organization's shining lights during a dark time. "We are all heartened by the various forms of support offered to us by Gloucester County, including our EDA," Martinez said.

Local restaurant owner Gary Ward said the grant program played a large role in the ability of his businesses to succeed during the pandemic. He said his restaurant businesses had to pivot to make takeout food or dining in as comfortable, safe and easy as possible for his customers. "The B2B Program gave us the support and confidence to quickly make decisions on purchasing equipment that helped

with speeding up the takeout process, protecting the staff and giving the customer a touchless experience if desired,” Ward added.

With the changes Ward has made in his operations thanks in part to the grant program, he has been able to generate the same revenues during the pandemic as in past years. “We may have seen a very different story if we had not had so much incredible support from our community, county administration, the MPPDC and specifically Sherry Spring with Economic Development,” Ward said. “They fought hard to get local businesses the resources needed to help win this battle.”

“We truly appreciate the Gloucester County Board of Supervisors and the Economic Development Authority for implementing the Back to Business Recovery Grant Program,” said John Phillips, President of Phillips Energy, Inc. at Hayes. “This pandemic has created many operating and financial obstacles for businesses to overcome in short periods of time.”

With the assistance of the program, Phillips Energy, Inc. was able to modify its offices and provide Personal Protective Equipment to its employees. “These were necessary steps for us to provide the safest possible working environment for our employees and interactive environment for our customers,” Phillips added. “We are fortunate to have our business located in a community that takes the necessary steps to help its businesses survive during such unprecedented times and strives to keep Gloucester - The Land of the Life Worth Living.”

The deadline for applications for Gloucester’s Back to Business Grant Program was Nov. 15 and the deadline for processing and distribution of funds is Dec. 30.

For more information about Gloucester’s Economic Development Department and the resources available to local businesses, visit <https://www.gloucesterva.info/1190/Economic-Development>.

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