

# PRESS RELEASE



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### Wilkes EDC awards 2020 Entrepreneurial Grants

**North Wilkesboro, N.C.** — Six local small businesses were announced as receiving Entrepreneurial Grants from the Wilkes Economic Development Corporation at the EDC’s board meeting on Friday, June 12, 2020. The seventh annual Entrepreneurial Grant Competition received applications from 14 businesses in Wilkes County in several categories including food service, recreation, construction and retail business, to name a few.

Business plans were judged with the emphasis being on sustainability and the potential funding impact to the business. Grant amounts totaling \$13,500 were distributed this year between six companies in two categories, new and existing businesses.

Stardust Cellars, located at 4780 Statesville Rd, North Wilkesboro, received \$2,500 for bottles and labels for a new line of mead production. Owners Kaitie and Nicolas von Cosmos opened Stardust Cellars in 2018 and specialize in naturally and sustainably produced wines and meads using local ingredients. Their mead is made by fermenting raw local honey in water then allowing it to age. To learn more, visit <https://stardust-cellars.business.site/>. The von Cosmos also operate a taproom located at 1202 Curtis Bridge Road in Wilkesboro.

The Wilkes EDC awarded The Vintage Work Shoppe \$1,000 to purchase equipment to help with social media marketing. Hope Jordan opened the Vintage Work Shoppe in 2016 and specializes in re-purposing furniture with Shabby Chic design elements. Owner/Interior Decorator/Painter, Hope Jordan, specializes in hand painted furniture using mineral and milk paints. Jordan offers paint supplies, “How To” tutorials and Facebook Live sessions for paid groups in addition to workshops and private lessons at her business. The Vintage Work Shoppe is located inside of Key City Antiques in North Wilkesboro. Learn more at <http://www.hopejordanatthevintageworkshoppe.com/>.

Hanna Vista Farms, which started in 2006 and is owned by Jane Leichter, received \$4,000 to purchase a freeze dryer to use in preserving its crop of hops. Hanna Vista Farms in Wilkes has cashmere goats and a llama, which provide fibers for weaving, a hops yard, which will offer its first crop of wet hops later this year, and organically grown strawberries, heirloom tomatoes and a special variety of blackberries. For more information, email [jleichter4@gmail.com](mailto:jleichter4@gmail.com).

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Brandon York and his wife Jennifer own Northwest N.C. Batting Facility located at 503 C St, North Wilkesboro. The facility, which opened in March 2020, is a self-service indoor batting and pitching facility for baseball and softball players of all ages. It can be used for private lessons and parties. York plans to utilize the \$2,000 grant funding to install cooling units and other equipment. To learn more about Northwest N.C. Batting Facility, visit <https://www.nwncbattingfacility.com/>.

Brushy Mountain Granola Company, located in Wilkes, says its mission is as simple as its ingredients: “create great tasting snacks that allow us to connect with, energize, and support our fellow life adventurers.” Owner Angela Reynolds, with her family, launched Brushy Mountain Granola Company in March 2020 and plans to use her \$2,000 grant award for branded offerings, events, and marketing. Brushy Mountain Granola Company offers nine varieties made with fresh, local ingredients. To learn more or to shop, visit <https://www.brushymountaingranola.com/>.

Cook’s Outfitters is a new business owned by Mark Cook. He plans to use the grant funding of \$2,000 to open a rental facility at 100 West Main Street in downtown Wilkesboro. This business will rent and repair bicycles, have a small retail space, and soon facilitate kayaking trips on rivers and the lake. Cook’s Outfitters plans to be open on Fridays, Saturdays and Sundays starting in July with the plans to add days in the near future. For more information, contact Mark Cook at [mark@cookssports.com](mailto:mark@cookssports.com).

Wilkes EDC President LeeAnn Nixon said, “We believe in entrepreneurship and the benefits it adds to a community. For that reason, we are happy to have the opportunity to invest capital into local small business development and expansion. These business owners are using real innovation and creativity to make Wilkes a better place to live for us all. And, the real reward is encouraging them and watching their businesses flourish,” said LeeAnn Nixon, president of the Wilkes EDC. “Throughout the program, applicants can meet with Laurie Brintle-Jarvis of the Small Business Center for business plan assistance, which increases the potential for a successful business venture. Additionally, we suggest mentors, resources and referrals that can complement winning the entrepreneurial grant.”

Nixon also stated, “We want to thank our judges for their time and dedication to this annual competition.”

This year’s judges were Bob Urness, Town of Wilkesboro; Amy Blair, Blair Properties; Gia Galifianakis, Gria Consulting; Gary Daemer, InfusionPoints; and Crystal Keener, Town of North Wilkesboro.

## **ABOUT**

The **Wilkes Economic Development Corporation**, a 501 c3 public-private partnership, aims to facilitate the creation of new jobs and capital investment in Wilkes County through the retention and expansion of existing businesses and the recruitment of new businesses. The EDC is located at 213 Ninth Street in historic downtown North Wilkesboro, North Carolina. For more information about Wilkes EDC visit [www.WilkesEDC.com](http://www.WilkesEDC.com) or contact LeeAnn Nixon at 336-838-1501 or [lnixon@wilkesedc.com](mailto:lnixon@wilkesedc.com).

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