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ENTREPRENEURIAL DAY HOSTED BY YOUR CHAMBER OF COMMERCE AND PRESENTED BY 4FRONT CREDIT UNION

Virtual Event Will Develop Skills and Plan Help to Plan for Success

[MANISTEE, MI March 5, 2021] Manistee, MI - Starting a new business, as well as managing a successful one, draws upon a wide range of skills and also requires great ideas, creativity, and analytical tools. The Manistee Area Chamber of Commerce (Chamber) has created an Entrepreneurial Day that will help entrepreneurs and current business owners think through questions about potential customers and the community marketplace, to build entrepreneurial skills, and to provide necessary tools to take a great idea and turn it into a successful business.

The event will be held virtually starting on Thursday evening, March 25, and conclude with a full day on Friday, March 26. All programming is free, but registration is required through the Chamber of Commerce at ManisteeChamber.com.

“Entrepreneurial Day programming will engage, educate, and build skills for our participants,” said Marc Miller, Director of Economic Development for the Chamber. “Our ultimate goal is to build a culture of community entrepreneurship, and with that goal also create pathways for success and economic impact.”

The Chamber has been able to draw upon some exceptional partnerships and assemble an outstanding team of local and outside-the-area experts to provide useful presentations and workshops.

“Many people have come together to bring their skills, expertise, and time to help new and aspiring entrepreneurs, and we thank all of you” stated Stacie Bytwork, President and CEO of the Chamber. “A special thank you to our event sponsor, 4Front Credit Union, and to Annie Olds of SBDC, Meaghan Kennedy of Orange Sparkle Ball, and Isabelle Swiderski of Seven25 and Protagoniste.”

Meaghan Kennedy, Manistee native and founder of Orange Sparkle Ball in Atlanta, Georgia, will

kick off the event with a keynote presentation on design thinking skills that can be used to find creative solutions to define a business idea. Design thinking can also be used to tackle community challenges and unlock creativity for other applications.

“We’re really looking forward to walking participants through understanding a problem to be solved and designing possible solutions,” stated Meaghan Kennedy, founder of Orange Sparkle Ball. “We’ve run these sessions with everyone from high school students to aspiring entrepreneurs to business leaders, and I am delighted to be able to work in Manistee, as my family has been here since the 1860s!”

On Friday morning, Isabelle Swiderski, founder of Seven25 and Protagoniste, will build upon the design thinking material to take you from your business idea to the marketplace. Business design, understanding your customers and building engagement will be outcomes for this three hour workshop.

“All communities have wealth and both design thinking and entrepreneurship help make tangible the myriad ideas folks come up with to solve problems and improve lives,” says Isabelle Swiderski, founder of Seven25 and Protagoniste. “We’re at a particular moment in time where having the opportunity to build nimble, resilient local businesses that sustain our families and our towns is not just desirable, it’s essential. I feel fortunate to contribute to this initiative to tap into Manistee’s entrepreneurial energy.”

On Friday afternoon, the Northwest Michigan Small Business Development Center (SBDC) will cover four fast-paced topics in 30 minute sessions. Experts from around the State of Michigan, including our own local SBDC consultant, Joni Krolczyk, will hit important topics that will also be useful for aspiring and existing small business owners. The afternoon sessions will be:

- Retail Stores Pivoting to Online Sales by Tim Rehard, SBDC, Grand Valley State University
- Focus Four™ - The Small Business Management System by Michael Gay, SBDC, Grand Valley State University
- Business Planning with a Purpose by Gretchen Swanson, SBDC, Networks Northwest
- Navigating the New Venture Lending Landscape by Joni Krolczyk, SBDC, Networks Northwest

“2020 was an incredibly difficult year and we’re excited that small businesses owners, both new and existing, are taking the time to reassess their futures, both personally and business-wise. We’re honored for the opportunity to join this group of speakers and experts and especially to share insights and ideas about topics that we love to talk about with small business owners,” said Annie Olds, MI-SBDC Regional Director at Networks Northwest.

4Front Credit Union is presenting this virtual event to give you skills and answers to your business questions. The Manistee Area Chamber of Commerce, SBDC, Orange Sparkle Ball, the Downtown Development Authority, and Seven25 are partnering with 4Front Credit Union on this exceptional program of experts. Additional funding for economic development work is provided by the Manistee Downtown Development Authority (DDA), and with volunteer

assistance from the DDA Business Development Committee.

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About The Manistee Area Chamber of Commerce

The Manistee Area Chamber of Commerce is a non-profit 501 C (6) organization. Our mission is to build a dynamic and sustainable organization to serve the Business, Workforce and Economic Development needs of all in Manistee County.