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E-commerce Program Expands Markets for Local Businesses During COVID

First round of new and revamped websites are up and running

Potsdam, N.Y. — Recognizing the need among local businesses to adapt their marketing strategies during the COVID-19 crisis, the Adirondack North Country Association (ANCA), Clarkson University's Shipley Center for Innovation, and the St. Lawrence County Chamber of Commerce, in partnership with the Center for Businesses in Transition, have unveiled a set of new and revamped websites that will help businesses withstand the pandemic and build resilience for the future.

Under the new program, Clarkson University students provided full website builds for North Country businesses that are new to e-commerce, as well as website and marketing consulting for entrepreneurs who want to enhance their existing platforms. The first round of website improvements was funded by a generous ANCA member, a Special and Urgent Needs grant from Adirondack Foundation, and the Shipley Center for Innovation.

"This initiative is not only helping local businesses mitigate sales disruptions by offering online purchasing options. It is also building resilience into their long-term business strategies," said ANCA Business Transitions Coordinator Danielle Delaini. "We are grateful to the donors and organizations that are supporting the North Country business community through this effort."

Participating businesses as well as student web developers have benefited from the program.

"Any opportunity that students and community members can work together is a benefit," said Ashley Sweeney, Associate Director for Clarkson University's Shipley Center for Innovation. "The collaboration between the stakeholders in this group has helped many more businesses than we could have alone. Letting students use the skills they have learned in the classroom to help companies establish new ways of working during the COVID crisis has been very beneficial all around."

"This project is really a win-win-win," said Eric York, Professor of Communication, Media and Design at Clarkson University. "It's a win for local businesses who get the technical assistance they need, it's a win for the non-profit organizations who can further their mission, and it's a win for students who get authentic learning experiences and a real sense of accomplishment."

Of the nine full website builds, six launched this June. The development team also provided website and marketing consultations to 18 small businesses and supplemental financial support for e-commerce projects.

The program has added value to local businesses in transition, like [Circle Court Motel](#) in Ticonderoga. Owners Jerry and Barb Greer are actively investing time and effort in developing the value of their business through this initiative, even as they prepare for retirement and seek new owners.

“We are extremely excited about our new website,” said Barb Greer, who worked with Nicole Ouellette of Breaking Even Communications to improve the motel’s online presence. “The appearance and ease of use will definitely enhance our business in these trying times. We are most appreciative to Nicole, ANCA and Clarkson for providing this service.”

The Greers said the new website ([circle court motel.com](#)) will not only support them through the COVID-19 crisis but will also increase the value of their business and make their transition to new owners easier.

Five other websites also launched in June: McLane Power Equipment in Plattsburgh ([mclanepower.com](#)), Bookburgh Books in Plattsburgh ([bookburghbooks.com](#)), Chicken Fried Quilter in Burke ([chickenfriedquilter.com](#)), Underwood Herbs in Plattsburgh ([underwoodherbs.com](#)), and Snipe Clan Botanicals in Hogansburg ([snipeclanbotanicals.com](#)).

ANCA and the Shipley Center hope to build on the program’s success and provide more website builds for local businesses who express an urgent need. The partners are currently seeking funding to support a second round of projects.

North Country business owners interested in receiving e-commerce support are invited to fill out an inquiry form at [www.adirondack.org/E-commerceSupport](#).

[ANCA](#) is an independent, nonprofit corporation with a transformational approach to building prosperity across northern New York. ANCA’s community-informed, results-driven strategies for local food producers, small business owners, would-be entrepreneurs and municipal innovators offer targeted interventions that are designed to keep wealth and value in local communities.

[The Shipley Center of Innovation](#) at Clarkson University was established to promote student learning and development in leadership, teamwork and entrepreneurship. Since its inception, it has served as a valuable community resource, fostering relationships between local businesses and nonprofits and assisting in the development of new ideas.

The [St. Lawrence County Chamber of Commerce, Inc.](#) plays a pivotal role in strengthening and maintaining the economic health of St. Lawrence County. The mission of the St. Lawrence County Chamber of Commerce is to cultivate, develop and support Chamber members and other businesses by

creating a vibrant business climate that encourages growth and enhances the unique quality of life in St. Lawrence County.

[The Center for Businesses in Transition](#), a program of ANCA, is a collaboration of regional organizations and leaders whose goal is to support existing business owners and aspiring entrepreneurs in developing successful business transition strategies. This program is supported by a grant from the Northern Border Regional Commission.

Attached: one (1) PDF document and one (1) photo

Photo courtesy of Clarkson University: Clarkson University students like Jada Flanagan helped build and enhance local businesses' websites as part of the e-commerce support program.

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