

Town of Hinesburg to Receive \$10,000 Business Revitalization Grant

BY TYLER LEDERER, THE COMMUNITY NEWS SERVICE

The town of Hinesburg is to receive a \$10,000 grant to promote spending at town businesses with the “Hinesburg Buck,” a currency which can be used to make purchases in participating downtown locations.

The “Restart Vermont Regional Marketing and Stimulus Grant Program,” which is designed to revitalize local businesses impacted by COVID-19 restrictions, was provided by the Vermont Agency of Commerce and Community Development.

The program is similar to other local currency initiatives around the country such as Vermont’s own “Bristol Bucks.”

“Obviously, [we’re] very pleased,” said Town Administrator Renae Marshall on the prospect of receiving the grant. “Anything that we can do to support our local businesses through this time is absolutely a plus.”

Stuart Deliduka, a member of the Hinesburg Business & Professional Association, is the co-owner of a Hinesburg business, Element Nail Salon, alongside his wife. His business has been in need of a boost since the pandemic began, he said.

“It’s turned our service industry, which was pretty much appointment based... into a little bit of a Rubik’s Cube,” he said. “We lost our two busiest months of the year... it’ll impact our revenue numbers from today compared to last year on the same day.”

“This is not going to be the end-all be-all [sic],” he said. “But I think every little bit helps.”

Deliduka, as a member of the HBPA, wrote a letter of support for the town grant application.

The project is a collaboration between the town of Hinesburg, the HBPA, the Hinesburg

Record and the University of Vermont. The HBPA will work with local businesses to explain and recruit for the program.

The Record will be in charge of design and distribution of the Bucks. UVM students enrolled in the Community News Service internship,

which distributes student-produced stories to Chittenden County papers,

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will create written and visual profiles of participating businesses. These profiles will then be distributed by the Record.

Richard Watts, a Hinesburg resident and Coordinator of the Community News Service, also wrote a letter of support for the town grant application.

The town is in the middle of planning the implementation of the grant program and will hopefully put it into action in early to mid-October, said Marshall.

While Deliduka stressed that more work needs to be done — the details on when and how residents can receive Bucks and which of Hinesburg's 40 businesses will accept them, for example, are currently unknown — the ACCD requires funds to be used up by November 15th so it is unlikely this program will last long.

Nonetheless, Marshall believes it will have a long-term impact.

“We’re all realizing how interconnected we are and if our businesses are struggling, that’s ultimately going to impact all of us,” Marshall said.

“Hopefully this program will really highlight the local businesses and the value that we have here.”

The Community News Service is a collaboration with the University of Vermont's Reporting & Documentary Storytelling program.