



MISSOULA DOWNTOWN ASSOCIATION
BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT
MISSOULA DOWNTOWN FOUNDATION

May 14, 2020
Missoula Media

NEIGHBORS HELPING NEIGHBORS: HOW THE DOWNTOWN BUSINESS SUPPORT FUND CONNECTS OUR COMMUNITY

When the effects of COVID-19 started to engulf the community, the Missoula Downtown Foundation (MDF) Board of Directors pivoted its fundraising initiatives to focus on the Downtown economy and vibrancy and to help reduce the economic impact felt by numerous local businesses. The Downtown Foundation established the Downtown Missoula Business Support Fund to assist businesses and organizations negatively impacted by the pandemic. Since the creation of the fund three weeks ago, the MDF has received more than \$85,000 in contributions and 49 applications for financial support. The MDF has already disbursed checks to 14 businesses, and an additional 29 businesses will receive a check this week.

The first donation and commitment to this endeavor came from the Foundation itself in the form of a \$25,000 contribution. Soon, others followed suit. Clearwater Credit Union, First Interstate Bank, First Security Bank, Stockman Bank, Missoula Radio Broadcasters Association, TrailWest Bank, Title Services, ATG Cognizant, the Montana Scotch Whisky Society, the *#MontanaStrong* Campaign, the Downtown BID and many other members of the community have contributed to the fund.

“As we see the unprecedented impact in our communities due to the COVID-19 crisis, we recognize how critical it is for us to do what we can to help those in need,” said Scott Burke, President and CEO of First Security Bank of Missoula. “Supporting our local community is one of the pillars of our organization, and we are so proud of the incredible work the Missoula Downtown Foundation is doing right now, when it is needed the most. We are honored to contribute to the Downtown Missoula Business Support Fund and see these funds go out to those businesses and individuals that have been hit the hardest,”

Missoulians have a long history of helping each other during difficult times. As the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic spread in our community, downtown neighbors have identified a number of ways to lend a hand. The Business Support Fund is one of those ways.

One of the businesses that received financial assistance from the Foundation’s Business Support Fund is The Artists’ Shop at 127 North Higgins.

“These are trying times in so many ways, but the kindness and support we all show each other makes them good times too,” said Sue Spanke, 30-year member of cooperative. “The Artists' Shop received one of the grants, which will help us pay some bills and gear up for our reopening on May 20. It is a good feeling to know Missoula cares. We are so grateful!”

The COVID-19 pandemic has stressed communities and businesses across the country in unprecedented ways. It is during a crisis when communities have to come together and support each other. As the fundraising arm of the Downtown Missoula Partnership, the MDF's mission is to support and promote the spirit and heritage of Missoula through cultural, economic and historical enhancements. The Business Support Fund directly aligns with the Foundation's mission and the Partnership's vision to lead and nurture a vibrant Downtown Missoula.

Individuals and businesses interested in contributing to the Downtown Missoula Business Support Fund can send a check, payable to the Missoula Downtown Foundation, to 218 East Main Street, Missoula, MT 59802. Donors can also contribute through the Foundation's GoFundMe Campaign <https://www.gofundme.com/f/downtown-missoula-business-support-fund>. The MDF is a qualified charitable organization, and all donations are deductible to the full extent allowed by law.

The MDF is receiving applications from affected businesses every day. Applicants must have a City of Missoula Business License or an IRS Determination Letter, operate in the Downtown Business Improvement District, and/or service the community in Downtown Missoula. Downtown businesses and organizations in need of support shall complete a simple online application located at <https://www.missouladowntown.com/missoula-downtown-foundation/downtown-missoula-business-support-fund/>

Applications are being reviewed by the MDF staff and board members and, if approved, disbursement of funds shall be in the form of one-time checks distributed by the Downtown Missoula Partnership.

For more information, visit www.missouladowntown.com or contact the Downtown Missoula Partnership office via phone (406-543-4238) or email (info@missouladowntown.com).

Downtown Missoula: Connecting Our Community!