

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**West Virginia Hive Network Honors Regional Small Businesses
And Supporters at Beckley Open House**

Beckley, W.Va. (Dec. 16, 2021) – The West Virginia Hive Network recognized area businesses and supporters for their high-level achievements and notable contributions at its annual open house.

“The entrepreneurial spirit was alive and well in 2021, regardless of the pandemic,” said Judy Moore, Executive Director of the West Virginia Hive. “Our work at the Hive puts us in communication and close working relationships with some of the most creative, hard-working, and tenacious people and their organizations – businesses, government entities, and social enterprises. Today we honor those who rose above the call of duty and captured our attention and appreciation.”

The following awards were presented:

2021 Small Business of the Year: RMB Racing, Inc. in Midway – Brent Moye of RMB Racing, Inc. faced many challenges but never lost sight of his dream, becoming a fabricator in the aerospace industry. He is now working with Lockheed Martin to become a developmental supplier and has created five jobs in the process.

2021 Start Up of the Year: Mountain Steer Meat Company in White Sulphur Springs -- Mountain Steer has consistently been optimistic in seeking new opportunities to grow their business and provide quality product to their community and those that surround them. From starting the business, to becoming a Hive client, to obtaining a Country Roads Angel Network

investment, Frank Ford and James Tuckwiller have continued to exemplify the possibilities of entrepreneurship in southern West Virginia.

2021 Start Up of the Year: Cox Telecom in Oak Hill – Dan Cox saw a need for upgraded telecommunication services in southern WV and created a solution for the problem, Cox Telecom. Fulfilling his vision, Cox Telecom is creating jobs. His successful completion of the Co.Starters Core program was a solid start for his vision and business plan.

2021 Entrepreneur of the Year: Sarah Gleason of Lucky Rivers Café and Catering in Hinton – Through grit and willpower, Sarah Gleason is bringing wholesome, unique, and locally conscious cuisine to her many enthusiastic customers. During the pandemic, Gleason opened Lucky Rivers Café and Catering. A recent diner left this review “An absolutely wonderful treasure hidden in downtown Hinton. The original gourmet food is perfection.”

2021 Social Enterprise of the Year: Pinheads Fun Center, Inc. in Oak Hill -- Pinheads is more than just a fun center; it has become an important part of the community. During the pandemic, owner Alison Ibarra fed those at the free testing stations and started a local initiative to provide Wi-Fi to displaced students forced to do remote learning. Ibarra is also passionate about employing individuals in addiction recovery. As a recent graduate of the Communities of Healing Program, she is even more equipped to be an employer of those in their recovery journey.

2021 Partner of the Year: Region 4 Planning & Development Council for its role in Communities of Healing – The Region 4 team traditionally supports a 5-county region by providing solutions and public funding resources for growth-related challenges faced by communities in Southern WV. In 2020 they took on an untraditional challenge of applying for, and securing, the Appalachian Regional Commission *Creating Communities of Healing* POWER program to collaborate with Fruits of Labor, the WV Hive, and several other partners to establish a recovery to work program. This program is a growing success, with much credit due to Region 4 PDC’s efforts.

2021 Partner of the Year: Fruits of Labor, Inc. in Rainelle – Tammy Jordan, president of Fruits of Labor, has been a partner and supporter of the WV Hive for several years. Since 2020 the Hive has been privileged to work closely with Jordan and Fruits of Labor as a partner in the Communities of Healing program. Fruits of Labor not only provides the proven model that the Communities of Healing program is based on, but serves multiple communities with exceptional food, a nationally recognized culinary program, and a strong belief that people can recover from addiction.

Jina Belcher, Executive Director of the New River Gorge Regional Development Authority, saluted the WV Hive and its award recipients. “I’m incredibly fortunate the WV Hive is a

program of the NRGRDA. Reflecting on the last year of successes the Hive is celebrating today truly speaks to the entrepreneurial grit that Judy and the Hive team fully embody in their everyday work. It's difficult to articulate how proud I am of Judy and her team for overcoming the challenges of the last year and consistently leveling up their impact on the small businesses and entrepreneurs they serve across their 12-county footprint. The stories of ideation, passion, persistence, and innovation shared today inspire all of us to do more to create new business models, new jobs, evolving products and services, and enhance our communities. I genuinely can't wait to see what 2022 has in store for this team."

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The WV Hive is the entrepreneurship program of the New River Gorge Regional Development Authority and the administrator of the Country Roads Angel Network. Its 12-county service area includes Raleigh, Fayette, Summers, Nicholas, Braxton, Webster, Greenbrier, Pocahontas, Monroe, Mercer, McDowell, and Wyoming counties. More information about the WV Hive can be found at <https://wvhive.com/>.