



BENICIA INDUSTRIAL PARK ASSOCIATION
A COMMITTEE OF THE BENICIA CHAMBER OF COMMERCE
601 First Street, Suite 100, Benicia, CA 94510
707-745-2120
www.beniciachamber.com / bipa@beniciachamber.com

PRESS RELEASE

06/18/2020

PONDER ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES AND VALERO BENICIA REFINERY ESTABLISH 'BUSINESS HELPING BUSINESS' MINI-GRANT PROGRAM

Jimmy Ponder, long-time Benicia resident and owner of Ponder Environmental Services in Benicia is worried about how the COVID-19 crisis is impacting other small business in town and wanted to do something to help them out. He appreciates the fact that the City of Benicia is working on a grant program for local businesses, but is concerned that funds from that program will not likely be available until August, at the earliest; possibly too late for some businesses that are barely surviving today. So, Jimmy pulled together a small group of friends and colleagues to discuss strategies that would provide small businesses in town with financial assistance in a very timely manner. The end result was the creation of a privately funded grant program for small businesses in Benicia called 'Business Helping Business'. The program is sponsored by the Benicia Chamber of Commerce and the Benicia Industrial Park Association. In order to jump-start this effort, Jimmy and his wife Deanne Sandoval-Ponder (Sandoval's restaurant) generously deposited \$100,000 into the grant fund, and Valero Benicia Refinery matched it with an additional \$100,000. Other companies in town are now stepping forward to contribute additional funds to the program.

Within a couple of days, the program committee designed and printed grant applications and flyers, for an official launch on 6/17/20. Committee members are in the process of distributing grant applications to small businesses in Benicia through on-site visits, emails, and social media. Completed grant applications are due on June 25th, and the goal for the program committee is to select grant recipients and present grant checks by the end of June.

The Business Helping Business Grant Program committee includes Jimmy Ponder, Paul Adler (Valero), Rod Sherry (Benicia Industrial Park Association), Chris Ferrucci (Benicia Chamber of Commerce), Mark Hughes (Former Benicia City Councilman), and Sam Hoang (Ponder Environmental Services).

Questions regarding the Business Helping Business program should be directed to Rod Sherry or Chris Ferrucci at bipa@beniciachamber.com, or (707) 745-3219.