



BENICIA INDUSTRIAL PARK ASSOCIATION
A COMMITTEE OF THE BENICIA CHAMBER OF COMMERCE
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PRESS RELEASE

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'BUSINESS HELPING BUSINESS' GRANT CHECKS HAND-DELIVERED TO SMALL BUSINESSES IN BENICIA

Jimmy Ponder, owner of Ponder Environmental Services in Benicia, pulled a small committee of close friends and colleagues together on June 11th to discuss how they could collectively assist small businesses in Benicia that are struggling through the COVID-19 crisis. Twenty days later, grant checks were hand-delivered to businesses throughout town.

The program that the committee established was called 'Business Helping Business'. Jimmy and his wife Deanne Sandoval Ponder generously contributed the first \$100,000 to the fund. Josh Tulino, the new Vice President and General Manager of the Valero Benicia Refinery, committed an additional \$100,000 from Valero. Other businesses that stepped up and generously contributed to the fund included, Signal Solutions Corporation (Greg Richey), F3 & Associates (Sean Finn), Lavery Construction (John Lavery), Benicia Police Officer's Association, Delta Tech (Curt Johnson), Underground Construction (Chris Ronco), Schultz Industrial Services (Kevin Rippee), and Yandell Truckaway (John Yandell), bringing the total program fund to nearly \$250,000.

Grant Applications were made available to businesses on June 17, and the deadline for completed applications to be submitted was June 25. The program committee, made up of Ponder, Paul Adler from Valero, Rod Sherry from the Benicia Industrial Park Association, Chris Ferrucci from the Benicia Chamber of Commerce, Mark Hughes, former Benicia City Councilman, and Sam Hoang from Ponder Environmental, got together on June 26 to review the applications and work through the selection process. A total of 92 applications were received, with a total request of nearly \$1 million. The committee carefully evaluated all of the applications and recognizing that there wasn't enough money to help all applicants, narrowed down the list based on need. When all was said and done, 55 small businesses in Benicia were selected as grant recipients. On July 1, the committee hand-delivered the grant checks to each of the businesses, which were located throughout the many commercial centers in town and the Industrial Park.

"Today was an exciting and emotional day for both the grant recipients and the committee members delivering the checks" said Jimmy Ponder. "The goal all along was to provide some of our struggling businesses with some good news and some hope. Based on the emotional reaction from the owners of the businesses, I think we accomplished that today."



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Josh Tulino, who is thrilled to be back at the Valero Benicia Refinery, said that the Business Helping Business grant program is a good reminder of just how special the town of Benicia really is. "I was honored and proud to be a part this effort, and very pleased that we were able to help out so many small businesses in Benicia", said Tulino.

As the COVID-19 crisis continues, businesses of all sizes, but especially small businesses are going to require additional support. Jimmy Ponder hopes that the Business Helping Business program will motivate others to step up to help our small businesses in the future.



BUSINESS HELPING BUSINESS SMALL PRIVATE GRANT PROGRAM

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 BENICIA CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

THE INDUSTRIAL PARK BUSINESSES HAVE ALWAYS BEEN HERE TO SUPPORT
 THE CITY OF BENICIA AND ARE CONTINUALLY HERE TO HELP OUR SMALL BUSINESSES OF BENICIA

A SPECIAL THANK YOU TO ALL OF OUR DONORS!!

