Business Name: **401 Gourmet Caterers**

Business Address: **691 Main Street Warren RI 02885**

Tell us about your business: **Full service Catering Business**

(What were some of your greatest successes this past year, What would you like to share with the community about your business, etc)

Covid-19 has affected us greatly. During this year we have had to pivot from a catering company that caters primarily weddings and events to doing gourmet meals to-go as well as pop up’s with Two Gals Cocktails offering cheese boards, meals, and desserts to go while they offered to-go cocktails. We are very happy and fortunate to be surviving during this pandemic and are deeply grateful to everyone who has supported us during these difficult times.

###

**Business Name:\_\_\_\_ AVTECH Software Inc.**

Business Address: \_\_\_ 16 Cutler Street, Warren, RI 02885

Tell us about your business:

\_\_ AVTECH Software manufactures hardware monitors and sensors for IT and facilities environment monitoring. Issues such as temperature and humidity extremes, power loss or overuse, flooding, smoke/fire, and more put 40% of small businesses who experience a significant disaster each year “out of business”. AVTECH protects organizations and supports their business continuity. AVTECH was recognized in 2018 by the U.S Small Business Administration as “2018 Exporter of the Year”… a high recognition! AVTECH’s Room Alert products are used worldwide by most of the world’s most secure and successful organizations and governments. There are only 196 countries worldwide according to the United Nations and this year AVTECH increased the number of countries with Room Alert customers to 187 of 196 by closing a sale in Reunion, a small island country off the coast of Africa near Mauritius.

AVTECH also introduced and is shipping it’s new Room Alert 32S and 12S as their PRO line of monitors. These models are recognized as the “most secure products of their type worldwide” and monitor the supporting communications infrastructure that everyone relies on daily.

If there was ever a quiet contributor among our membership that has a significant worldwide reach and impact, yet remains relatively unknown within the membership and community, then it is AVTECH. They are the primary tenant at Cutler Mill and responsible for other community contributions that they do behind the scenes, benefiting the East Bay community at large. \_\_

###

**Business Name: BankNewport**

Business Address: 6 Gooding Avenue Town: Bristol (Warren and Barrington)

#### ABOUT BANKNEWPORT:

#### BankNewport has served generations of families and businesses since our founding in 1819. That’s two centuries of Rhode Islanders trusting us as a secure, local and friendly way to bank, and we continue to provide new ways to do business and provide value to our customers.

We are one of the oldest community banks in the United States and, as a mutual organization, is committed to the financial success of its customers, employees and communities. Having no stockholders, mutual banks focus on long-term strategy and profitability, with earnings reinvested to serve customers and communities – unlike stock banks that must focus on quarterly returns to stockholders.

We believe in the personal banking experience. Our well-versed and highly trained team of universal bankers, business bankers and commercial lending officers are committed and empowered to provide support and guidance to help customers and prospective customers achieve their financial goals. All of our funding decisions are made right here in Rhode Island, so customers will experience expedient borrowing opportunities and personalized service that directly reflects our mission and role as a true community bank.

#### BankNewport is growing and serving more customers than ever with branches throughout Rhode Island, including two branches in Providence and one in Johnston that opened over the past year. We also have commercial lending offices in Cumberland and Providence.

In 2019, the Bank rebranded its marine lending business to OceanPoint Marine Lending, a Division of BankNewport, specializing in consumer marine and recreational vehicle financing programs, with an experienced team operating along the East Coast with offices in Rhode Island, New Jersey, Maryland and Virginia. Also introduced was OceanPoint Investment Solutions through a relationship with LPL Financial, to provide access to comprehensive financial and investment advisory services.

#### In 2019 we proudly received Rhode Island Monthly’s ‘Common Good Award’ and ranked the #1 SBA 504 Lender in Rhode Island, in addition to being named one of Rhode Island’s Best Places to Work and Fastest Growing Companies by *Providence Business News*.

COMMUNITY INVESTMENT:

#### Over the past nine years, BankNewport has awarded over $4.6 million in sponsorships, and donations to a wide range of nonprofits to help strengthen and enrich lives and communities throughout Rhode Island. Some of our East Bay beneficiaries include: Barrington TAP-In, Bristol Fourth of July Parade, Coggeshall Farm Museum, Community String Project, Corliss Institute, East Bay Community Action Program, East Bay Food Pantry, Friends of Linden Place, Historic Warren Armory, Imago Foundation for the Arts, Warren Senior Center, and We Share Hope.

Through BNWise, BankNewport’s Financial Education Program we provide engaging learning experiences through a series of varied and interactive courses designed to help consumers of all ages manage their money and prepare for their financial future. Online, virtual and in-person presentations are conducted throughout the year for consumers, classrooms and community groups by BankNewport and OceanPoint Insurance employee facilitators.

In 2019, annual financial education and community service performed by our employees totaled over 9,000 hours.

COVID COMMUNITY SUPPORT:

In March 2020, just before the onset of COVID-19, 35 employee volunteers from BankNewport and OceanPoint Insurance participated in a meal-packaging project with the United Way of Rhode Island. In just two hours, our team packaged 12,000 meals for local food pantries, including FabNewport, the MLK Community Center, East Bay Community Action Program, and We Share Hope, a contribution that unknowingly would fill an immediate need.

As the pandemic grew in March, the Bank’s Community Fund Committee redirected its grant funds to extend immediate financial support with grants totaling $250,000 to the Rhode Island Foundation and United Way of Rhode Island COVID-19 Response Fund, and a $100,000 grant to the Rhode Island Community Food Bank. In addition, more than $79,000 in sponsorship funds earmarked for nonprofit fundraising events were released to help meet their immediate needs. OceanPoint Insurance also contributed $2,500 to the COVID-19 Response Fund at the United Way during 401 Gives Day.

In addition to ongoing community support, BankNewport’s lending team worked around the clock to fulfill loan requests for small businesses through the Paycheck Protection Program, as well as an emergency micro loan program in partnership with Rhode Island Commerce, the Rhode Island Hospitality Association, and the Local Initiatives Support Corporation.  Through these programs (as of August 1, 2020), BankNewport awarded a total of $134 million in loans to approximately 2,000 small businesses in Rhode Island, including restaurants, retailers, and sole proprietors.

To limit person-to-person interaction during COVID, we shifted branch operations to appointment banking only, complemented by the availability of Personal Teller Machines (PTM) at many of our branches, which offer the personal touch of a real-life banker, combined with the convenience of an ATM, extending our personal service beyond traditional banking hours. PTM’s offer customers the ability to conduct most everyday transactions, including deposit, withdraw, transfer funds, make payments, cash checks, receive coins, and make withdrawals in $1, $5, $20 and $50 denominations.

To ease the burden many customers faced during the COVID-19 crisis, BankNewport waived a variety of fees as part of its customer assistance program.

We turned 200 years in 2019!

BankNewport celebrated its 200th Anniversary last year with various community activities, programming, random acts of kindness, including a special “We’re All In” giving program made available $200,000 in grants to nonprofits and community groups across RI including those that might not ordinarily qualify for funding. We extended 200 hyper-local donations, each $1,000, to support community projects that positively impacted our neighbors, with the donations impacting 29 of the 39 cities/towns in RI. Some of the East Bay beneficiaries of this special program include: Bristol County Baysiders/Special Olympics, Bristol County Elks Lodge and Lions Club, Bristol Housing Authority, Bristol Warren Education Foundation, Coggeshall Farm Museum, Community String Project, Corliss Institute, East Bay Educational Collaborative, East Bay Food Pantry, Guiteras Discovery Garden, Warren Land Conservation Trust, We Share Hope, and Women’s Resource Center of Newport and Bristol Counties.

Also in our 200th year, our employees participated in a special Pay It Forward opportunity where each was given $200, to keep $100 and use $100 for their own act of kindness. Employees shared personal stories of helping strangers in the grocery store, aiding those who were experiencing illness and partnering with fellow employees to give larger gifts to local nonprofits.

Technology Investments:

Technology investments provide our customers with a convenient, accurate and secure banking experience, especially essential during this continued COVID environment.

With BankNewport’s mobile app, customers can check account balances, manage budgets, view recent activity, deposit checks, send money to friends and family via Zelle, schedule an appointment with a banker, apply for a mortgage, open an account in less than 1 minute, communicate with BankNewport staff via CHAT or phone call, and more.

We also offer enhanced options to bank via telephone voice response and offer debit card fraud alerts that provides a higher degree of security and convenience for customers.  We also enhanced our customers shopping experience by offering contactless payments for debit and credit cards (Apple Pay, Samsung Pay, Google Pay).

CONCLUSION:

Whatever the cause, BankNewport employees are there to lend a hand, guided by core our values: we CELEBRATE individuality, we EMPOWERcreative problem solving, we INVEST the time to know our customers, communities and employees and we COMMIT to serving the financial needs of Rhode Islanders.

###

Benjamin Church Senior Center

1020 Hope St. Bristol maria Ursini, [mursinibese@gmail.com](mailto:mursinibese@gmail.com)

These past few months during the pandemic of COVID-19 Benjamin Church Senior Center stepped up to service age 50+ populations in numerous ways.

When the governor declared a State of Emergency, our staff immediately focused on the response measures. Our building was closed to the public on march 13, 2020 our organization had to put a strategic plan in place to keep our members safe at home. Collaboration was a very important strategy to make this a successful mission. Our board members and staff made calls to members to check in with them weekly. Local businesses reached out to support us along with community members.

We served in the month of March:  
over 495 Hot meals, over 280 lunch delivers, 330 lbs of food donated to food pantry, over 275 bags of produce, over 275 bags of groceries, over 730 meals delivered by Meals on Wheels April we again delivered over 350 nags for groceries and handmade masks to 420 individuals. This has been ongoing process with our organization and to date continue to deliver over 350 meals weekly.

###

**Business Name:\_Bookkeeping Towne**

Business Name:\_BookkeepingTowne

Business Address: \_1275 Wampanoag Trail, Suite 3B Town\_\_\_Riverside\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Tell us about your business:

Hello. My name is Dolly Towne. I founded Bookkeeping Towne in March 2019 – I can personally say it has been a great first year!! I have done so much to get to where I am today! I was very proud of myself what I have accomplished in my first year so I decided to have a big bash for my one year milestone on 3/3/2020! I asked the East Bay Chamber of Commerce to sponsor a Ribbon Cutting for my First Year Anniversary! It was such a great event! I hired 2 of my clients to cater the event, a photographer & had state officials, Mayor of East Providence Bob DaSilva & RI Lt. Governor Dan McKee helping me celebrate. I was a little nervous that it would be canceled because of the pandemic hitting RI that same week – but I went on with my plans hoping for the best and I’m so glad I did. Unfortunately, one week after my event, the state & schools shut down due to Covid-19. I wasn’t sure what I would do – I couldn’t spend too much time on my business anymore because my 2 year old son’s daycare closed. I had to put my business on hold and take care of my family – I tried to work at night when I can for the first couple of months of this pandemic. Every Sunday night, I would spend a few hours researching and figuring out my son’s schedule for the upcoming week and meals to prepare for my family while continuing to keep up with my client’s bookkeeping work & try to market a little. My main concern was that my son wasn’t getting the teachings he would normally get from daycare so I wanted to still give him some sort of education at home, even though he was only 2 years old. I was very tired juggling it all but I had a great supportive husband that helped me out as much as he could. My husband was able to work from home during this time. While we are all going through this tough time, I was so glad I decided to open a virtual bookkeeping business – it helped with being virtual at this time. In June, my husband & I worked out a schedule that is the perfect mix for the both of us where I work 3 times a week at my office and my husband takes care of our son on those days while he works from home. It’s definitely not an easy task but when we work together at a problem, anything is possible. Our daycare has opened up in June but we still don’t feel comfortable bringing him to daycare just yet. I know that this is temporary and I am confident that we will all get through this together. The time I had to reflect on my business at this time was a blessing in disguise. I was able to work with a website designer, content creator, business advisor & accounting coach. If it wasn’t for this pandemic I wouldn’t have been able to spend that time with those professionals that have helped my business in a better state. I spent time adding new services to my business which include sales tax management, payroll management, Tax preparation, Advisory Services, Benchmarking & financial reviews.

My business is more than just a bookkeeping business – it will help small businesses profit and grow by 10-20%. I can help businesses attain that by reviewing their cash flow, minimizing their expenses & helping with getting their time back. Yes, I have tried to be involved in community events – I had my own first anniversary networking event in March of 2020 and I also hosted a Monthly Mingle with the East Bay Chamber of Commerce in June 2020. I also attended other events hosted by the East Bay Chamber. I am so thankful for the East Bay Chamber – they not only help me with my business but they help out so many others. I am always trying to promote other small businesses on my Facebook page and LinkedIn page. I absolutely love helping other small businesses. I know how it is like to start somewhere and you have no idea what you’re doing. I was there! If I can tell myself one thing when I decided to started my business is “Don’t think you can do this on your own, hire out people to help you!” It is very tough to do everything on your own – I know it’s your business and you want the control of everything that happens to it but I ask myself all of the time “is it worth my time? How much is my time worth?” Then, I come to my senses and reach out to people to help – they are professionals that can do it right the first time instead of spending time trying to figure it out on my own. Do what you do best, then hire someone to do the rest.

###

Business Name: Bristol Total Fitness

Business Address: 385 Metacom Ave, Bristol RI 02809

Tell us about your business:

With a heavy heart, Bristol Total Fitness closed due to Covid-19 on March 17th. One of the hardest decisions that owners, Geoff and Michael Morin would have to make in their 18 years of business. With these challenging times, the owners and staff took advantage of the fitness center being closed to make some renovations. The BTF team worked tirelessly cleaning and disinfecting each room from top to bottom. Every piece of gym equipment was disinfected, ductwork ws cleaned, and the entire interior was painted. We even have a new sign and beautiful landscaping in front of our building.  
 As the days became weeks the staff reached out to many of the members just to check in with them, to make sure they were safe and healthy.

With our re-opening staff have been extremely diligent with following the RI State guidelines. Safety protocols are in place to keep members and staff healthy. Our facility has been spot-checked four times from the Dept. of Health and the Dept. of Business Regulations. We received A+ rating s for our efforts.

With the uncertainty of the virus BTF owners, Geoff and Michael wanted to make sure that the members felt comfortable and safe coming back to the gym and if they weren’t when we re-opened on June 1st they offered a $0 freeze until Dec. 31st, 2020 (regularly $5 a month). Many took advantage of this offer but the majority of our members have come back to the gym. They understand the importance of supporting small businesses.

Bristol Total Fitness has always and will continue to be supportive in the community. They have worked with many community-based programs such as Bristol Parks and Recreation Center by offering free classes to the public outside at Independence Park.

###

Business Name:\_East Bay Community Action Program

Business Address:19 Broadway Town: Newport (additional locations in Bristol, Warren, Barrington, and E. Providence)

What would you like to share with the community about your business?

East Bay Community Action Program (EBCAP) is a private, non-profit, 501 (c) (3) organization that provides a wide array of health and human services for the residents of Rhode Island’s East Bay region. The agency has been in operation since 1965, and its mission is to provide high quality, comprehensive, and accessible health and human services to assist people to achieve their fullest potential. The agency, which employs more than 500 people, successfully worked to meet critical health and basic human needs in the East Bay during this past year.

What were some of your greatest successes this past year?

In September 2019 EBCAP opened East Bay Recovery Center in Warren, Rhode Island, bringing much needed recovery support services to the area. People who are actively in recovery, are contemplating recovery, or whose loved ones would benefit from recovery support find the help they need to successfully meet the challenges associated with substance use disorder. Participants experience one-on-one support with a Peer Recovery Coach, who has personally “walked the walk” and who strives to promote mutually supportive relationships in ways that empower recovery, personal growth, and social action. The program features: All-Recovery Meetings, Recovery Training Series, Family Support Groups, Community/Social Events, Telephone Support, Wellness Activities (yoga, meditation, health screenings, etc.), Expungement Workshops, Employment/ Life Skills Specialists, 12-Step Fellowship Meetings, Relapse Prevention/SUD Education Groups, Drop-in Naloxone Distribution and Trainings, and Social Services Assistance. During the recent Rhode Island State of Emergency, the Center continued to support the community via telephone and online group meetings, as well as in-person drop-in hours for distribution of the life-saving medication Naloxone.

Throughout recent months, during the pandemic, our behavioral health component responded to increased calls for support for individuals with substance use disorder and/or mental illness. In order to meet this need, while at the same time prioritizing the health and safety of our community and staff, we quickly implemented telehealth services. In fact, many of our health and human services programs were able to continue to provide support to individuals in need via telephone and online interactions. Our health centers in Newport and Riverside and dental center in Newport remained open for emergencies throughout the RI State of Emergency while the health centers continued to treat patients with non-emergency concerns via telehealth.

Our three food pantries (located in Tiverton, Newport, and East Providence) have continued to provide emergency food and other items to individuals and families throughout the pandemic. When faced with staffing difficulty at our Tiverton pantry earlier this year, staff solved the problem by setting a weekly delivery day and enlisting staff from other components at the agency to deliver food to Tiverton residents. Having identified the need too for personal care items, we created a Charity Wish List on Amazon, with nearly $2,000 in products. like soap, shampoo, toothpaste and laundry detergent, having been received to date.

In May of this year, our health centers in Newport and Riverside joined in the statewide effort to expand COVID-19 testing. Drive up testing sites were established at both locations, and our staff continues to provide testing today. This effort was key in making testing available for people in/near their city/town of residence.

Were you involved in any community events?

In August 2019 EBCAP served as a host site for the annual Back to School Celebration of Rhode Island event in Newport, where families gathered to learn about various community programs and services for school aged children and families, and all children received a complimentary backpack filled with school supplies. This was the 7th consecutive year that EBCAP hosted this event.

Our East Bay Recovery Center staff were active participants in Rhode Island’s Recovery Month activities in September 2019, including the Rally for Recovery in Providence. Peer Recovery Specialist Ernie Thivierge received the “RI Recovery In Action” award which recognizes the Peer Specialist who has devoted countless hours to the success of the recovery community. East Bay Recovery Center was a host to the Touch-A-Truck and Cookie Decoration for children attending the Warren Holiday Festival. The East bay Recovery Center participated in the East Bay Warriors (Pop Warner football) Family Fun Day and provided Narcan training to 75 people with free Narcan kits distributed.

During the spring of 2020 our Backpack Feeding Program in Newport helped to in the fight against hunger by providing packaged meals for weekends to students and families coming to the school’s lunch grab and go program. This Backpack Feeding Program, managed by EBCAP’s Newport Family and Child Opportunity Zone, raised more than $12,000 for this effort by participating in the first annual 401 Gives event (a 24-hour period of online giving in Rhode Island, held April 1st, and organized by United Way of Rhode Island).

Our staff at East Bay Recovery Center supported Mental Health Association of Rhode Island’s state-wide 2020 Mental Health Awareness Month campaign by educating, advocating, and promoting recovery programs and community resources.

###

Business Name: East Bay Community Development Corp.

Business Address: 150 Franklin Street Town: Bristol

Tell us about your business:

(What were some of your greatest successes this past year? What would you like to share with the community about your business? Were you involved in any community events? etc.)

Throughout the last year and particularly during the extremely challenging last six months, East Bay Community Development Corp has continued to meet the needs of those requiring safe, affordable and comfortable housing options in our area. These times have not been without obstacles, as we have tried to also retain and support our staff while serving our residents, but we have consistently balanced the needs of both.

One of our properties, in particular, Franklin Court Assisted Living, has been a true beacon of strength and resilience in the midst of our struggles with this merciless virus. With the dedicated staff in all the departments, from nursing to housekeeping, from kitchen to maintenance, and everyone in between, Franklin Court Assisted Living has been able to keep the residents safe while maintaining their best quality of life. It has taken our whole East Bay CDC community to support this effort, and as the Administrator of Franklin Court, Angela Cabral has reminded us, “We are infinitely capable when we help one another.”

We are proud of all that East Bay Community Development Corp accomplishes, but Angela and her staff, in particular, have made us all exceedingly proud of the strength and leadership they continue to exhibit throughout this crisis.

###

Business Name:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_Grace Barker Health

Grace Barker Health’s (GBH) greatest success to date is its record of zero deaths and zero cases of coronavirus among the residents in its care. GBH was one of the first elder care facilities in the State of RI to voluntarily close its doors to visitors weeks before the Dept. of Health mandated it as a COVID-19 prevention protocol. In so doing, GBH protected the lives and health of its entire staff, long-term care residents, assisted living residents, and their families. GBH was one of the first to implement the use of technology such as FaceTime, Skype and Zoom to allow residents to communicate with their family members. According to the Dept. of Health, it is also one of the first in the state to allow family members to wear clear face masks to accommodate deaf and hard-of-hearing residents during in-person visits. These examples are but a few of the ways this family-owned business is navigating the pandemic, demonstrating innovation, and leading the way on best practices. Grace Barker’s heroic staff and compassionate leaders treat every resident it cares for like family, and should be honored as one of the best local businesses in the East Bay.

###

Business Name:\_Highlander Charter School

Business Address: \_360 MarketStreet\_\_\_Town\_\_\_\_Warren\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Tell us about your business:

Highlander is fortunate to be part of the amazing East Bay Community where our middle and high school is located. Over 90% of our students’ families live at or below the poverty level. With the help of local community partners such as Blount Fine Foods and Hope and Main, we were able to provide food above and beyond what was available through the state school lunch program which was limited to school age students. With amazing community donations and some small grants, we were able to provide soup and fresh vegetable and fruit for our families. There were times during the early part of the pandemic that we were feeding 150 students, plus their parents each day! As more resources are now accessible to families, we are feeding about 50 students and their parents each day. The ability to provide nourishment helped families focus on their child’s education during distance learning.

Highlander was also able to provide a small graduation ceremony for the class of 2020 that included 30 graduates and 2 family members each, socially distanced under a tent on our soccer field on July 16th after getting approval from the Governor’s office. Seating was assigned, families were 6 feet apart, and everyone wore masks. It was a true celebration of our students and staff!

###

Business Name: Marshall Building & Remodeling

Business Address: 152 Forbes Street Town: Bristol

Tell us about your business:

The Marshall Building & Remodeling team stepped up to the challenge this year, and quickly adapted to meet the growing needs that came with COVID-19. We were fortunate and able to continue working throughout this tumultuous time. Our team members worked hard to create seamless virtual experiences for our customers, to socially distance and follow CDC guidelines during installations, and overall continue to provide the same 5-star customer service our customers know and deserve. While we were working on acclimating to so much change in our business, we also continued to recognize and support our community’s urgent needs through donations to the RI Food Bank and Feeding America. We’re so proud of our fellow chamber members and local businesses who rose to the occasion and are weathering this storm with us. We believe that together we can make it through this trying time, and together we can make a difference in our community. With that in mind we will continue to try and do our part, for our team, our customers, our neighbors, and our future.

###

Business Name: MF Engineering company

Business Address: 7 Peter Road, Bristol

Tell us about your business:

MF began utilizing their 3-D Printing and CNC Routing capabilities to produce face shields for the healthcare industry. MF started a custom plastics division for the recreational consumer market, manufacturing products such as Adirondack chairs and tables, fishing filet tables and cutting boards.

###

Business Name: Michelle Hughes, CPA\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Business Address: 654 Metacom Avenue, Suite 3 \_\_\_Town:\_Warren\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Tell us about your business:

Over this past year our firm has had many small successes, even through difficult times. During March and April of 2020, while many small businesses were struggling with shut-downs, and maintaining employees, our office was able to increase hours and accept new clients during these trying times. The demand for tax and accounting services was heightened by new tax legislation and the need for interpretation of the Acts put into place by congress. As we continue to work through remote access with limited office hours, we strive to ensure the ongoing safety of our staff & clients.

Thanks to existing technology and secure document delivery methods already in place, we were quickly able to adapt to state COVID restrictions and immediately shift to a work at home environment. We added a “coronavirus” page to our website and sent regular updates via constant contact to our valued clients, who much appreciated our simple and understandable content related to the Cares Act and PPP loans. We attended continuing education through online platforms, and spent countless hours answering unemployment, SBA, PPP and Economic Stimulus questions. Ensuring our clients and community obtained timely and technically accurate tax information was the main focus of our financial frontline mission. As part of her duties as incoming Chamber Chair, Michelle attended weekly “Town Hall” meetings with the Warren Economic Development Committee and shared information with the Chamber Board, Town of Warren, small business owners, and members of RI Commerce.

On March 23rd, we developed and implemented our business continuity plan. This plan involved the examination of business operations in order to insure uninterrupted service to our valued customers. We have provided a safe environment for our employees and any customers requiring in person services. Our staff has access to PPE to help them maintain a safe environment while socially distancing themselves from one another. For our client’s convenience, we will continue to accept tax and other financial documents through our secure Share Safe portal, our secure lock box located outside the front of our building, and via USPS. This allows for contactless tax and financial document preparation. We are also offering meetings through google/zoom, phone conferencing, and email communication as an alternative to in person meetings.

Over the recent months, our firm has helped many small business clients navigate their way through the ever-changing PPP loan process and the CARES Act passed by Congress on March 26th. We educated our clients about best practices regarding the handling of their PPP funds. This includes techniques for tracking their spending, which may increase their ability to obtain 100% loan forgiveness depending on how they choose to spend their funds. As the process continues, over the next few months, we will continue to be by their sides assisting in the forgiveness application process and with 2020 budgeting and bookkeeping. One of our goals is to help them navigate this process as smoothly as possible and come out on top despite a downturn in the overall economy.

On June 1st, we held our official reopening ceremony outside our Metacom Ave, Warren Office with a limited number of attendees and our local Chamber of Commerce present. We celebrated outside with ice cream treats from our neighbor and fellow small business owner, Chelsea’s Creamery.

###

Business Name:\_\_\_Pilgrim Title Insurance Company \_\_\_\_

Business Address: 47 Maple Ave, Barrington, RI Town\_\_\_\_\_Barrington\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Tell us about your business:

Pilgrim Title Insurance Company has been providing closing and title services to home buyers and sellers for many years and has the pleasure to work with many wonderful local Realtors and Mortgage Lenders. The company prides itself on exceptional personalized service. At the start of the COVID scare, the partners were quick on their feet and sent all staff home (to keep us all safe) and set up remote connection so that everyone could continue to work. With interest rates dropping to an all-time low, an abundance of refinances started coming in and surprisingly, many homebuyers became motivated to purchase outside of the city. The staff and partners all found themselves working well into the night to assure that loans would close on time and people could get into their homes as quickly as possible. To ensure the safety of all, the company had all the attorney’s certified and trained to handle remote closings – something that was new to everyone.

I am nominating Pilgrim Title for its resilience and ability to pivot during a very difficult time, and in the process, improving both service and efficiencies. In the end, we have made lemonade!

###

Business Name: OPT Physical Therapy & Sports Medicine

Business Address: 236 County Rd. Town: Barrington  
851 Main St. Warren  
652 Wood St. Bristol

Tell us about your business:

OPT Physical Therapy and Sports Medicine remained open throughout the pandemic and implemented free programs to help keep our community strong during this challenging time.

We have been able to safely provide in-clinic physical therapy services to the residents of the East Bay who have required essential care. Additionally, we implemented tele-health for those who preferred remote care.

OPT’s physical therapists know the risk of developing musculoskeletal issues due to inactivity. At the launch of the “stay at home order”, our team quickly developed three free virtual programs to help keep people active.

• Andrea Wasylow, OPT Bristol’s Clinic Director, created and taught “Fitness from a Distance. A Gray Institute faculty member she incorporated her extensive knowledge of applied functional science into full body, musculoskeletal workouts.

• Steve Warren, a Physical Therapy Assistant in Bristol, runs OPT’s Total Athletic Performance Summer Camp for student athletes. His virtual workouts provided a high intensity functional based workout for athletes and individuals unable to go to the gym.

• Senior Chair Exercises were taught by Melissa Cromack. Melissa’s classes were aimed at helping seniors to keep moving while being restricted to their home. Melissa is based in our Wakefield office; her virtual workouts were shared with senior centers and recreation departments in the East Bay.

In response to Covid-19, OPT Physical Therapy & Sports Medicine also provided two series of classes to The RI Interlocal Risk Management Trust members. These classes were made available to all municipal and school department members both in the East Bay and throughout Rhode Island; teachers, school administrators, police, fire, etc. One of the programs was focused on teachers and how to reduce their risk of posture related injuries caused by extended hours on the computer (Zoom!).

In a “normal” year, OPT is involved in many community events. In the East Bay, OPT provides free recovery tent staffing for the Bristol’s Independence Rhode Race and the Warren, Food Truck 5K, a fundraiser for the Bristol Warren Education Foundation.

This year, prior to Covid, we ran an in-clinic workshops for Barrington Youth Soccer coaches and the golf fitness workshop with the East Bay Chamber of Commerce.

In addition to the 3 physical clinics found in the East Bay, Barrington, Warren, Bristol, OPT Physical Therapy and Sports Medicine provides an on campus physical therapist at Roger Williams University. We have also been providing the athletic trainers for both Mt. Hope and Barrington Highs school for many years. Pre-season our physical therapists often provided free screenings to athletes.

OPT Physical Therapy & Sports Medicine celebrated our 20th year in business this spring. Our success reflects the quality of our team and we are proud to say we “manage locally”. This includes hiring individuals from our local communities. We are happy to have the talents of many East Bay residents providing care in our clinics to their neighbors.

Although we have remained open, in order to provide needed services to community members, we reduced employee hours. However, we continued paying the company’s portion of our employee healthcare. As a business we are pleased to provide many East Bay residents with jobs, healthcare and meaningful employment.

Covid-19 has changed the face of business for the moment. We are extremely proud and thankful for the dedication our staff has shown this year. They have truly helped to “Strengthen Our Communities”!

On a final note, at the beginning of 2020 we partnered with Pappas Physical and Hand Therapy. We are now Pappas|OPT Physical, Sports & Hand Therapy with 16 clinic locations across the state. Considered a large employer, Pappas|OPT provides jobs to over 150 individuals in RI.

Included with this nomination form, please find a video. We hope it gives you a feel for how  
OPT is making a difference in the East Bay community

###

Business Name: Piccolo Children’s Boutique

Business Address290 County Road, Barrington, RI 02806

Tell us about your business:

Fashion Show Participant, EBCC Small Business Boost participant.   
Was open during Covid closing for curbside pick-up, delivery, shipping   
Sent photos of products to customers via social media to solicit business (facebook Instagram, emails)  
customers were very appreciative of opportunity to support small business and still be able to buy gifts, etc. for kids and babies.

###

Business Address: RE/MAX River’s Edge, 300 County Road, Barrington

Tell us about your business:

While real estate has always been a customer facing business, the events of the past year have created an opportunity for companies to shift their practices, and adjust to a new normal in the world of selling homes. At RE/MAX River’s Edge, our outstanding team went above and beyond to not only ensure the continued success of their clients, but to also keep their client’s safety and peace of mind their top priority.   
With the help of our very supportive staff and the amazing resources provided by our national brand, we were able to pivot to meet new client demands for virtual home showings, increased social media advertising, and safe in person interactions. In this environment, with the help of our very special community of agents, we were also able to open our newest office location at 423 Hope St. in Bristol. Through the not so typical 2nd quarter of 2020 we began the process of slowly welcoming our REALTORs and clients into the wonderful new space. Our new location served as the backdrop for our participation in the virtual sesson of Art Night Bristol Warren, where two local artists were able to present their work for a virtual and video showing online.

We also took part in some creative and supportive community events, consisting of both a virtual wine tasting fundraiser for the East Bay Community Action Program, and the East Bay Chamber clam boil This event is hosted by volunteers and board tof the East Bay Chamber of Commerce and will be a drive up/ take out affair in August.

We hope the rest of the year brings more opportunities to continue to support our community both online and (hoefully) in person.

We hope that you and your business can too Sail to Success in 2020

###

Business Name: Superior Comfort Inc.

Business Address: 11 Broadcommon Rd. Town: Bristol

Tell us about your business:

(What were some of your greatest successes this past year? What would you like to share with the community about your business? Were you involved in any community events? , etc)

Superior Comfort Inc. is a family owned company that has been in beautiful Bristol RI for over 14 years. Our team's mission is to provide world class service and true satisfaction to all customers and employees. We hope to bring outstanding value and high-quality installations, designs and service to the residential and commercial HVAC industry. While cultivating a positive atmosphere and through a combined effort we will have a positive impact on the world around us. Superior Comfort Inc specializes in all things HVAC. From Central air to ductless mini splits, geothermal to conventional, covering both your home and business. Our certified technicians handle the task from start to finish with professionalism and dedication. We’ll work closely with you, throughout each stage of the job, keeping you informed and ensuring your needs are met to your highest expectation. 2020 has been a year of adaptation for everyone that's for sure. Our Technicians are taking extra precautions to ensure the health and safety of our customers, their families and our team. We have been helping other businesses run as safely and efficiently as possible as well. Superior Comfort Inc. has been designing indoor air quality solutions for over 10 years and we are currently working with hotels, restaurants and movie production companies to help with air purification of their facilities. Superior Comfort Inc. tries to donate to as many local businesses and support as many local programs as possible throughout the year. We are honored to be part of the East Bay and looking forward to many more years to come. We wish everyone a safe and happy remainder of 2020!

###

Business Name: Tap Printing, Inc.

Business Address: 628 Metacom Ave., Warren RI 02885

Tell us about your business:

Tap Printing has been in business for 47 years under its current ownership. This year has probably been the most challenging because of the State being mostly shut down. Tap Printing remained open normal hours to assist customers with Fedex package returns and to offer printing, copying, finishing and shipping services as needed in our community. However, to help businesses, such as restaurants, get back up and running again, we have offered to print “throw away” menus at half price for the initial order. We have been successful in providing several restaurants those menus without a high cost. This service has been much appreciated by the businesses that have come here. Other reopening established businesses that have come in our door, were offered 45 day payment terms on regular printing so they could get their cash flow back up and running without having to payout immediately for needed printed goods.

The owner, Timothy Pray, has always helped businesses as much as possible in many ways. He has gained experience in many areas of operating a small business and has shared his experiences with other small business owners with the intent to help or guide them not to make potential mistakes.

Tim is very active in the community where he grew up, went to school and opened his business. He has been the chairperson of the Warren Quahog Festival for over 32 years. The goal of the festival has been to get Warren more exposure by bringing visitors to Town by way of attending the Warren Quahog Festival. Fortunately, the visitors attending have enjoyed foods, fun and art at the festival before looking around town to see what else Warren has to offer. These visitors do return to Warren to frequent many of our excellent restaurants and shops to see more of what Warren offers. The chairperson’s goal has always been to put on a safe festival with many out of town visitors to give the Town of Warren a maximum exposure.

Tim is also the Secretary for the Historic Warren Armory on Jefferson Street, which is an Armory hall built 1842 and managed by a Board of Directors. The 1842 Armory has been renovated through funds raised by events held at the Armory and other locations. The building is available for use by local organizations and for meetings. The handicap accessible facility is air conditioned for summer events and well heated for winter events. Tim has worked closely with the other board members on fundraising for the renovation process. They have successfully done Clam Boils, Taste of Warren events, and Recognition Galas over the last several years.

Tim has been a member of the Warren Barrington Rotary Club for over 33 years. He has held several officer positions and continues with other very active members to keep the club moving forward. The club raises funds through many events throughout the year and uses the funds for three area High School scholarships, funding for many organizations such as the library, middle and high school programs, drug awareness education, and substance abuse prevention funding in two school systems. Rotary is an International organization, so the club assists clubs in other countries to accomplish a humanitarian goal and with the help of Rotary International. The donated funds contributed are many times tripled by the Rotary International Foundation and other Rotary Clubs participating in the project.

Tim is also a member of the Board for the East Bay Chamber of Commerce with many other talented business people. The East Bay Chamber aggressively promotes Bristol County businesses to visitors and other businesses. The Board normally meets monthly to conduct business and plan events, business ribbon cuttings, after hours events and help businesses when or as needed. The challenging part is to get local businesses aware of how many services the Chamber of Commerce offers. Tim has always said that the more your are involved, the more you will learn about the small and large details of operating a business.

Tim lives in Bristol with his wife Fran, and has two children, Tim and Nick, and two grandchildren, Genevieve and Ted.

###

Business Name: The Perfect Sweet Shoppe

Business Address: 16 Joyce Street Town Warren

This has been a challenging year for everyone, to say the least. The Perfect Sweet Shoppe opened it’s doors back in November of 2018, so we are a fairly new business throughout all of this. We were incredibly fortunate to be given the opportunity to stay open during the COVID shutdown, as we are seen as an essential business. Early on, we recognized the need for people in the community to have a place that they could still go to too find a sense of normalcy and comfort. during a time that has been anything but normal or comfortable. We adapted our business model to include ease of take-out and pick-up by joining local food delivery services, such as, UberEats, DoorDash and GrubHub. We also upgraded our website to make it as easy as possible for our customers to order from us and choose curbside pick-up, contact-free pick-up or our own delivery service. In addition, however, our customers have always been able to come into a clean shop with gloved and masked employees. We sanitize the register stylus and the door handles between every customer use (something that is nearly impossible to do in larger places). In addition, we installed a hand sanitizer dispenser at the exit/ entrance for customers to keep themselves germ free and increase their comfort level upon entering or exiting.

People wanted to be able to continue to order cakes for much much smaller numbers! I found myself going back and forth with them through email, providing options and narrowing down what they were looking for. I finally realized that by giving them a sort-of of flowchart experience, very easily accessible through our website with lots of pictures and clear instructions allowed them to pick out a cake in a relatively short amount of time, pay right through the website and have a cake made specially for them ready and waiting in 48 hours! They have come to know that we use only the finest ingredients and our recipes are delicious and a step up from what they may be used to. We made and continue to make A LOT of cakes during this time and have sold many many macarons, as we stay committed to this signature product and the authenticity and quality of it (another item that can be ordered easily through our website or picked out in person 7 days a week).

Several months ago, I had wanted to add a “fourth leg” to our shop by putting in ice cream. I was slated to introduce it in the beginning of spring and then COVID hit… I decided I was going to make it happen anyway and in May, I introduced “Sweet Scoops” to provide for a need that Warren and the surrounding communities in and around the East Bay Bike Path would surely benefit from. I also extended our summer hours, so we are here 7 days a week until 9pm (open at 10am every day, except MondayI I was thankfully, correct, in my assumption and added a second ice cream scooping cabinet this week. I now have 24 Rhode Island made ice cream flavors in stock, with our handmade toppings available and I have seen even MORE smiles over the past couple of months! During a time like this, the community reaction has been AMAZING!! We LOVE our customers; we LOVE our community; we LOVE what we do and we are SO PROUD of what we have built in this humble little town, full of artisan shops and restaurants, big hearts, and generous spirits! Thank you for the opportunity to share a little of how things have been through all of this.