

## **For Immediate Release**

### **Mecklenburg County's Gift Card Match Program is Back for a Third Round – and another \$100,000 to match purchases made to local businesses**

The Gift Card Match Program has proven to be very successful in helping Mecklenburg County's locally owned Restaurant, Retail and Service-Based Businesses make it through the strain of the Covid-19 Pandemic. By offering a dollar-for-dollar match on purchases made, the program has not only served as a stimulus to local businesses, but a stimulus to citizens as they gain a substantial savings when purchasing vouchers through it. For \$20, you receive a \$40 voucher that is good for 1 year; a savings that is hard to pass up.

Since the first round launched in May of 2020, the program –in combination with consumer support- has infused \$244,000.00 into Mecklenburg County's small businesses. The county's Tourism Coordinator, Tina Morgan remarked that when this third round is complete, it will have successfully placed almost a half million dollars into the hands of local businesses. "That is a significant stimulus. The program is designed to double any investment made to the matching fund, using consumer support. We've seen that it has served as a major catalyst in driving people to shop local, and that's the best outcome we could have hoped for."

The Chase City, Clarksville and South Hill Chambers of Commerce remain unified in this effort and will be working with all of the towns to reach businesses about this next (and perhaps last) opportunity to participate. Registration is now open and small businesses can find the sign up form at [www.VisitMeckVa.com/ShopLocal](http://www.VisitMeckVa.com/ShopLocal). Interested businesses can also call any of the Chambers or the County Tourism Office at 434-738-6191 to find out more information. Businesses do not need to be a Chamber member to participate and they have until November 5<sup>th</sup> to sign up.

The online store will go live for customers to shop on November 17<sup>th</sup> at 6pm. Just in time for the holidays. Consumers can visit [www.VisitMeckVa.com/ShopLocal](http://www.VisitMeckVa.com/ShopLocal) and click the store icon to shop. Here, customers will find gift cards to participating businesses in the amount of \$20 each. For each card purchased, the program will match it for as long as the matching funds last. So, for \$20, you receive a \$40 gift card. There will be a few changes to the limits in Round 3, so consumers are encouraged to learn more on the website before they shop. There will also be a limited number of vouchers available to purchase directly from each Chamber, in order to better serve those without internet access.

The program is made possible through a collaboration between the three Chambers of Commerce (aka Chambers In Action) and Mecklenburg County Tourism, utilizing CARES Funding. The shopping platform for the online store is made possible by Virginia's Growth Alliance, a regional economic development group, who had the site developed for retail businesses to use for free. Any business located in the VGA region, who is interested in selling their products online (for free), can visit [www.ShopLocalVGA.com](http://www.ShopLocalVGA.com) to learn more.