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Christie Administration Awards Stronger NJ Business Grants To Manasquan Businesses

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Tags: [Hurricane Sandy](#)

Funds Support Ongoing Recovery Efforts Of Sandy-Impacted Businesses

Trenton, NJ – Demonstrating the Christie Administration’s commitment to the recovery of small businesses in the aftermath of Superstorm Sandy, Timothy Lizura, President and Chief Operating Officer of the New Jersey Economic Development Authority (EDA), today visited *Things That Make Scents* in Manasquan, which recently received a grant from the Stronger NJ Business Grant Program.

Things That Make Scents, a manufacturer and retailer of candles, had over four feet of water from the storm surge and received a grant for more than \$27,000. Another local business, *Firefly Bistro*, received a grant for \$50,000. The grants will help these businesses in their recovery from the damage and disruption of Superstorm Sandy.

“These business owners have demonstrated the kind of determination that is leading to the recovery of the NJ small business community,” said Lizura. “All Sandy-impacted businesses in need of help should contact us. There are funds available through the Stronger NJ Business Grant and Loan Programs for all eligible businesses around the state that need assistance.”

Things That Make Sense in Manasquan, which is not located near the Ocean and had never flooded, lost nearly all of its inventory and equipment in the storm surge. The storm hit at the height of the store’s busy season leading up to the holidays.

Owner Janine Predmore said, “We lost so much -- packaging supplies, bags, boxes, ribbon, most of our holiday inventory, display racks, manufacturing equipment, computers, paper files -- everything. The Stronger NJ Business grant has given my business the extra boost it needed to start this holiday season in much better shape.”

Firefly Bistro, a Manasquan restaurant, lost its inventory and was without power for 15 days following the storm. The restaurant’s chef, Teah Evans, competed and won on last night’s episode of the Food Network’s “Chopped.”

The acclaimed restaurant was recognized by local residents and officials following the storm for their support of the community. *Firefly* provided free food, a warm fireplace, and even entertainment by local musicians. Owners Lori and Malissa Rathgeber rented a high power generator, the cost of which was not covered by insurance, in order to support the local recovery.

“What was more important than the food was the camaraderie. People came out to talk to their neighbors. It was more important for their soul and their spirit than anything else,” said Lori Rathgeber.

Since May 1, storm-impacted small businesses have been able to apply for EDA-administered grants of up to \$50,000 through the Stronger NJ Business Grant Program. The program launched two days after the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) approved New Jersey’s Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Disaster Recovery Action Plan. Governor Christie called on the EDA to administer \$460 million of the state’s CDBG Disaster Recovery allocation to support the recovery of impacted businesses. The Stronger NJ Business Grant Program is the first of these CDBG-funded business recovery programs and is utilizing \$260 million of the allocation. On July 1, the EDA unveiled the \$100 million Stronger NJ Business Loan Program, which is making low-cost loans of up to \$5 million available to businesses and non-profits that were impacted by the storm, as well as businesses looking to expand within storm-impacted communities.

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To date, 75 businesses have been awarded Stronger NJ Business grants totaling up to \$3.8 million. Once approved for a grant, businesses have up to one year to submit receipts and invoices for eligible expenses, at which point the EDA will issue a disbursement. The Stronger NJ Business Grant program has helped dozens of business owners throughout New Jersey get back on their feet. [Here](#) are a few grant recipients describing their experience.

Eligibility for Stronger NJ Business grants is no longer tied to whether a business has applied for a Small Business Association Loan. In some cases, businesses may be eligible for reimbursement of repair costs incurred prior to applying for a grant.

Applications must be received on or by October 31, 2013. For more information on the Stronger NJ Business Grant Program, including the complete list of eligibility criteria and eligible uses of funds visit <http://application.njeda.com/strongernjbusiness> or call EDA's Sandy hotline at 1-855-SANDY-BZ (1-855-726-3929).

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