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Lt. Governor Kim Guadagno Visits Stronger NJ Business Grant Recipients in Ocean City

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Stops Highlight Small Business Recovery Successes In Midst of Critical Summer Season

Trenton, NJ – Ahead of the July 4th holiday, Lt. Governor Kim Guadagno today visited Ocean City to celebrate the resiliency and determination that has defined so many small business owners along the Jersey Shore in the aftermath of Superstorm Sandy. This included stops at Sun Rose Words and Music and Pacific Soul, two businesses that sustained heavy damage and benefitted from Stronger NJ Business Grant Program support to assist in their recovery efforts.

"Small businesses are the backbone of New Jersey's economy, and nowhere is this more clear than in Ocean City and across the Jersey Shore during the critical summer season," said Lt. Governor Kim Guadagno. "Today is not only about spreading the word that these Sandy-impacted businesses are open and primed for a great summer, but also highlighting the incredible spirit of resolve that guided them through their darkest hours toward recovery and the better days we celebrate on this July 4th holiday."

An Ocean City mainstay, Sun Rose Words and Music is an independently-owned book and CD seller specializing in a wide array of non-fiction and fiction genres, while also hosting readings and book signings throughout the year. In addition, Sun Rose offers a diverse variety of games, office supplies and children's toys. In the aftermath of Sandy, the business suffered considerable damage to fixtures and storage areas, in addition to a significant loss of inventory. To aid in their recovery, Sun Rose received a Stronger NJ grant that not only offset recovery costs, but helped them to stay in business altogether.

"We at Sun Rose Words & Music are very grateful for the financial aid we received from the State of New Jersey," said Rosalyn Lifshin co-owner Sun Rose Words and Music. "We thank the Lt. Governor for her help in providing assistance to us in completing the grant application and for the quick response we received from the state economic development representatives with whom we worked. Had it not been for this state grant, we may not be open today and a four-decade business in Ocean City would be closed. Superstorm Sandy was devastating, but the help we received made it bearable."

Like Sun Rose, Pacific Soul is another Ocean City small business that received critical Stronger NJ grant support to help it through the impact of Sandy. Located on Asbury Avenue, Pacific Soul offers a unique selection of Bali and Bali-themed items ranging from clothing, home décor, purses, accessories and more. To better serve their customers, the owners travel to Bali every winter to personally select many of the handmade items they offer for sale.

"It was a pleasure to welcome the Lt. Governor and hear her support for small businesses like ours ahead of the critical summer season," said Roger Brangan, owner of Pacific Soul. "We opened the store in Ocean City in the spring of 2010, and we look forward to many more successful summers here at the Jersey Shore."

To date, more than 630 businesses have been approved for Stronger NJ Business Grants and loans totaling over \$68.7 million to assist in Sandy recovery work. While the deadlines for the Stronger NJ Business programs have passed, anyone who opened an application before the deadline is encouraged to complete it as funds are still available for eligible businesses.

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The Stronger NJ programs are funded through New Jersey's Community Development Block Grant Disaster Recovery (CDBG-DR) allocation from the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). Similar to other Sandy relief programs, there are strict federal eligibility requirements to which the EDA and applicants must comply.

For more information on the Stronger NJ Business programs, 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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