43North Announces Strategic Partnership with Facebook, M&T Bank and Other National Partners

“Ignite Buffalo” program will award small businesses with grants between $25,000 and $100,000, and provide 12 months of business mentorship.

BUFFALO, N.Y.—43North today announced a strategic partnership with Facebook, along with M&T Bank, Quickbooks, Amazon Web Services, WordPress and WooCommerce, that will offer small businesses access to much-needed mentorship and capital through the Ignite Buffalo program.

On July 9th-11th, Buffalo will host the Facebook Community Boost, a Facebook program to help US small businesses grow and to equip more people with the digital skills they need to compete in the new economy. The free three-day curriculum focuses on preparing Western New York small businesses for a mobile-first economy.

Additionally, through its strategic partnership with Facebook, the Ignite Buffalo program will award 27 grants totaling $1 million to WNY small businesses and provide 12 months of mentoring programs.

“This strategic partnership 43North has established with Facebook is further evidence that Silicon Valley is looking at cities like Buffalo for the next wave of innovative entrepreneurship,” said Bill Maggio, Managing Director at Lorraine Capital, CEO of the Jacobs Institute, Immediate Past Chairman of the Board, and one of the founding board members of 43North. “Investment in small businesses becomes more impactful when coupled with strong mentorship and a network of resources. The digital skills small businesses will learn during this event will pay dividends for years to come which aligns with 43North’s mission of growing entrepreneurship, in all its forms, in Western New York.” Bill Maggio will be leading the Ignite Buffalo program on behalf of 43North during the 12 months of sustainability and mentorship programming.

“We’ve been talking to people around the U.S., and Buffalo has a vibrant small businesses community. In Buffalo, research found that 67 percent of SMBs surveyed said that social platforms, like Facebook, were essential for their business. We saw an opportunity to provide more resources and mentorship to help local business owners grow their companies. That’s why we're excited to partner with 43North and make Ignite Buffalo a new component of our Facebook Community Boost program,” said David Jakubowski, US Publisher Programs Director for Facebook.

“Buffalo’s renaissance is underway, and we are diversifying, modernizing and growing our regional economy. Small businesses must keep pace in this dynamic environment, adapting to changes both local and global,” said M&T Bank Chairman and CEO, Rene F. Jones. “As long-time believers in the power of small business to drive economic growth, M&T Bank will bring its small business expertise and experience to this strategic partnership, working with 43North, Facebook, Amazon AWS, Quickbooks, Wordpress and WooCommerce to help small businesses in Western New York overcome new challenges, and to help expand our economic recovery.”

“Small Businesses and entrepreneurs are the backbone of our economy,” said Mayor Byron W. Brown. “These businesses have a vested interest in our City, our neighborhoods and our quality of life. The Ignite Buffalo program complements my Administration’s ongoing efforts to foster a thriving small business ecosystem while also creating a strong business assistance network. I urge our small business owners and entrepreneurs to take advantage of this opportunity and to apply by the deadline.”

Whereas the 43North competition focuses on high-growth startups that are seeking larger investment to grow businesses that aim to have national or global impact, Ignite Buffalo is aimed at the existing small businesses eager to contribute to the revitalization of Western New York. This grant targets businesses with smaller capital needs than those that would apply to the 43North $5 Million Startup Competition. The best cupcakery, the best hand-made craft store, and Main Street-type businesses have different needs for capital and often don't fit typical investment criteria. Ignite Buffalo is specifically set out to have an impact on underrepresented small businesses already established in Western New York.

Western New York small businesses interested in applying for the Ignite Buffalo grants can do so beginning today. The following eligibility criteria must be applicable in order to apply for the grants:

1. 1. Must be existing business in the greater Buffalo/Niagara region (CEO or founder must be in the region, more than 1/2 of employees in the region. Note: Canada not eligible).
2. 2. Need to be in business for at least 12 months.

3. 3. Must have some business traction: existing customers or revenue; willing to provide references.
4. 4. Mailing address within 8 regional zipcodes of Western New York: Allegany, Cattaraugus, Chautauqua, Erie, Genesee, Niagara, Orleans, and Wyoming.
5. 5. Leader or appointed representative(s) of the company needs to be in the Buffalo area on July 9th - 11th, 2018 to participate in the Facebook Community Boost.

Businesses that meet the criteria of the Ignite Buffalo grant program can apply at www.ignitebuffalo.org and must have their applications submitted by 12:00 pm, June 13, 2018.

Small business owners from across the region are encouraged to join 43North, Facebook, July 9 - 11 for a packed curriculum of small business training. Everything from growing your business with mobile advertising, financial readiness to expanding your business internationally will be covered by experts from all areas of business.

About 43North
43North is the $5 million startup competition, awarding cash prizes to some of the best entrepreneurs and startups from around the world to grow their businesses in Buffalo. 43North winners also receive free incubator space in Buffalo for one year, guidance from mentors in related fields, and access to other business incentive programs such as START-UP NY. For a full list of sponsors and more information about 43North, visit www.43north.org.

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