M&T Bank Newsroom

M&T Bank Spotlights Connecticut Small Businesses in Innovative Pop-Up Shop Concept at Captain's Cove Seaport

Local small businesses will have access to retail space at Bridgeport's premier tourist destination

BRIDGEPORT, Conn., Aug. 11, 2022 -- M&T Bank is bringing its innovative Spotlight Shop concept to Connecticut, providing local small businesses with an opportunity to market their unique products from a pop-up space in Bridgeport's popular Captain's Cove Seaport.

The M&T Spotlight Shop is a modern, 240-square-foot modular retail space with folding walls that provides a welcoming, engaging space for businesses to connect with customers. Starting today in Bridgeport and continuing in different locations across the state, businesses from across Connecticut will rotate through in two-week segments.

The first businesses to be featured, all of which are M&T customers, include:

- **Leisha's Bakeria**, a small-batch bakery owned by Leisha Young and located in the Bijou Square neighborhood of downtown Bridgeport. Leisha's Bakeria offers freshly baked cookies, cakes, and other baked goods.
- **El Coquito**, a family-owned Puerto Rican restaurant located in Bridgeport that has served the community for over 30 years.

M&T's Spotlight Shop first launched in Baltimore's Inner Harbor in 2019, and in 2020 went virtual due to the coronavirus pandemic. The pandemic-inspired adaptation of the physical retail space was so popular that the company will run a Virtual Spotlight Shop simultaneously alongside the physical location at Captain's Cove in Bridgeport.

Additional local small businesses will be added to both Spotlight Shops throughout the month-long stay at Captain's Cove. The following month, the physical Spotlight Shop will move to new, high-traffic locations across Connecticut.

"The Spotlight Shop is a symbol of our unwavering support of small business owners," said Frank Micalizzi, M&T's Bridgeport regional president. "Bridgeport is home to many exciting and creative businesses. As one of the leading SBA lenders in Connecticut, we are committed to helping small businesses grow, create jobs and uplift our community."

"My business depends heavily on word-of-mouth and foot traffic, so to be featured in M&T's Spotlight Shop, with the new location and all the exposure that comes with it, makes me feel so fortunate," said Leisha Young, owner of Leisha's Bakeria.

"We are proud and happy to welcome M&T Bank's Spotlight Shop here to Captain's Cove Seaport," said Bruce Williams, vice president of Captain's Cove. "As the supporter of a number of small maritime businesses here at the Seaport, we appreciate M&T's commitment to the small business community in the Bridgeport area."

"As Vice Chair of the Finance, Revenue & Bonding committee, I am always concerned as to what is available to the small, diverse businesses that call Bridgeport home," said State Senator Marilyn Moore. "The M&T Spotlight Shop at Captain's Cove is a great way to bring exposure to such businesses, and I hope this is just the beginning of giving exposure to small businesses who are the backbone of our communities."

"Bridgeport is a great place to live, work, and of course, start and grow a business. As a part of the Finance, Revenue and Bonding Committee in the State Legislature, it is my job to ensure Connecticut attracts and keeps businesses," said State Representative Steve Stafstrom. When companies like M&T step up and help local businesses, it goes a long way to sustaining our vibrant small business community"

"Bridgeport is home to many small businesses that are deeply enshrined in the city's culture and community," said Bridgeport City Council President Aidee Nieves. "I'm glad to see M&T Bank highlighting these local businesses in their Spotlight Shop, which will bring in new customers and show visitors the best of what Bridgeport has to offer."

"The Spotlight Shop is a unique way to showcase small businesses in Connecticut and help them grow," said CBIA President and CEO, Chris DiPentima. "CBIA is pleased to see M&T Bank facilitating this program to give local businesses more exposure."

As part of its commitment to supporting local businesses and entrepreneurs, M&T recently launched a Multicultural Small Business Innovation Lab in Bridgeport, Conn. The seven-week program, which was announced in June and will kick off on Sept. 21, is designed to help local multicultural business owners thrive, grow and pursue new ideas by providing guidance and skills to expand and operate their businesses.

M&T consistently ranks in the top 10 in the nation for U.S. Small Business Administration lending and is currently the second

leading small business lender in the SBA District of Connecticut.

The Bridgeport M&T Spotlight Shop will be open Wednesday and Thursday from11am-3pm, and Friday through Sunday12pm-5pm, weather permitting. For more information and to visit the M&T Virtual Spotlight Shop, please visit www.mtb.com/spotlightshop. To keep up with all the Spotlight Shop action, follow us on Instagram - @mandt_spotlightshop.

About M&T

M&T Bank Corporation is a financial holding company headquartered in Buffalo, New York. M&T's principal banking subsidiary, M&T Bank, provides banking products and services in 12 states across the eastern U.S.
from Maine to Virginia and Washington, D.C. Trust-related services are provided in select markets in the U.S. and abroad by M&T's Wilmington Trust-affiliated companies and by M&T Bank.

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