

# Smyth County Business Boot Camp presents awards to 4 entrepreneurs

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Four businesses came out of the Smyth County Business Boot Camp with financial awards designed to support their entrepreneurial efforts.

The Chamber of Commerce of Smyth County hosted the eight-week boot camp this fall. The boot camp offers local entrepreneurs with an idea for a business an opportunity to receive training to transform that idea into reality and open the business in Smyth County. The boot camp also supports existing businesses and can receive help them expand their current operations. At the boot camp's conclusion, participants present their ideas to a panel of judges. They also present completed business plans to a separate panel of judges. Based on the scores from these two panels, winners are selected.

Sarah Gillespie, the chamber's executive director of the chamber, said she was proud to present entrepreneurial grants to four businesses, one each from the towns of Chilhowie, Saltville and Marion, and one in the county.

The winners were Julius and Kayla Winebarger, Downtown Outfitters, downtown Marion; Seth and Courtney Umbarger, Laurel Springs Farm, Smyth County; George and Angela Robbins, Robbins Small Engine, Chilhowie; and Barry Salewsky, New Horizons, Saltville.

The funding for the program's grants was provided by the Mount Rogers Planning District Commission, Virginia Tourism, the Saltville Industrial Development Authority, and the town of Chilhowie.

The boot camp is expected to be offered again next spring as part of the Smyth County chamber's goal to fill downtown buildings in Chilhowie, Saltville and Marion, and build the local economy in Smyth County. "We are very excited to have so many wonderful partners to work with on this boot camp," said Gillespie. "This is a great step in the direction of revitalizing our downtowns and surrounding communities. We are thrilled to be able to offer this program and will continue to seek out funding so that we can keep investing in the local economy."



## Boot camp 2

Addison, Seth and Courtney Umbarger of Laurel Springs Farm in Smyth County.