

For Immediate Release

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Downtown Leaders Announce OverFlo Fundraising Campaign, Graphic and Social Media Portals and First Challenge Donation

Wilmington, NC – With over 900 businesses in Downtown, dozens of small business owners envisioned a campaign to provide a unified and collaborative approach to help with relief efforts and support small businesses in the area. Their vision is now a reality as civic leaders have announced a new initiative called *Over Flo*. The group also announced a \$10,000 challenge grant to kick-off the campaign.

The campaign name was inspired by a desire to help the community get over the hurricane impacts. It also alludes to the fact that the community and Downtown has an abundant array of people who care and an interconnected economy and quality of life that is unmatched anywhere in the country.

Over Flo has already attracted support. A private donor under the moniker of *Friends from Iowa* has already pledged \$10,000 as a matching grant. To continue the momentum, organizers will also be hosting an Over Flo benefit concert on October 20, 2018, with proceeds going to the campaign. Details about the location, hours, band line-up and appearances will be made public on October 3rd.

To meet this match grant, and go way beyond, *Over Flo* is enlisting merchants to showcase the community and donate to the cause. Participating businesses will develop specials for a week, a month or even longer. Examples include selling a Foodies Over Flo appetizer for \$5 with a portion of the sales being donated back to the campaign. Other examples include t-shirts, bracelets, art work, gift items and other similar products. The list of participating businesses and specials will be posted on-line at www.overflowilmington.org and www.facebook.com/OverFloWilmington/

“We wanted to create a way to bring the Downtown business community together to collaborate and make a substantial impact,” said Billy Mellon, owner of manna restaurant. “This campaign provides a fantastic vehicle to accomplish this vision,” he said.

Justin Smith, co-owner of Husk, Yosake and Dram + Morsel, said “Before the hurricane was even over, several businesses informally met to kick-around ideas to help. We quickly realized the need to broaden the conversation and find a way to extend support beyond just the next few weeks,” he said.

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In addition to Mr. Mellon and Mr. Smith, the leadership team also includes other business owners. They include Steve Gaconnier with Anne Bonny's, Bobby Reville of Tavern Law, Beth Crookham of Musco Lighting and music promoter/musician Jason Jackson. The Fiduciary agent is Wilmington Downtown Incorporated (WDI), a 501c3 organization with over 40 years of economic and community development experience. WDI also undergoes an independent audit each and every year.

The graphic logo was created by local artist Trevor Van Meter, owner of HeyTVM Design & Apparel. "I wanted a look that visually incorporated our crucial tie to the river and the ocean, yet also reference movement to meet our goals," said Mr. Van Meter. The heart shape also shows that the community cares," he said.

"WDI is excited to be part of this collaboration to help the lead recovery efforts in Downtown and across the community," said WDI President Ed Wolverton. "Many people are hurting and this will provide a beacon form our community to move forward," he said.

Businesses or individuals interested in sponsoring, supporting or participating in the campaign should visit www.overflowililmington.org or phone 910.763.7349 for more information. Organizers have a range of sponsor benefits. The site also identifies the charities that will benefit from the effort, although more may be added.

About Wilmington Downtown Incorporated

Wilmington Downtown, Inc. (WDI) is a public-private partnership agency that promotes the economic growth and development of Downtown Wilmington and is a tax exempt 501c3 organization.

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