

Family Farm and Woman-Owned Telecom Firm Each Earn Grand Prize in Movers & Shakers Small Business Competition

More than 500 Companies in New Jersey & New York Competed for Two, Top Prizes Valued at Approximately \$100,000

SHORT HILLS , NEW JERSEY , UNITED STATES OF AMERICA , October 26, 2020 /EINPresswire.com/ -- [Investors Bank](#) and the companies co-sponsoring the Movers & Shakers Small Business Competition recently selected the two grand prize winners. The Movers & Shakers' competition was put on hold earlier this year as a result of the pandemic. The small businesses earning the grand prize are [Alstede Farms](#), a 600-acre family farm in Chester, N.J., and [Macondo Networks](#), a WBENC certified woman-owned small business in Randolph, N.J. that supplies telecommunications equipment (new and refurbished), conferencing systems and cloud services. Each organization received a grand prize package with an estimated value of \$100,000.



Investors' CEO Kevin Cummings (center) and executives from bank's retail and business banking units recognized farmer Kurt Alstede and the farm's 65 employees as a grand prize winner in the Movers & Shakers Competition.

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Investors Bank, the New Jersey Devils and WCBS 880 (WCBS-AM) developed the Movers & Shakers as an elevator-pitch competition that drew more than 500 entries from among small businesses in New Jersey and New York. Each company's entry was evaluated on the three criteria aligned with the key values that continue to drive Investors Bank's success: Creativity, bringing new approaches to the marketplace; Competitiveness, versus near-in competitors and larger corporations; and

Community, fostering significant and positive changes in neighborhoods the business serves.

The small businesses that entered the competition represent a broad range of industries and sectors: architecture and design, business services, consumer brands, hospitality, marketing, manufacturing, technology, and sports/recreation, to name a few.

Investors' Chairman and CEO Kevin Cummings, President and senior executives from the business and retail banking groups presented a \$10,000 check from the bank, which is a part of the \$100,000 grand prize package, to each winner. Kurt W. Alstede, the farm's founder, owner and general manager, along with some of the farm's 65 employees, received the grand prize at Alstede Farms. Jennifer Frey, the founder and owner of Macondo Networks, collected the honors at Investors' Roxbury branch at Two Commerce Road in Succasunna, N.J.

In announcing the grand prize winners and finalists, Mr. Cummings said, "We are inspired by the compelling stories the small businesses shared in their Movers & Shakers applications. The companies' owners and employees are committed to excellence in providing products and services, assisting clients, and giving back to local communities. It's clearer than ever that small businesses are a core part of our regional and national economy. Investors and our partners know and understand that these companies deserve our support right now."



Jennifer Frey, managing partner of Macondo Networks, is holding Dash, the company's mascot.



Investors' CEO Kevin Cummings (third from right), Sr, V.P. MaryRose Genovese (far left), Roxbury Branch Manager Alp Akturk and the branch team present a \$10,000 check to Jennifer Frey (center) and Stacy White, with Dash, of Macondo Networks.

The Movers & Shakers grand prize package comprised three key elements. The Grand Prize winners received \$10,000 from Investors Bank. Each company will get an estimated \$15,000 worth of advertising from WCBS880F (WCBS-AM). The New Jersey Devils will create a special event for each winner and their guests in one of Prudential Center's exclusive suites during a regular season hockey game. Digital and video advertising/messaging will be displayed in the arena for each of the grand prize winners on the day of their event.

"We value building productive relationships with small businesses that continue to drive to be examples of best-in-class companies," said New Jersey Devils President Jake Reynolds. "We know these organizations are always looking for better, faster and more affordable methods to serve their clients along with improved ways to recognize their outstanding teammates. As we participated with our valued partners at Investors Bank in their Movers & Shakers program, we were strongly reminded that small businesses need solid leaders, a competitive edge and unstoppable energy to succeed. We are proud that this program shows that Alstede Farms and Macondo Networks are recognized today and given additional resources to achieve even more in the future."

The co-sponsors also chose "Top 10 Finalists" from among the Movers & Shakers applicants. Each of these businesses, which include three minority- or women-owned companies, have developed innovative, viable and sustainable business models or products that distinguish their operations from even their larger competitors. (Brief descriptions about the 10 finalists are on the Investors Bank website.)

The finalists are invited to a virtual celebration on Tuesday, October 27, hosted by WCBS 880 Small Business Reporter Joe Connolly.

Connolly said, "The Movers & Shakers competition attracted a truly incredible group of small businesses. Selecting the two grand prize winners and top ten finalists was very interesting and difficult because all these companies are performing at an ultra-high level, in every aspect of their businesses. Even in a challenging economy, they are taking advantage of new opportunities and openings they uncover. That's what New York area business owners are doing every day. I thank Investors Bank for recognizing local business owners in this way and for asking me to take part."

Overview of Grand Prize-Winning Companies

Alstede Farms provides a bounty of local fruits, vegetables and flowers, which are grown using a variety of farming practices including among others: natural, sustainable, certified organic growing methods on their permanently preserved farmland. The farm and its employees welcome families, groups, and schoolchildren to visit the grounds and pick their own produce, experience a working farm and find the joy of connecting with nature. The farm also supports the community through food donations. In 2019, it gave more than 18,000 pounds of produce to local food banks.

Macondo Networks is a WBENC certified woman-owned and -founded business that supplies telecommunications equipment (new and refurbished), conferencing services, and cloud solutions to a wide range of businesses. Ms. Frey and the company's employees develop close relationships with their clients to ensure companies make the best buying decisions. The firm also conducts industry research to find emerging trends, identify technology evolution, and recognize manufacturers' platform transitions as soon as possible. The company supports many local fundraisers by donating and volunteering, and by responding to special requests for computer equipment.

About Investors Bank

Investors Bank, headquartered in Short Hills, New Jersey, is a full-service commercial bank that has been serving customers since 1926. With over \$27 billion in assets and a network of more than 150 retail branches, Investors Bank delivers personalized services and products tailored to the needs of its customers. Investors Bank's banking services include complete deposit, loan and treasury management products for consumers and businesses. Investors Bank: Member FDIC and Equal Housing Lender.

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