



For Immediate Release
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**MCEDC Introduces MoCo Marketplace Website to Support
Local Retailers and Restaurants**
*New digital platform connects consumers to MoCo merchants offering
safe winter shopping options—plus the chance to win big holiday prizes*

Rockville, Maryland – The Montgomery County Economic Development Corporation (MCEDC), along with Visit Montgomery and the Montgomery County Food Council's MoCo Made, have launched MoCo Marketplace, a website featuring a directory of local business shopping and dining information that highlights deals and safety protocols to encourage customers to support local businesses online or safely in-person. The site also features a unique MoCo Holiday Challenge, offering substantial prizes of up to \$1,000 in gift cards to use at participating MoCo merchants.

Business owners can participate in a “virtual shopping center” that supports hundreds of local merchants, restaurateurs, artisans and farmers, and is backed by an extensive marketing campaign to direct traffic to the MoCo Marketplace website. Consumers can explore a comprehensive list of shops, restaurants and makers located within the county and learn more about their safety protocols around in-store, pick-up and delivery – all in one digital location.

Holiday shoppers are encouraged to go to mocomarketplace.com to find participating retailers. Merchants are invited to take the safety pledge and join the virtual shopping center.

Throughout the month of December, consumers who sign up and take the pledge to buy local will have the opportunity to win big in the MoCo Holiday Challenge. Participants will automatically be entered to win weekly prizes by checking in to participating retailers during pick up, take out or a safe in-person visit. Fifteen (15) consumers who check in five (5) or more times throughout the weeks of December 11-17 and December 18-24 will receive MoCo Marketplace Gift Cards ranging from \$500 to \$1,000.

“The MoCo Marketplace is an essential component of our year-long public-private 3R Initiative, which was created to help small, locally-owned retail and restaurants adapt to the effects of COVID-19 and survive the important holiday season and subsequent winter months,” said Benjamin H. Wu, the President and CEO of MCEDC. “We appreciate the support of the public and private partners who are committed to assisting our local shops and eateries in new and creative ways during the pandemic.”

Other 3R Initiative activities include a recently concluded grant program which awarded over \$900,000 to restaurant and retail establishments throughout the county.

“Our shops, restaurants, breweries and wineries in Montgomery County are what make our communities truly special, from our ethnic restaurants that represent the diversity of our county to tastemakers and artisans creating exceptional products, paired with one-of-a-kind experiences. We are excited to support this effort in highlighting these gems, starting with this holiday season,” said Kelly Groff, the President and CEO of Visit Montgomery, MD.

“We appreciate this opportunity to highlight the work of our Montgomery County farms and food artisans. MoCo Made’s delicious products can be enjoyed all year long or as one-of-a-kind gifts this holiday season,” said Heather Bruskin, Executive Director of the Montgomery County Food Council.

Montgomery County merchants are invited to join the MoCo Marketplace website at no cost. Current local participating retailers and food & beverage establishments include: AnnaTeiko, BannerBees, Cinnamon Tree Organics, Sprinkles Potomac, Sha’s Creations, Denizens Brewing Co. and Carmen’s Italian Ice. Customers and business owners interested in participating can go to mocomarketplace.com for more information.

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About MCEDC

The Montgomery County Economic Development Corporation (MCEDC) is the official public-private economic development organization representing Montgomery County, Maryland. Created in 2016, MCEDC is led by a Board of Directors of business executives. Its mission is to help businesses start, grow and relocate in Montgomery County by helping them gain access to top talent, business and market intelligence and prime locations. For more information, visit our [website](#). Follow us on [Twitter](#), [Facebook](#), and [LinkedIn](#).

About Visit Montgomery

Visit Montgomery, MD is the destination marketing organization for Montgomery County, Maryland – located just north of Washington, DC. The mission of Visit Montgomery is to give our visitors useful information for a visit to Montgomery County and Washington, DC area and to enthusiastically promote, market, and sell Montgomery County, Maryland as a destination for meetings, conventions and travelers, fostering economic development and benefiting and supporting members and the overall business community.

About MoCo Made

The Montgomery County Food Council launched the MoCo Made initiative in Fall 2017 in partnership with the Montgomery County Economic Development Corporation to highlight our vibrant local food and beverage sector. The MoCo Made program features 73 producers of fruits, vegetables, dairy, meat and other products from Montgomery County farms, in addition to packaged goods, beverages and desserts and confections created by Montgomery County food artisans. The Food Council builds the capacity of these local, small businesses through access to new markets, special events, networking and business development opportunities, and educational programming.