



The Calico Rock Community Foundation has awarded \$5,000 in grants to 20 local small businesses. In a social media post, the foundation says small businesses have been hit particularly hard during the COVID-19 pandemic. Calico Rock tourism was down 70% over the previous year.

Calico Rock Mayor Greg Hamby says, "Our local economy is dependent on tourism. Tourist dollars support our gas stations, restaurants, lodging, shing docks, and shopping. Those local businesses then support our mechanics, grocery stores, hair salons, and more."

The foundation says this grant program was designed to support the local businesses during the winter when it's particularly hard. These 20 businesses employ 108 people in the Calico Rock community, which means they are supporting 108 families.

The businesses reported an average of 35% decline in their sales from last year. All of them have experienced increased costs due to higher minimum wages, pandemic safety requirements and increased costs to their purchases.

This grant program was funded by proceeds from The Marketplace and Artisan Gift Shop, which are owned by the foundation. The foundation uses these proceeds to support the Calico Rock Museum & Visitor Center and community revitalization projects.

With the pandemic, the museum could not offer educational programming in 2020, therefore, the funds were used to support these local businesses.

Gloria Sanders, executive director of the community foundation and Main Street Calico Rock, says, "I was a small business owner myself and I know just how hard it can be to make ends meet, even when there isn't a pandemic raging."

The average grant was \$250, which can make a huge difference for a small business operating on less than \$50,000 a year in sales. These businesses have to buy their goods, pay their utilities, make a mortgage or pay rent, pay employees and try to support their families. These grants were open to any business operating within the city limits of Calico Rock or licensed to operate by the city.

For more information on the Calico Rock Community Foundation, visit its website at [www.calicorockmuseum.com](http://www.calicorockmuseum.com) or call 870-297-6100. To see a complete listing of all the businesses in Calico Rock, visit [www.explorecalico.com](http://www.explorecalico.com).

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