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Wayne County, NY - November 24, 2020 - In September 2019 Wayne County Economic Development Corporation (WEDC) announced KickStart Wayne County as a new initiative aimed at accelerating new business development in the County. As part of this initiative WEDC held its first Start-up Pitch Competition in November that year and awarded its first finalist prize to David Murphy of Load Alone, a patent pending, multi-position winch pulling system to load human remains in vehicles for removals and transportation to funeral homes, airports and crematories.

This year WEDC continued this effort holding its second annual Pitch Competition. On Wednesday November 18, at the historic Ohmann Theater in Lyons, six Wayne County entrepreneurs made their "pitch" to a panel of five expert judges competing for an award of \$32,000 in startup capital to "KickStart" their local business. Jamie Sonnevile, a Williamson resident, was selected as this year's winner for her innovative new custom web application that assists farmers and labor brokers with manager their day-to-day tasks via multiple configurable modules.

Jamie, a graduate from Cornell University where she studied Communication Systems and Technologies, is no stranger to the agriculture industry. Jamie grew up on an apple farm in Wayne County, and currently owns and operates (with her husband, Jason) a 220-acre apple farm in Williamson. Both experiences helped her understand the challenges farmers are facing when working within the confines of local labor laws, existing payroll systems and farm management software options, and an increase in pressure for family farms to build efficiencies. Agri-Trak merges two of Jamie's passions, technology and farming, and allows her to work more closely with her husband.

Jamie and Jason have two boys, Carter and Casen, and in her free time, she likes to give back to her community and has served on numerous boards and with various volunteer

organizations. Currently, Jamie is the President of the Williamson Central School Board of Education and also serves on the Executive Board of the Western Wayne Chamber of Commerce.

The Pitch competition is just part of the Kick Start Wayne County initiative that the WEDC hopes will continue to inspire entrepreneurs to build and grow their businesses here in Wayne County.

“We’ve been getting some great feedback from our participants, and I think we’re just a the tip of the iceberg when it comes to the real fruitfulness of this effort, which is helping our residents access business resources and encouraging entrepreneurship.” said Brian Pincelli, Executive Director of the Wayne Economic Development Corporation. It was made clear by several participant, including this year’s winner.

“The Wayne County Pitch Competition encouraged me to focus on moving Agri-Trak full scale,” said Jamie.

There were a broad range of partners who helped with the initiative including financial support and judges from Lyons National Bank, EFPR Group, LLP and Harris Beach, PLLC as well as coaching and workshops provided by NYS Small Business Development Center and SCORE.

“It was a fantastic event with tremendous help from our sponsors and judges” said Pincelli. “While it’s great to recognize a winner and help support their efforts to start their business, the whole event is really about bringing those great business ideas we know are out there to the table, and working with all of the applicants to help them take the steps necessary to make ideas reality.”

The Wayne County Economic Development Corporation plans to continue this annual fall event and is already beginning to plans for November 2021. Please contact Tanya Hasseler, Business Outreach Coordinator at Wayne County Economic Development & Planning at thasseler@co.wayne.ny.us or call (315) 946-5975 regarding sponsorship or assistance with your Wayne County business.

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