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Greater Cleveland Partnership's Council of Smaller Enterprises Hosts Cleveland Chain Reaction Pitch Days

Twenty semi-finalists will pitch their business to a panel of judges December 8 and 9
Winners to be announced live on "Kickin' it with Kenny" December 16



CLEVELAND (December 7, 2022) – Greater Cleveland Partnership's (GCP) Council of Smaller Enterprises (COSE) will host the Cleveland Chain Reaction pitch days **Thursday, December 8 and Friday, December 9** at the GCP offices. The competition's 20 semi-finalists have completed a business bootcamp hosted by JumpStart and will pitch their business to a panel of judges consisting of partners and supporters from Bedrock, GCP/COSE, KeyBank, JumpStart and MAGNET, along with partners in the entrepreneurial ecosystem.

The semi-finalists are vying for prizes that include \$40,000 for first place, \$20,000 for second place and \$10,000 for third place. The winners will be announced **Friday, December 16** at Tower City, and the public can watch live during "Kickin' it with Kenny" on FOX 8 News in the Morning.

“We are looking forward to the Cleveland Chain Reaction pitch days,” said Megan E. Kim, executive director of COSE and senior vice president, membership development and marketing at GCP. “Our entrepreneurs have completed their bootcamp where business experts have advised them on how to successfully pitch their business, create a business plan, place value on their business and appropriately invest capital to take their business to the next level. Our judges are eager to see how these entrepreneurs will take what they have learned, along with the feedback they have received from the experts, and apply it to the competition.”

Cleveland Chain Reaction judges share what they’re looking for from these entrepreneurs in a winning business pitch:

“A winning pitch isn’t about selling a product; it’s about showcasing an entrepreneur’s expertise,” said JumpStart business advisor Patty Ajdukiewicz. “We’re looking for a clear ask and understanding of how the investment will take a business to the next level, coupled with a demonstrated knowledge of industry, market and competitive landscape.”

“Innovation is key to moving our region forward and getting ahead of the progress curve,” said MAGNET marketing manager Rachel Trem. “I’ll be watching for ideas, concepts and products that will help our community and our region transform and grow.”

“I am so excited to serve as a judge for Cleveland Chain Reaction's pitch days and to be part of this event, which showcases the enthusiasm and excitement local entrepreneurs have for their ideas and for the community,” said Shanelle Smith Whigham, senior vice president and director of community relations & corporate initiatives at KeyBank. “The contestants who rise to the top will showcase not only their expertise and products, but also how their efforts will help their business and our community grow.”

“As a small-business owner who built a business from nothing into a thriving business for 25 years, I have the utmost respect for all of the entrepreneurs participating in the Cleveland Chain Reaction pitch competition,” said Ken Wilson, senior manager, minority business growth at GCP. “I’d be honored to work for any of these innovative business leaders. As a judge of this competition, I’m listening for common-sense, down-to-earth explanations of how and why their product is beneficial to their intended audiences. I’m listening for the successes they’ve achieved thus far. I’m listening for their strategies for taking their companies to the next level, and as senior manager, minority business growth at GCP, I’m looking for opportunities to support their growth any way I can.”

“Bedrock is excited to once again be a part of Cleveland Chain Reaction, which connects a wide range of entrepreneurial talent to an enthused clientele, said Jason Russell, VP of operations and leasing, Bedrock. “As part of the team at Tower City, we’re looking for local small businesses who offer unique products and services, while also providing convenient and quick grab-and-go necessities. A winning pitch will put forth a comprehensive business plan, explain how their product or idea fills a niche in the Cleveland market and most importantly, offers a passionate and compelling story about their business!”

The 20 semi-finalists include (in alphabetical order):

- [CHVD JUSTIN](#)
- [Cleveland Flower Walls](#)
- [Cure Nail Gallery](#)
- [Ellie-May's Gourmet Cookies](#)
- [Evergreen Podcasts](#)
- [Fedora Food](#)
- [Fuego Fermentations LLC](#)
- [He Loves Curves Boutique LLC](#)
- [Hunny Bunny's Confections](#)

- [KAZ Radio TV Network](#)
- [Micah Specialty Foods](#)
- [Professional Inspiration](#)
- [Recreational Pots and Plants](#)
- [Scoot! Coffee](#)
- [Spa Lavender](#)
- [Terranean Herbs & Spices](#)
- [The Cleveland Brew Shop](#)
- [The House Hotels](#)
- [The Plug Appliances](#)
- [The Sweet Fix Bakery](#)

Media interested in covering the Cleveland Chain Reaction pitch days should contact Kelley Notaro Schreiber to secure admission.

Cleveland Chain Reaction connects entrepreneurs to capital and mentors and places new businesses in Cleveland neighborhoods to create jobs and prosperity. Since its inception in 2017 (the competition was put on hold in 2020 due to the pandemic), Cleveland Chain Reaction has received more than 476 applications, coached and prepared 108 small business semi-finalists and connected winning businesses to nearly \$1.7 million in capital.

Cleveland Chain Reaction was inspired by [Cleveland Hustles](#), the reality series produced by LeBron James that aired on CNBC in 2016. Cleveland Chain Reaction is an independent and unrelated effort that supports the continued opportunity that Cleveland Hustles initiated.

Cleveland Chain Reaction is produced by GCP and COSE in collaboration with FOX 8 News in the Morning's "Kickin' it with Kenny." FreshWater Cleveland is the competition's digital publication partner. Cleveland Chain Reaction is sponsored by MAGNET, Bedrock, KeyBank and JumpStart. Visit clevelandchainreaction.org for more information.

Two Cleveland Chain Reaction semi-finalists have withdrawn from the competition. Please refer the updated list of 20 semi-finalists above.

Photo Caption: Emma Risley from Scoot! Coffee practicing the company's business pitch during "Kickin' it with Kenny" on FOX 8 News in the Morning. Photo courtesy of Greater Cleveland Partnership.

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About Greater Cleveland Partnership and the Council of Smaller Enterprises

Greater Cleveland Partnership (GCP) is the region's leading economic development organization and with over 12,000 members, the largest metropolitan chamber of commerce in the nation. Guided by a board of corporate and entrepreneurial CEOs, the organization focuses on strategic initiatives, business services, and advocacy to build a vibrant business environment and region for small businesses, middle-market companies and global corporations. It includes the Council of Smaller Enterprises ([COSE](#)) and [Cleveland Development Advisors](#), a real estate development affiliate. GCP is committed to working with private, civic, and public partners to accelerate growth and prosperity to propel Greater Cleveland towards being one of the Great Regions in the Great Lakes.

Council of Smaller Enterprises (COSE), the small business arm of GCP, provides networking and educational events, advocacy on legislative and regulatory issues, cost-effective group purchasing programs, and navigation to the right resources and solutions within the entrepreneurial ecosystem to help small businesses grow and succeed.