

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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CONTACT: NW Illinois Economic Development
815-297-7361
dschmit@nwiled.org

**NORTHWEST ILLINOIS ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT
ANNOUNCES NEW GENZ FUND AWARD FOR DITTMAR FARMS AND ORCHARD**

HANOVER, ILLINOIS - Northwest Illinois Economic Development (NWILED), along with UMB Bank, has announced the presentation of the 11th Genz Small Business Development Fund Award to Dittmar Farms and Orchard of rural Elizabeth, Illinois. The check for \$19,370 from the Genz Small Business Development Fund was issued to owners Jonna and Mike Dittmar on Dec. 23, 2025.

Dittmar Farms and Orchard have been family owned and operated since 1854. Now in their 6th generation, the Dittmar family specializes in growing and selling pumpkins and apples, as well as sweet and popping corn.

"Thank you to NWILED. Receiving this grant will help us to finish the construction and complete the indoor space of our barn," said Jonna Dittmar. "This part of our farm welcomes our guests to buy fresh produce, baked goods and other products from our farm. We are excited to have a fully functional indoor space to extend our seasonal business!"

On hand to congratulate Jonna and Mike were his parents Peg and Rick, members of the NWILED staff and board, as well as other supporters.

"Unique experiences are part of the foundation of our region's tourism industry and quality of life, and NWILED is pleased to help grow Dittmar Farms and Orchard's regional footprint," said David Schmit, NWILED Regional Director. "Jack Genz specifically mentioned his desire to support agricultural businesses, as well as other industries, through his trust, and this award to Dittmar Farms and Orchard will help honor his legacy."

Dittmar Farms and Orchard is open seasonally May to November or by appointment and is located at 256 S Grebner Road, Elizabeth, Illinois-61028. Interested people with questions can email the Dittmars at jmstayn@yahoo.com. Their web address is www.DittmarFarms.com and they also have an active Facebook page.

ABOUT THE GENZ SMALL BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT FUND:

Established in 2020, the Genz Small Business Development Fund was formed by the late John "Jack" Genz of Galena to help retailers, small manufacturers, wholesalers and hospitality industry genres, along with farmers and food processors in the Galena Trade Area. It can also be used to help fund capital projects, to purchase an existing business or for startup and pilot projects. The fund is administered by UMB Bank and is marketed by Northwest Illinois Economic Development. Since first awarded in 2020 a total of \$97,672 has now been dispersed through the fund.

ABOUT NWILED:

Northwest Illinois Economic Development was created by the Jo-Carroll Energy Board of Directors to spearhead economic development structures, funding and progress in Jo Daviess, Carroll, and Whiteside counties in Northwest Illinois. Now in its 17th year of successful service, NWILED continues to be a regional development entity concentrating on growing the economy and public/private partnerships.

NWILED promotes economic development by fostering business growth and assisting expanding and relocating businesses. The organization aids in determining these needs for growth with cooperation from government and business partners.

NWILED encourages entrepreneurs by assisting with access to resources to begin and grow their businesses and employs all available resources to create a welcoming business environment, aligning the skills of the available workforce with the needs of businesses, and building political and economic capital.

NWILED's commitment to success also produces programs, ventures and events that nurture educational business growth and overall business community involvement.