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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Wright-Patt Credit Union and Co-op Dayton Host \$5,000 Small Business Competition

Beavercreek, OH – On Friday, October 16th at 5:30 pm, Co-op Dayton and Wright-Patt Credit Union (WPCU) will host “Pitch Night: A Celebration of Cooperative and Community Enterprise.” This online event invites the community to cheer on eight teams of entrepreneurs from Co-op Dayton’s business incubator program and to vote for their favorites. Teams will compete for \$5,000 in prizes including: a \$2,000 cash prize, \$2,000 worth of in-kind services from The Entrepreneurs Center, and a \$1,000 cash prize for the team with the most votes from the audience. Guests will also have the opportunity to get to know the entrepreneurs through a virtual meet and greet after party featuring DJ Ron Hunter.

The event celebrates the hard work that the start-ups put toward creating co-op and community enterprise business concepts. The teams spent seven months in Co-op Dayton’s incubator program, performing market research, building financial models, and ultimately developing business plans. The teams will each present business pitches from a wide variety of industries, including: construction, marketing and design, tourism, retail, health and wellness, food service, and agriculture.

“Each of these teams represents something we need in our solidarity economy. This is asset-based community development, in which we each bring our gifts to the community in a cooperative way,” said Co-director of Co-op Dayton, Amaha Sellassie.

WPCU provided financial support and two business plan judges: Tim Mislansky, Chief Strategy Officer, and Heather Corbin, Member Business Service Manager.

“The teams identified problems in our communities that could be solved by a cooperative and then worked to take their solutions from the idea stage into sound and sustainable business plans,” said Mislansky. “Cooperatives really are a great business model for consumers because they solve the challenges facing our communities in ways that all their members can benefit. For example, WPCU is a financial cooperative and when the credit union does well the members benefit with competitive offers and at times a Special Patronage Dividend.”

“Each group has a limited amount of time to share their business story and to talk about the social impact and financial sustainability of their organization,” said Corbin. “It is difficult to judge when each of these start-ups identified services for the communities that really need them.”

“Like many of these teams, WPCU is a member-owned cooperative, and so we understand the unique value that comes from people helping people,” said Tracy-Szarzi Fors, Vice President of Marketing and Business Development for WPCU. “We’re proud to support this program and excited to see the impact that these new start-ups could bring to their communities.”

Guests can register for free and join the virtual event by visiting coopdayton.eventbrite.com. For more information on Pitch Night, please contact Rachel Meketon at Rachel.meketon@coopdayton.org. For more about how WPCU supports the community, please contact Tracy Szarzi-Fors at tszarzi-fors@wpcu.coop.

About Co-op Dayton

Known for the Gem City Market cooperative, Co-op Dayton incubates cooperative businesses to create and retain good jobs



in our region and to build a local economy that works for all.

About Wright-Patt Credit Union

Established in 1932, Wright-Patt Credit Union is a member-owned, not-for-profit financial cooperative proudly serving Central and Southwest Ohio with more than 415,000 members and over \$5.8 billion in assets. As a cooperative, Wright-Patt Credit Union joins members together, pooling financial resources to meet the needs of all. The pooled resources provide the capital to run a strong and efficient operation. Wright-Patt Credit Union is headquartered in Beavercreek, Ohio, and has convenient Member Centers throughout Central and Southwest Ohio. Wright-Patt Credit Union's mission is to help people through life by allowing members to achieve a greater degree of economic independence. Visit Wright-Patt Credit Union's website at www.wpcu.coop for more information.