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Michigan Celebrates
Small Business

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Bear Creek Organic Farm Earns 2022 Michigan 50 Companies to Watch Award

3/21/22 (Petoskey, Michigan)— Bear Creek Organic Farm has been recognized as one of the 2022 awardees for the Michigan 50 Companies to Watch Award, presented by Michigan Celebrates Small Business (MCSB). MCSB is the most prestigious small business awards program in the state of Michigan. The mission of the program is to honor and recognize Michigan’s small business people as well as the champions and advocates that support them.

Michigan 50 Companies to Watch is an awards program honoring second-stage companies headquartered in the state of Michigan. These companies demonstrate high performance in the marketplace, exhibit innovative products or processes, and make an astounding impact on Michigan’s economy by collectively providing thousands of jobs and contributing millions of dollars of revenue. In short, they tell a compelling story about the state’s diverse economic landscape.

“We work incredibly hard everyday to grow the most delicious and nutritious organic plants and vegetables for our customers and community,” co-owner Brian Bates said. “While we never set out to be the biggest farm, we’ve always focused on our quality, our community, and our customers,” co-owner Anne Bates, added. “That’s why we say ‘Good Food Happens Here’ - we want to be the place where the good food grows, where good gardens begin, and where we get to build community around good food,” Anne said. “To be recognized as a successful business among the entire state and across every industry is the ultimate honor for our farm as we strive to grow the good food future and keep doing what we love!” Brian exclaimed.

Entering its ninth season, Bear Creek Organic Farm is young, enthusiastic, and no stranger to charting their own path. In 2013, they became Petoskey’s first USDA Certified Organic farm. In 2020, they became the first B Corp Certified farm in the state of Michigan. And in 2021, they became the region’s first Real Organic Project Certified farm. By being triply-certified by three separate third-party inspection agencies, Bear Creek is serious about proving their commitment to the highest production standards possible. “We want to be known for running a people-first business, operated by people who care about the environment, the local economy, the independent supply chain, and the value of fair pay for hard work,” Bates said.

Companies nominated for the Michigan 50 Companies to Watch Award must be second-stage companies, defined as having six to 99 full-time-equivalent employees and generating \$750,000

to \$50 million in annual revenue. Additionally, the companies must be privately held and headquartered in Michigan.

“MCSB has always prided itself on its spirit of collaboration and celebration,” said Jennifer Deamud, MCSB Board Chair. “We love seeing our awardees celebrating one another's success and sharing in this amazing moment is each awardee’s journey. It’s true— success is best when it is shared.”

More than fifty judges from economic and entrepreneurship development organizations across the state work to select the winners. The judges evaluate the nominees’ demonstration of intent and capacity to grow based on the following:

- Employee or sales growth
- Exceptional entrepreneurial leadership
- Sustainable competitive advantage
- Other notable factors that showcase the company's success

Michigan Celebrates received over 550 nominations for the Michigan 50 Companies to Watch award this year. In addition to a competitive landscape for this award, the businesses who are selected by the judges go through a rigorous due diligence process prior to the final decision.

Additional information can be found at MichiganCelebrates.org.