



2015 Recovery Pledge Press Kit

RECOVERY PLEDGE

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Company Profile

Christopher Girdwood, Founder of Recovery Pledge, spent time working in New Orleans after the Deepwater Horizon Oil Spill. After talking to a number of small business owners, it became clear that disaster recovery efforts fell short of expectations. Girdwood realized that there was not a good solution for small business owners to stabilize their sales immediately after a disaster.

In 2011, Girdwood filed Form 1023 with the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) to start a not-for-profit organization called ifutures.org to fix this problem. After many exhaustive attempts, Girdwood was denied tax-exempt status because the IRS deemed the business model to be "retail". Not giving up, Girdwood held a number of informal meetings with small business owners to ask for their candid reaction to the business concept. The response was overwhelmingly positive. Small business owners are often offered low-interest loans after a disaster when what they really want *and need* are customers.

iFutures.org was reorganized and rebranded as Recovery Pledge. For consumers, the pitch has always been embodied in the Recovery Pledge service mark, which is "*consume with a conscience*". Meaning, every time you shop – whether you are passing through the aisles of a big box retailer or browsing the Recovery Pledge marketplace – you make a choice. More importantly, your purchase could serve you personally while simultaneously help a small business recover after a disaster.

From Hurricane Katrina and Sandy to the recent fires in California and Colorado, disasters just happen. When they occur, charitable organizations respond with temporary shelter, food, clothing and social services. Recovery Pledge is not a charitable organization that sends money or aid. Instead, we offer a marketplace whereby you can support small businesses by purchasing their products and services immediately after a disaster. Recovery Pledge is social enterprise platform that enables a purely private sector approach to disaster recovery.

For more information on Recovery Pledge, visit: www.recoverypledge.com, or contact: Christopher Girdwood at cgirdwood@recoverypledge.com or (517) 230-5288.



Pitch Letter

Recovery Pledge is a new marketplace where consumers take the lead in disaster recovery. This is achieved by connecting small business owners with customers immediately after a disaster to stabilize their sales. Any individual can purchase *recovery pledges*, which are vouchers for the goods and services small businesses sell on a daily basis. Your purchases will provide small businesses with cash they desperately need to help them get back on their feet after a disaster.

Here is how it works. Before a disaster occurs, small business owners will build profile pages on recoverypledge.com and enter descriptions of products and services they will offer. In the event of a disaster, the marketplace will be activated and consumers will be able to take the lead in disaster recovery by purchasing *recovery pledges*. The recovery pledges simply represent the goods and service that you, the consumer, will receive once the small business has recovered.

Why? According to the Insurance Information Institute, up to 40 percent of businesses affected by a natural or man-made disaster never reopen. The Recovery Pledge mission is to reduce this percentage by letting consumers take the lead in disaster recovery.

We are asking for financial support to build and launch the Recovery Pledge marketplace. In doing so, consumers from all over the globe will have the opportunity to consume with a conscience – by purchasing products and services while simultaneously helping small businesses recover from a disaster.

We appreciate your consideration! Please let us know if we can answer any questions that you have. You can reach us at www.recoverypledge.com, cgirdwood@recoverypledge.com or (517) 230-5288.



Press Release

For Immediate Release

Contact: Christopher Girdwood (517) 230-5288

Creating Consumer-Driven Disaster Recovery for Small Businesses

Valencia, Calif - September 24, 2014 - When disaster strikes, small business owners watch sales plummet. Earthquakes, floods, or man-made disasters can wipe out a customer base that took years of work to build. Recovery Pledge solves this problem by connecting small businesses with customers immediately after a disaster.

Christopher Girdwood witnessed the turmoil small business owners experience while he worked in New Orleans during the 2010 Deepwater Oil Spill. In a disaster, nonprofit groups like the Red Cross can bring in needed water, canned food, and blankets and the federal government can provide low-interest loans. Customers are lost, though, and local businesses are devastated.

"Companies can't pay back a loan, even a low-interest one, if there are no customers," says Christopher, a native of Detroit, Michigan who works in economic development and urban planning.

He is based in Valencia, California and his solution is Recovery Pledge, a social enterprise that connects small businesses with customers around the nation.

According to the Insurance Information Institute, up to 40 percent of businesses affected by a natural or man-made disaster never reopen. Christopher believes consumers will direct their buying habits to support disaster-stricken companies if given the opportunity.

"A private sector approach to disaster recovery can compliment the work of charitable organizations," he says.

Local businesses in New Orleans and those he has met in Los Angeles have responded with enthusiasm.

The next step to make Recovery Pledge a viable platform on a national scale is the development of an e-commerce site allowing consumers to purchase from the businesses that sign on. Shoppers can purchase recovery pledges, which are vouchers for the goods and services small businesses sell on a daily basis. This creates operating cash despite a disaster.



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Shoppers will be able to follow the business in its recovery process and the website will show where in the country the purchases are made.

"The goal is to stabilize sales. This also sustains a tax base and helps the entire community."

ABOUT CHRISTOPHER GIRDWOOD

Christopher's professional background in public-private partnerships with the Department of Defense and work with the International Economic Development Council in Washington, D.C. makes him an ideal interview on the topic.

Contact him directly at 517-230-5288 and via recoverypledge.com



Sample News Story

Can consumers take the lead in disaster recovery? A small team located in Pasadena, California thinks so and is asking for your help to build the social enterprise platform.

Here is how it works. Before a disaster occurs, small business owners will build profile pages on recoverypledge.com and enter descriptions of products and services they will offer. In the event of a disaster, the marketplace will be activated and consumers will be able to take the lead in disaster recovery by purchasing *recovery pledges*. These purchases will directly support small businesses by stabilizing both their sales and the cities they call home.

The team is laser-focused on one piece of data in particular. The Insurance Information Institute has reported up to 40 percent of businesses affected by a natural or man-made disaster never reopen. The Recovery Pledge mission is to reduce this percentage by letting consumers take the lead in disaster recovery. Consumers from all over the globe will have the opportunity to consume with a conscience – by buying products and services while simultaneously helping a small business recover from a disaster.

It's a pretty bold idea and worth a look. Check out their campaign at www.recoverypledge.com. You can contact the team directly at cgirdwood@recoverypledge.com or 517-230-5288.



Executive Bio

Christopher J Girdwood (Chris) started his career in 2004 with the U.S. Department of Defense where he facilitated public-private partnerships to ensure war-fighter readiness during multiple international conflicts. After finishing graduate school in 2008, he relocated to Washington, D.C. to work with the International Economic Development Council (IEDC), which is the largest not-for-profit membership organization for economic development professionals. At IEDC, Chris served as lead content editor for IEDC's training course manuals, which cover topics such as finance, entrepreneurship, business retention and expansion, strategic planning, real estate, tax incentives and credits.

Through a federal government contract, Chris spent some time in New Orleans after the Deepwater Horizon Oil Spill in August, 2010. After talking to a number of small business owners, it became clear that disaster recovery efforts fell short of expectations. He quickly realized that there isn't a viable solution for small business owners, who are the economic engine of cities. Chris resides in Valencia, California.