**Additional Quotations**

Jon Maynard, President of the Oxford-Lafayette County Economic Development Foundation

“The program launched by Heartland Forward matches the way we do business in Oxford,” said **Jon Maynard, president of the Oxford-Lafayette County Economic Development Founda**tion. “People often hear me say that our economic development strategy is more like targeting ‘tropical fish’ instead of ‘big whales.’  Our focus has been on growing and nurturing smaller businesses instead of trying to ‘buy’ big new businesses to the area with large incentive packages that often give away the farm. The approach of the Community Growth Program and Toolkit works for our community and is why we welcomed Heartland Forward to launch in Oxford.”

Robyn Tannehill, Mayor of Oxford

“Last year, Heartland Forward recognized Oxford in its 2020 Young Firms report ranking us 12th among the top 50 communities in the nation with a population of 50,000,” said **Oxford Mayor Robyn Tannehill.** “We are proud of this recognition for building an entrepreneurial ecosystem for Oxford that fosters strong growth for long-term economic success. We want people to move to Oxford and know we are here to support them in starting and growing their businesses. Entrepreneurs are the lifeblood of our economy, and that is why it made so much sense to accept the invitation and invest in Heartland Forward’s inaugural program, the Community Growth Program and Toolkit. It has been wonderful to watch this first cohort of entrepreneurs and what they’ve achieved.”

Ken Levit, Executive Director of The George Kaiser Family Foundation

“We are pleased that Builders and Backers is making an impact in Tulsa and breaking down barriers to launch great entrepreneurs and their ideas so that they can get lift off in our community and beyond,” said **Ken Levit, executive director of The George Kaiser Family Foundation.** “Heartland Forward’s work is a critical force in the country for highlighting the case for investing in areas too often overlooked.”

Kathy Taylor, Former State Secretary of Commerce and Former Mayor of Tulsa

“My mission as Mayor and Secretary of Commerce was to support public policy and public private partnerships that support entrepreneurs.  It was very clear to me how much support entrepreneurs needed and how much their success would propel Oklahoma’s economy.” shared **Kathy Taylor, former State Secretary of Commerce and former mayor of Tulsa**. “When we learned of the Community Growth Program and Toolkit provided by Heartland Forward and their desire to bring it to Tulsa, we knew we wanted to not only support it but invest in it.  To see what these Builders have been able to accomplish since May is remarkable, and we are impressed with this modernized approach to entrepreneurship. It is something we hope continues to live and thrive for many other aspiring future Builders in Tulsa.”

Elizabeth Frame Ellison, President and CEO of Lobeck Taylor Family Foundation

“Engaging in this opportunity with Heartland Forward and its Community Growth Program and Toolkit was important,” said **Elizabeth Frame Ellison, president and CEO of Lobeck Taylor Family Foundation.** “As a Foundation, our goal is to decrease barriers to success for underestimated entrepreneurs, giving them tools to test and scale their latest concept without burdensome financial risk. Heartland Forward's work aligns with ours and I am proud to watch them execute during such an unprecedented time in our country.  For some of the members of the Tulsa cohort, like Shakori Fletcher, support from a pebble grant was the very thing needed to bring an idea to life. Tulsa is fortunate to be among the first to experience this and hope other communities will follow suit to benefit their economies.”

Alana Beard, Former WNBA player and Founder and President of 318 Foundation

Being a native of Shreveport, I’m pleased to learn about all of the work of Heartland Forward especially its efforts to positively affect the economy for a part of our country that often feels ignored,” said **Alana Beard, former WNBA player, and founder and president of 318 Foundation**. “The Community Growth Program and Toolkit is an outstanding effort to help social entrepreneurs discover, learn, connect with others and take action. While my foundation has a mission to strengthen youth development, connecting with others and sharing the tools for success is a huge part of its equation too. Sometimes that is all others need to achieve their dreams – to connect and be equipped.”