



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **FuzeHub Awards \$20,000 Grant to Pine Ridge Industries to Ramp Up Manufacturing to Fight COVID-19**

*Grant will help to fund new equipment to meet current needs, foster sustained growth*

**ALBANY, N.Y.** – FuzeHub, the statewide New York Manufacturing Extension Partnership (NY MEP) center, announced it has awarded \$20,000 in grant funding to Pine Ridge Industries, a contract manufacturer and division of Schenectady ARC, to help it expand and accelerate its manufacturing of components that are critical to essential supplies used in the fight against the novel coronavirus.

“During these challenging times, it has been inspiring to see manufacturers like Pine Ridge Industries step up to produce essential supplies needed to keep people safe and healthy,” said Everton H. Henriques, NY MEP Solutions Director for FuzeHub. “In addition to supporting the fight against COVID-19, this grant will contribute to our region’s economic resiliency by strengthening a contract manufacturer that has accelerated the growth of several local businesses.”

With more than 15,000 square feet of production and warehouse space, Pine Ridge Industries deploys its team of trained workers to meet the manufacturing, assembly, packaging and processing needs of its business customers. As an integrated business within Schenectady ARC, it provides employment opportunities to people of all abilities.

“Thanks to this grant from FuzeHub, Pine Ridge Industries can now secure the equipment we need to ramp up our manufacturing services, as we help our business partners combat the coronavirus. Importantly, it will also help us serve more local companies after our community emerges from this unprecedented situation,” said Nathan Mandsager, Chief Operating Officer of Pine Ridge Industries. “We’re grateful to FuzeHub for its help in solving this pressing challenge – it will have a long-term impact for us.”

Among the essential services it is now providing, Pine Ridge Industries works with VistaLab Technologies, a Putnam County-based manufacturer of liquid handling products for clinical and research laboratories, for whom they package sterile pipette tips. Demand for the kits has increased significantly as VistaLab’s products have surged in use to combat COVID-19. Its novel pipetting technologies and supplies are frequently used in research settings and other facilities where scientists are relentlessly pushing forward with efforts to develop new tests, treatments and vaccines.

“We are very pleased with our partnership with Pine Ridge Industries and congratulate them on receiving this award, it is well deserved,” said Dick Scordato, Chairman and CEO of VistaLab Technologies, Inc. “PRI has been able to scale-up its cleanroom pipette tip packaging production in order to meet the increasing demand for our products to supply laboratories doing COVID-19 testing and research around the world, all while continuing to meet or exceed our customers’ stringent quality requirements.”

To accelerate production for VistaLab, Pine Ridge Industries hired 10 additional temporary workers and increased work hours for existing staff. The situation has increased the urgency to acquire and install ergonomically designed work stations, which will increase the comfort of employees and contribute to greater workplace productivity.

FuzeHub’s \$20,000 grant will fund the purchase of the necessary equipment to help Pine Ridge meet current customer demand and position it for sustained growth. FuzeHub helps New York manufacturers navigate the state’s extensive network of resources, programs and partners. In 2018, it connected VistaLab with Pine Ridge, as the company looked for a new contract manufacturer to fulfill assembly needs.

Pine Ridge Industries currently employs about 50 workers. It was deemed an essential business because it produces supplies for medical device companies. It is practicing social distancing protocols within its workplace to keep employees safe.

FuzeHub has set aside a small pot of funds to support a limited number of manufacturers already engaged with FuzeHub through existing requests for assistance.

#### **About FuzeHub**

*FuzeHub is a nonprofit organization that connects New York’s small and mid-sized manufacturing companies to the resources, programs and expertise they need for technology commercialization, innovation, and business growth. Through its custom assessment, matching, and referral platform, FuzeHub helps companies navigate New York’s robust network of industry experts at Manufacturing Extension Partnership centers, universities, economic development organizations, and other providers. FuzeHub is the statewide New York Manufacturing Extension Partnership Program center, supported by Empire State Development’s Division of Science, Technology & Innovation (NYSTAR). For more information, visit [www.fuzehub.com](http://www.fuzehub.com).*

#### **About Pine Ridge Industries**

*Pine Ridge offers individualized contract manufacturing services that are tailored to its customers’ specific needs. It often serves as a small business accelerator, providing access to flexible space and a workforce that can be trained for specific projects. It provides employment and training opportunities for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities. For more information, visit [www.PineRidgeInd.com](http://www.PineRidgeInd.com) or contact [info@PineRidgeInd.com](mailto:info@PineRidgeInd.com).*

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