

Entrepreneurs invited to enter Walmart's annual Open Call

Special to The Clinton Courier

The application process for Walmart's eighth annual Open Call is now open, and the company invites Mississippi entrepreneurs dreaming of landing their products on Walmart shelves and online to apply for the opportunity to meet with Walmart buyers on June 30, 2021, via virtual pitch meetings.

The deadline to apply for participation in this year's Open Call for products made, grown or assembled in the United States is April 30. The application and additional information about the event are available at corporate.walmart.com.

Walmart recently announced a new commitment to spend an additional \$350 billion on items made, grown, or assembled in the United States. It's estimated that this spend will

support more than 750,000 new American jobs. Walmart's Open Call is one way in which the company supports this commitment.

The June 30 virtual event will include similar program-



ming to last year. In addition to one-on-one pitch meetings with Walmart merchants, participants will have an opportunity to hear directly from Walmart executives at the hour-long kickoff of the event. Smaller breakout sessions will be available throughout the day, where suppliers can learn more on valuable topics and about resources available to them.

"Open Call is like watch-

ing the American Dream play out in real time," said Laura Phillips, Walmart senior vice president for Global Sourcing and U.S. Manufacturing.

"You see on full display the spirit and energy of new ideas and the hope of what could be — founded on creativity, hard work, and self-belief. It's inspiring. Walmart's announcement earlier this month to

spend an additional \$350 billion on products made, grown or assembled in America makes Open Call even more exciting and important. We know how much this opportunity means to small businesses, and we can't wait to see the new product submissions from potential new suppliers."

This year's Open Call attendees could secure opportunities that range from promoting products in a handful of

stores in local markets to supplying products to hundreds, even thousands, of Walmart stores, Sam's Clubs and online.

"Walmart makes it easy — they really do," Henry Johnson, who owns Le'Host Hair and Wigs with his wife, Haith, said about their experience at Walmart's 2020 Open Call. "They sent us a video that they send to everyone who's going to present to buyers and said, 'This is what we're looking for.' ... We found out what was important to Walmart as a company, in the community. What's important to Walmart is their customers. To us, our customers are No. 1. So, when we saw that was the mindset of Walmart, we knew it was a good marriage."

Earlier this year, Walmart began expanding Le'Host products into some three hundred stores across the Southwest and Southeast regions of the United States.

Howell presents for History Week



Dr. Walter Howell, historian for the City of Clinton, gave a presentation at the Wood Activity Center last month for Clinton History Week.

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