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A Program of the Grow Iowa Foundation

Rural Development Center

2010 Newsletter

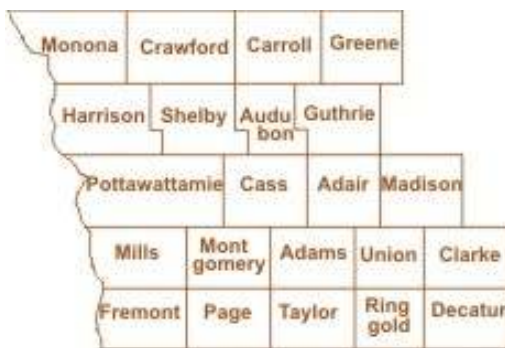
Contact Us >>>

Rural Development Center

2011 N 4th Street
PO Box 292
Red Oak, IA 51566
712-623-5521

www.EnterprisingIowans.com

www.BuyIowaOnline.com



Self Employment

RDC Workshops Can Address Company Closures

The news of local companies closing or downsizing throws our communities into an emotional and reactionary tail-spin. But in this negative environment, opportunities exist to support entrepreneurial activities that lead to homegrown business starts. Statistics show that 10 to 15% of the laid off workforce will attempt to start his/her own enterprise. In this environment, every job counts! So, to help local development leadership seize the moment, the Rural Development Center can adapt our existing group workshops to provide self employment training.

Self employment training can be offered as a front-end, fast-paced, hands on program that assists laid off employees target and then assess the viability of a local business start through the creation of a top-end feasibility plan. The hope is that "companies with a conscience" will choose to make this option available to their employees instead of simply explaining to them how to file for unemployment or write a winning resume.

The Rural Development Center focuses its efforts on stimulating "home-grown" businesses that will stay, expand and contribute positively to local economies for the long-term. Our existing programs can be quickly and efficiently tailored to meet local needs and greatly condenses the length of time for planning and implementation.

Local development leadership support is critical throughout the process, especially when the time

This program is part of our efforts to stimulate "home-grown" businesses that will stay, expand and contribute positively to local economies.

comes for implementation. Some may begin as a home-based operation with relatively low start-up costs; others will need storefronts and financing through local resources.

Topics included in the group workshop are:

- Determining if self-employment is a good fit and what service/products are needed locally.
- Education and skills inventory to determine the individual's needs to move ahead with the selected business venture.
- Those who go on to start their own business will use the "Enterprise Suite" in conjunction with one-on-one TA to complete the plan and move to financing.
- E-commerce training to effectively utilize Buy Iowa Online.
- Open office days: TA with no consultation fees for help with clerical tasks such as applying for a sales tax permit, obtaining a federal tax ID number, verifying zoning regulations, etc.

Contact us for more details or to get a customized proposal for your community or company.

resources >>>

Buy Iowa Online

Buy Iowa Online was created to showcase the products of artists, crafter's, authors, musicians and manufacturers in southwest Iowa. By making these regional products available online, Buy Iowa Online offers local entrepreneurs exposure to the 1.6 billion Internet users, who generated \$30.8 billion in e-commerce sales in the second quarter of 2009.



Buy Fresh Buy Local

Buy Fresh Buy Local chapters are connecting consumers in communities throughout the country to the freshest, most delicious locally grown and produced foods available. The BFBL SW Iowa chapter is one of 11 chapters in Iowa. Look for the BFBL logo at local grocery stores, farmers markets and restaurants.



Local Retail Data

Free Workshops For Business Owners

A series of free seminars focusing on business strategies and tools that potential and current entrepreneurs can utilize to assist in the formation of a business and/or to help ensure its success, will be held across the RDC region.

Data and information will be presented on: understanding your trade area, population thresholds for business types, industry performance over time in Iowa, marketing and pricing strategies. The seminars will provide the analysis and data that companies use in their decision making process to determine where to locate, whether to adopt a growth or maintenance strategy, and how to compete within an industry.

Data used for the analysis is the most current supplied to Iowa State University's Center for Regional Economics & Community Analysis Program (ReCAP) by the Iowa Department of Revenue and Finance. ReCAP explores issues and compiles relevant data related to regional economic and demographic change to assist communities and is administered by the Departments of Economics and Sociology and Extension Community and Economic Development at Iowa State University.

Sessions will begin in late May and run through June, with each session offering data specific to two or three counties. Pre-registration is suggested as seating is limited. To register, contact the RDC at 712-623-5521 or email info@EnterprisingIowans.com.

Grant Funds for Rural Businesses

Apply Now for Energy Efficiency Funds

The USDA Rural Development is currently accepting applications for renewable energy systems and energy efficiency improvements grants and guaranteed loans under the Rural Energy for America Program (REAP).

The REAP program is designed to assist farmers, ranchers and rural small businesses that are able to demonstrate financial need. All agricultural producers, including farmers and ranchers, who gain 50% or more of their gross income from the agricultural operations are eligible. Small businesses that are located in a rural area can also apply.

The grants are awarded on a competitive basis and can be up to 25% of total eligible project costs. Grants are limited to \$500,000 for renewable energy systems and \$250,000 for energy efficiency improvements.

Most rural projects that reduce energy use and result in savings for the agricultural producer or small business are eligible as energy efficiency projects. These include projects such as retrofitting lighting or insulation, or purchasing or replacing equipment with more efficiency units.

Eligible renewable energy projects include projects that produce energy from wind, solar, biomass, geothermal, hydro power and hydrogen-based sources. The projects can produce any form of energy including, heat, electricity, or fuel.

The staff at the Rural Development Center has a successful track record of completing the grant applications on behalf of ag producers and small businesses. For more information about having the RDC complete an application for you, call our office at 712-623-5521.



2009 USDA Energy Grant Recipient

Brown's Shoe Fit Company worked with RDC in 2009 in securing a REAP (Rural Energy for America Program) grant. We hoped to secure a REAP grant in order to make our facilities more energy efficient. Our project consisted of replacing the existing light fixtures in our office, warehouse, and remodeling shop with high efficiency lighting. We also insulated our warehouse attic with recommended insulation.

We began working with Angie Rae Duncan at the RDC office in Red Oak in June of 2009. RDC made the process of applying for the grant easy. Most correspondence was done via email, but we also communicated via telephone. Once an energy audit was completed by MidAmerican Energy, we supplied the documentation needed to complete the grant application. All the needed documentation was clearly explained, and Angie was readily available if we had questions. She organized the documentation and put together the application, all we had to do was sign some paperwork. Once our grant application was completed, it was submitted promptly for review. The grant was awarded in September of 2009. We were pleased with the grant amount and will use RDC again for any future grant writing assistance!

Zeb Burkhiser
Brown's Shoe Fit Company-General Office, Inc.
Shenandoah, IA



Workshop Schedule

All sessions begin at 6:00 pm

- May 24—Adair, Guthrie and Madison Counties
Greenfield Chamber Office, Greenfield
- May 26—Carroll and Greene Counties
Jefferson City Hall, Jefferson
- June 1—Fremont, Montgomery, Page Counties
US Bank Community Room, Red Oak
- June 3—Audubon and Cass Counties
Atlantic Chamber Office, Atlantic
- June 14—Clarke and Decatur Counties
Clarke County Development, Osceola
- June 16—Crawford and Shelby Counties
Iowa Western Community College, Harlan
- June 22—Ringgold and Union Counties
Union County Extension Office, Creston
- June 24—Adams and Taylor Counties
Town Centre, Lenox
- June 28—Mills and Pottawattamie Counties
JavaJudi's @ Glenwood Florist, Glenwood
- June 30—Harrison and Monona Counties
Moorhead Community Center, Moorhead

Register Today!!
712-623-5521

Other Upcoming Events

- June -Dates TBA, Ag Data Sessions, 4 sessions to gain public input on developing local food products
- June 17- Rural Summit, hosted by Southwest Iowa Coalition, Red Coach Inn, Red Oak
- June 30- USDA Energy Grant Deadline

Programs are available to all without regard to race, color, national origin, religion, sex, age or disability. EOE