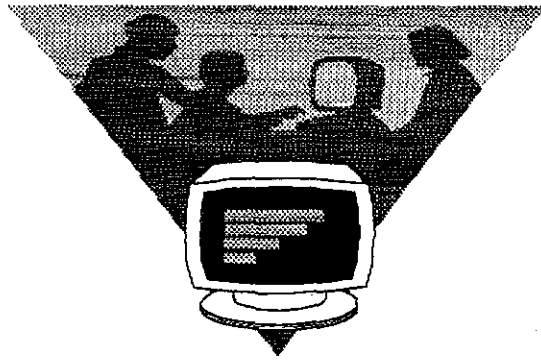


SMALL BUSINESS RESOURCE

AND

TRAINING CENTER



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record

KOSCIUSKO LEADERSHIP ACADEMY



RANDAL U. VUTECH
BYRON L. TINKEY
JEFFREY J. THORNBURGH

SMALL BUSINESS RESOURCE/TRAINING CENTER

Picture yourself, it is April 1997. Perhaps you have a great new idea for a new business venture in Kosciusko County, or you have just been advised that your position has been eliminated due to "right sizing." Therefore, you decide you will go into business on your own.

Some of the challenges that must be faced by the new entrepreneur are:

- Using up life savings
- Financial institutions will seek equity in your assets
- How to establish credit with vendors
- How to properly market and promote your product or service
- How to recognize and limit your legal exposure

Our original thesis was to establish a small business volunteer consulting group for Kosciusko County. As our project developed, we were pleased and excited to learn that there were other organized entities who were working along lines parallel to our project. What has evolved is a much broader, more comprehensive development. This includes the establishment of a Micro Loan Program, along with a small business resource and training center, as well as an opportunity to coordinate counseling with a volunteer group on an ongoing basis.

A group of concerned, dedicated and motivated individuals has been working together to make this project a reality. This group includes, but is not limited to:

- The Warsaw Community Development Corporation (WCDC)
- Ivy Tech
- Grace College
- Warsaw Community Public Library
- Individuals and groups from various businesses in our community

The following is what has been or is being established:

MICRO LOAN PROGRAM

This is in the process of being established through the efforts of the Warsaw Community Development Corporation, more commonly known as the WCDC.

The Micro Loan Program was initiated by the efforts of:

- Trish Brown - Executive Director
- Kurt Carlson - President for 1997
- Todd Lybarger - board member and chairman of the Micro Loan Program

The Micro Loan's basic premise is to establish a source of loan funds for start-up business ventures, giving special preference to minorities, women and displaced workers.

Initial funding for this program would be a State loan together with matching funds from the private sector.

Of equal or greater significance to our project would be the development of small business/training resource centers that would be utilized by Micro Loan applicants and other interested individuals.

Currently, the business/training resource centers could include the following facilities that can provide the assistance necessary for this program to succeed:

IVY TECH: Network computer system; conference and training rooms, teaching faculty who can conduct seminars and develop short courses.

WARSAW COMMUNITY PUBLIC LIBRARY: A wide range of current business journals and books that are on site or can be ordered; internet computer access and business related software.

GRACE COLLEGE: Space for conferences, meeting, training sessions and consulting; professors could provide high level technical consultation;

undergraduate business major students to assist in conducting feasibility studies.

WARSAW COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION (WCDC):

Coordination of services and referrals in addition to administering the Micro Loan Program.

WARSAW / KOSCIUSKO CHAMBER OF COMMERCE: Referrals and connections to other services within the county.

LOCAL BANKERS/LOAN OFFICERS: Referrals to WCDC and provide personnel to serve on Micro Loan Committee.

SMALL BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT CENTER in South Bend (SBDC):

Literature, along with on site consultation and seminars.

CONCLUSION

The Micro Loan Program, coupled with the small business resource/training center, offers a solid beginning to the new entrepreneur. Our original idea of supporting these two entities with a small business volunteer consulting group can enhance the overall potential of success. These volunteers can be local

business people, which includes accountants, attorneys, bankers and experienced management personnel.

By the end of 1997, it is our belief that a Micro Loan Program will be in place. There will be a resource/training center that is available and operational, and there will be a volunteer group to see them through the initial years.

Possibly the next step would be an incubation center, which houses small businesses, that share space and overhead expense to see them through initial and difficult start-up periods. The national success of these centers reduces business failures significantly.

Our idea is to foster economic development in Kosciusko County through support that is directed to small business ventures and start-ups.

The above project accomplishes this objective. This project is ongoing and will help to greatly alleviate difficulties of new businesses and will reduce the percentage of business failures.

Think of the heartache, lost resources, lost employment, lost dreams that occur when a business fails.

Think of the many contributions that a successful enterprise can give to the community.

Our project is about giving back to the community so that others might also give back to the community.

Support of this project by the entities listed and by various individuals will ensure that more start-up ventures and businesses will be successful; will contribute to the community; will allow people to realize their dreams.

ARE YOU WILLING TO JOIN US?

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