

HELP IS ON THE WAY!  
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We all need a little help sometime. Small business owners would probably add..."and the sooner the better!"

Throughout our community, there are hundreds of small businesses; many with great product or service ideas...and little else. Successful commercialization of an idea involves a firm grasp of business planning, marketing, cash flow management, assemblage of a talented management team, and much more.

The Small Business Growth Program recently kicked off in Nevada County. A partnership of several agencies, this program is intended to stimulate job creation within the low and moderate income sector locally. Before turning your attention away, I might add that in Nevada County, a family of four can make as much as \$50,900 in 2003 and still be considered moderate income.

Funded by a federal grant secured by the efforts of the Nevada County Economic Resource Council on behalf of the County, the program will provide extensive free training and mentoring for both existing as well as start up businesses. At the conclusion of the training, having been suitably prepared, participants may have the opportunity to apply for debt financing or pursue equity financing if appropriate.

Partner organizations include the County of Nevada; Sierra Economic Development District; the Sierra College Small Business Development Center; Golden Capital Network; Golden Sierra Job Training Center; Citizens Bank; and the Nevada County Economic Resource Council.

The initial program information session recently attracted more than fifty Nevada County real and would-be business people, representing a wide variety of business types. One was an exotic bird breeder. Another hopes to start a business guiding people through their personal spiritual journey. Other examples include a mobile food caterer, a film production/post production company and an individual who has invented a new type of leaf blower.

The program provides opportunity for two basic types of companies. The first category is the lifestyle business: a company that serves essentially a local market, such as a retail or service company. Businesses in the second category are called scaleable. Because of the type of product or service, these businesses serve regional, national or even international markets. Scaleable businesses tend toward fast growth and are the type that attract angel and venture capitalists.

If one reads about those who have been successful in business over a long period, one is struck by the wide differences in approach, style and company cultures. Despite the individual nuances and creativity, there are a couple of principles that appear in almost every case. Among these is the need to structure a company around a plan. The successful business must know where it is going, and what its needs will be along the way.

The Small Business Growth Program offers the opportunity to begin the journey toward success. It's not too late to become involved. To learn more about this exceptional opportunity, call the Sierra Economic Development District at 823-4703. Who knows...we may be reading your success story before long!