

Press Release

Local Business Development Classes Coming Fall 2009

Uvalde, TX – Many local area businesses are microenterprises – businesses with five or fewer employees that require \$35,000 or less in start up capital. When asked, Microenterprise business owners state that they started their business without assistance. Business & Community Lender's (BCL) of Texas organized a coalition of agencies called, "Texans for Rural Entrepreneurship & Education (TREE)," to assist small business owners succeed in business through business development education.

The First Step FastTrac program administered by BCL of Texas, Workforce Solutions Middle Rio Grande and Southwest Texas Goat Producers is a 12 week course in basic entrepreneurship skills. The program facilitator helps students develop a feasibility plan, research the local market, identify competitors and understanding how to finance her business.



Lucy Brooks, from Neighborhood Housing Services of Dimmit County (NHSDC), the facilitator, says, "...the program is for people who have a business idea or are in business, regardless of their own personal business knowledge, because sometimes people need to start at zero."

"This program presumes nothing," Ms. Brooks said. "Sometimes people know what questions to ask. Other times, people don't know enough to even ask the questions."

This Fall, the first Step FastTrac course will begin with 12 weeks of entrepreneurs meeting on Thursday evenings from 6:00pm to 9:00pm. Some will have never taken business courses, while others may already own a business, or have owned one in the past. Lucy Brooks said, "...helping create successful business owners is only part of the program's goal."

"We want to change people's lives, particularly those stuck in poverty," Brooks said. "We not only need people to open businesses, but people to keep them open."

"People don't realize the value of small business," Lucy said. "This program gives these entrepreneurs the basic knowledge and skill to succeed."

For more information on the First Step FastTrac Course and to register, call BCL of Texas at 888-385-1975. Classes start September 3rd.

About Texans for Rural Entrepreneurship & Education

Texans for Rural Entrepreneurship & Education, established in 2005, is made up of nine non-profit multi county business and community development organizations collaborated to stimulate entrepreneurship in a 45 county South Texas region. Together the partners bring over 105 years of experience serving rural markets and professional support from the lead organization to the collaborative. TREE's mission is to foster entrepreneurship through education, technical resources and capital.

About BCL of Texas

Established in 1990 as a statewide not-for-profit Certified Development Corporation, BCL of Texas successfully promotes business and community development and provides business capital and commercial real estate loans throughout Texas. True to its mission to create jobs through business development, BCL of Texas has helped to create jobs for more than 3,500 Texans. In addition to providing businesses with counseling and technical assistance, BCL of Texas originates, underwrites, processes, closes and services business loans to healthy, growing businesses. The organization also offers homeownership program, helping customers remain responsible and successful homeowners. BCL of Texas is a member of the nationwide NeighborWorks® Network, which engages in revitalization strategies that strengthen communities and transform lives. For more information go to www.bcloftexas.org or <http://www.bclhomeownershipcenter.org>

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