## **Rural Entrepreneurs sought**

Written by Holyoke Enterprise

Applications are currently being accepted for the CSU Extension 2012 Rural Entrepreneurship Academy (Project REI). Project REI is a leadership program focused on educating entrepreneurs and start-up businesses about the full scope of planning and launching your business in the energy sector.

This programs is designed to provide executive decision-makers with information and tools to guide themselves or their organizations to "launch phase" of their business. This is NOT for the faint of heart. It will be a 10-12-week class (starting July 24) to help entrepreneurs develop a marketing plan, a financial plan and ultimately a full-fledged business plan with the intent that the entrepreneur will actually utilize them in their (new) business—hopefully in northeastern Colorado.

"CSU Extension plays an important role in engaging a cross-section of industry and community leaders in bringing quality information to those who can use it," community energy coordinator Tim Edgar said. "It's a critical time for business growth in both Colorado and the United States. It's time to re-engage our workforce and start growing some companies that will bring in primary, new jobs to northeastern Colorado."

Although this program is in its inaugural year, CSU Extension is excited to partner with both the local Small Business Development Center and the Eastern Colorado Workforce Center to bring the program to northeastern Colorado. This academy will be an 80-hour-long period of instruction for attendees. Right now, through a grant made possible by the State Energy Strategic Partnership and CSU Extension, there are 15 scholarships available that will fully fund entrepreneurs in rural Colorado to attend the academy. Scholarships must be applied for, and candidates will be selected based on several qualities.

A few limitations that will help narrow down the candidates:

- —The candidate must be currently unemployed and able to show proof.
- —The candidate must be seriously considering a business venture in the energy sector. This is very loosely defined. Perhaps one is an existing business hoping to expand into the energy

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