

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 program 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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sector. Perhaps one has always wanted a business and would like to go into the energy sector.

—Candidates must be considering northeastern Colorado as the final home for their new venture.

—All scholarship recipients will also become clients of the Small Business Development Center and agree to go through business planning sessions with a certified counselor of the SBDC (at no charge to the client) outside of class.

It is important to note, again, that this scholarship will provide 100 percent of materials and tuition cost for this course. Cost of getting oneself to the course is the responsibility of the attendee. The course will be either in Sterling or in Fort Morgan, to be decided based on where most registrants live. This will be finalized early in July.

Contact Tim Edgar with CSU Extension to request a scholarship application soon. Edgar can be reached by phone at 970-522-3200 ext. 276 or by email at tim.edgar@colostate.edu. The scholarship application deadline is Monday, July 9.

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