BLACKHAWK HILLS

Resource Conservation and Development

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Small Business Development Centers in Northwest Illinois
Blackhawk Hills Resource Conservation and Development

When someone has an idea for a business, where do they turn for assistance?
For the past several years, one of those stops has been to the local Small Business Development Center (SBDC), located at Sauk Valley and Highland Community Colleges. We recently learned that one of the colleges will not be continuing funding after June 30. Without the local match the SBDC's are in jeopardy of closing their doors.

Why is this a big deal?
Last year 465 individuals met with the two staff persons that make up the SBDC. That is 465 potential business start ups, loans processed and additional jobs created. Those businesses fill empty downtown storefronts, build new and remodel old buildings, create sales tax and keep more of the money in our communities. Without someone to provide technical assistance those opportunities may be lost.

What do the SBDC's do?
The SBDC are there to provide services to individuals interested in starting their own business. They have classes that help someone decide if the business their interested in starting is viable, develop business, marketing and other plans to ask for a loan. Banks have always asked prospective businesses to provide a business plan.

What are the plans to prevent this from happening?
Blackhawk Hills RC&D is leading an effort to raise $30,000 to provide funding under the current arrangements through December 31, 2009. During the intervening six months, the RC&D will work to develop a coalition of banks, economic development organizations, private businesses and others, which would allow the staff to form a Not-for-Profit business.

What happens at that point?
The Blackhawk Hills RC&D in partnership with the Community Colleges will provide logistical support to the Not-for-Profit business. Grants and additional financial support will be used to supplement the fee-for-service business structure the new business will begin implementing. The staff at the SBDC has developed several programs and curriculum that can be licensed to other SBDC in the United States and used locally.

How much are you asking for?
Initially, $30,000 will be needed to remain in operation for the next six months, of which $15,000 has already been secured. We are asking for each organization to consider a $1,000 or more investment in the future of Northwest Illinois Small Businesses. Once the initial $30,000 is secured, funding will be sought for the subsequent three years. We will be having a series of meetings that will further outline our plans for the future.

The Blackhawk Hills Resource Conservation and Development Council wants to thank-you for your support.

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