



Volunteer State Community College
Small Business Development
Center
2010 Stakeholder's Report



Economic Impact

Client Count	210
Event Count	51
Attendees	703
Jobs Created	47
Capital Formation	\$1,183,500
Business Starts	26

Business Start Ups

Business starts – Locations

- BETHPAGE
- CASTALIAN SPRINGS
- GALLATIN
- GOODLETTSVILLE
- GREENBRIER
- HARTSVILLE
- HENDERSONVILLE
- LEBANON
- LAFAYETTE
- MADISON
- NASHVILLE
- PORTLAND
- OLD HICKORY
- SPRINGFIELD
- WESTMORELAND
- WHITE HOUSE

Business starts - Types

- Retail
- Handyman
- Chiropractor
- Wedding Planning
- Auto Repair
- PR
- Videography
- Insurance
- Dance Studio
- Bookkeeping
- Medical Sales
- Salon
- Consultation

2010 Workshops

- How to Start a Small Business
- Developing a Business Plan
- IRS Small Business Tax
- Government Contracting
- Small Business Sales Forum
- Day Care Orientation
- How to Apply for a Community Express Loan
- Best Legal Advice for Small Business
- Time Management for Small Business Owners
- Internet Marketing
- Getting Found on Google
- Web Design Basics – Do's and Don'ts
- Blogging for Small Businesses
- Estimating and Progress Invoicing in QuickBooks
- Introduction to QuickBooks for Small Businesses
- Small Business Survival in Rough Economic Times

Accomplishments in 2010

- Computers placed in off-site locations to assist in online training and counseling
- 21 new workshops offered online (FREE)
- Online counseling offered
- Part-time counselor – Dave Jose

Upcoming in 2011

- QuickBooks lab offered at off-site locations
- New workshops
 - Social Media
 - Accounting Basics
 - Payroll in QuickBooks
 - Human Resources 101
 - Marketing Strategies

TSBDC in the News



Christopher and Brenda Newton with Chef Christopher's Catering accept the 2009 Rising Star Award from Charles Alexander, director of the Tennessee Small Business Development Center. PHOTO BY DESSISLAVA YANKOVA / SUMNER A.M

Chef Christopher's honored among small businesses

Owner plans Gallatin event center

Westmoreland-based Chef Christopher's Catering won the 2009 Rising Star Award from the Tennessee Small Business Development Center at a special ceremony at Volunteer State Com-

munity College in Gallatin on Thursday, July 15. TSBDC officials give the annual award to the local business that has best utilized the center's resources to grow and stir economic growth.

During their acceptance speech, business owners Christopher and Brenda Newton revealed they have purchased a new event center to open

by the end of 2010. The 30,000-square-foot facility will be the biggest of its kind in Gallatin and possibly in Sumner County, creating an industry niche and wide opportunities for economic growth and development, said Clay Walker, executive director of the Gallatin Economic Development Agency.

— DESSISLAVA YANKOVA / SUMNER A.M.

Chef Christopher and Brenda Newton came to the TSBDC at Volunteer State Community College in 2007. The Newtons wanted to grow their business and wanted to be proactive by managing their growth. They were very busy and confident that they could continue to expand the business.

Over the past three years Chef Christopher's Catering has worked closely with the TSBDC to develop their business plan, develop an employee handbook, implement policies and procedures, and grow their book of business.

Recently, they have also made the decision to expand their business into the Epic Events Center, a 30,000 square foot facility that will open in January 2011. With the assistance of the TSBDC they have developed a business plan to test the feasibility of this business and to present to city council and the bank.

TSBDC in the News

TSBDC client, Riyadh and Linda Alkasem of Café Rakka in Hendersonville, were featured on the very popular *Diners, Drive-Ins, and Dives* on the Food Network.

Guy Fieri enjoyed this Mediterranean restaurant and was served lamb with a traditional Syrian spiced tomato sauce.

Café Rakka came to the TSBDC in fall of 2007 looking for information on getting started, human resources and referrals. They continue to use the services of the TSBDC and have been quite successful.

Food Network's Guy Fieri spotted at Hendersonville restaurant

By Eric Miller
HENDERSONVILLE STAR NEWS

Diners who stopped by to pick up lunch from Café Rakka in Hendersonville Wednesday found themselves at a filming of an upcoming episode of Food Network's *Diners, Drive-ins and Dives*.

The show's host Guy Fieri and the Oak Ridge Boys were on scene to check out the restaurant's cuisine, known locally for its authentic Mediterranean fare.

Filming paused while Fieri met with the Oak Ridge Boys and posed with them in the convertible Camaro featured in *Diners, Drive-ins and Dives*.

Fieri told the Oak Ridge Boys he'd been a longtime fan.

"I love listening to you guys," Fieri said. "I know all the old songs."

Before returning to work, Fieri took some time to speak to and pose for pictures with young fans March Martin, 12, Kell Martin, 9, and Solomon Golden, 8.

"I love his show," said March Martin, a self-described "huge fan." "I think he's genius, he's awesome, his hair's amazing. I watch him every day."

Kell and Solomon echoed his



Fans Solomon Golden, 8 and March Martin, 12, get a thrill sitting in Guy Fieri's red Camaro. Fieri was at Café Rakka in Hendersonville on Wednesday filming a feature for the Food Network's *Diners, Drive-Ins and Dives*.

TSPBDC in the News

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BUSINESS

FOR MORE LOCAL BUSINESS NEWS, GO TO GALLATINNEWS EXAMINER.COM

SMALL BUSINESS

The power of in-person sales

I often get asked for best sales practices. Clients will ask, "What's the best way to sell my particular product or service on a shoestring budget?" I usually get a sense that the person asking is looking for a magic pill of sorts. There is no foolproof TV ad or brochure that is so attractive that it makes you whole year without any additional effort. This is not even to mention the Magic Sales Box, known as the Internet. Yes, you should be selling online, but your neighbor's cousin's kid who is so good at the computer (they're just playing on Facebook) probably cannot build a website so powerful that you will never have to actually go out and sell yourself.



CHARLES ALEXANDER

have an actual marketing budget to spend on tangible advertising methods such as print media, direct mail, and yes, the magic sales box. But if you are on a very tight budget and have any real belief in your product or service, what better way to promote your business than for you to get out and ask for sales.

Consider these opportunities for you to get out and sell your product or service.

Chamber events

Local chambers of commerce have ample opportunities to create and maintain business relationships. Whether it is a chamber

luncheon, an after-hours mixer, or a Leads Exchange, there are plenty of chances to learn about other businesses and, of course, sell your product or service.

Association meetings

Although association meetings for your industry are just business meetings, they do present an opportunity to discuss the topic of the day, they are also good places to sell your product or service. If you are a financial planner, a healthy lawn for each appeal. Every office may not take you up on the offer, but if you can find one that will you can put yourself in front of some very influential people.

Trade shows

Trade shows are a great way for you to market yourself directly to the consumer. They are a hassle to get prepared for and if you are uncomfortable about it at all, it could be a complete waste of time. But if you are willing to meet and greet and follow up on possible

referrals, a trade show can pay for itself many times over.

Presentations

Offer to do free presentations (not a blatant sales pitch) for potential customers that are informative and brief. If the local real estate agency has a Monday morning meeting, this may be a good time to offer a brief, yet informative landscaping presentation. A healthy lawn for each appeal. Every office may not take you up on the offer, but if you can find one that will you can put yourself in front of some very influential people.

Good old-fashioned calling and knocking

This is the one for which I have been told that I am completely out of touch with reality. There is no way that calling and/or knocking on the door of a potential customer could ever work, right? I understand that it is uncomfortable

WEDNESDAY, JULY 2, 2014

www.hartsvilledivette.com

Making a small business work in a struggling economy

By LIZ FERRELL
Managing Editor

The ability to own and operate your own business is a dream dear to the heart of Americans. Even those who don't have an entrepreneurial spirit like to root for the underdog and support their local businesses.

But hard economic times, fewer jobs and less income mean consumers have less money to spend, and no one isn't feeling the recession's impact more than small business owners and would-be owners looking for the right time to launch a business.

Enter the TSBDC, Tennessee Small Business Development Centers.

This organization, composed of a network of professional business consultants, exists to provide one-on-one expert business advice for a wide range of business areas, including those in manufacturing and retail, service providers, and professionals.

"We are here to help yourself," the TSBDC web site reads. "We are here to help you."

That help is available right here in Trousdale County.

Charles Alexander serves as

also come to Hartsville the third Wednesday of each month, and meet with clients by appointment at either 8 or 9 a.m.

"We've had several people in Trousdale County take advantage of Charles' counseling since he started holding sessions here," Teresa Garman, office manager at Four Lake Regional Industrial Development Authority, said.

At the Hartsville/Trousdale Chamber of Commerce September luncheon, Alexander noted that his office has 140 clients and within the last year has helped create 46 jobs, saved 60 more jobs, and helped 14 businesses get started.

Small business survival Alexander shared steps to a small business owner can take to ride out the rough economic times the nation is facing. Alexander offered marketing, financial and management strategies that make sense in any economic environment.

Marketing strategies include the inclusion of an advertising budget and marketing on a fixed monthly expense.

"Do not cut advertising expenses," Alexander stated. "If

lizing promotions aimed at keeping existing customers with a customer loyalty program, and reserve efforts to seek new customers for improved economic times.

Alexander also recommended that every business have a financial statement reflecting monthly income and cash flow, to help in spotting trends and potential problems.

"Most business owners I've met with can't produce a financial statement," he noted.

He also urged business owners to keep their business balance sheet as a totally separate entity from their personal financial statements; and to make and stick to a collections policy for collecting debt.

From a human resources standpoint, Alexander urged small business owners to consider shorter hours and furloughs in the short term to help save jobs in the long run.

Should layoffs become necessary, he said, "start with the least desirable employees." "Surviving with a few employees is better than falling with all employees."

Finally, Alexander noted that because businesses are so different, there is no "one size fits all" strategy for one busi-

op of your credit and collections processes



CHARLES ALEXANDER

clear expectations of prompt payment. Make sure that the payment guidelines are on your order form, brochure and/or Web site. Also make sure they clearly spell out your terms of sale and payment options. Do not use generic terms

review at least on a weekly basis. This report will tell you what customers are 30, 60 and 90 days late. If you make this analysis a recurring task, just like processing payroll or any other weekly task, you will make it a habit of being informed about collection issues.

Send a series of reminders. As soon as the payment date is missed, you need to have a system in place that reminds the customer. Using letters, emails or phone calls will work. You can use software, such as QuickBooks, to assist you in setting up reminders and even for processing collection letters. Also, if you have a late payment charge policy, you need to enforce it each time.

your business and your stress level will be in much better shape if you are willing to make those decisions.

Many of you know that you will not always win in the collections process and there has to be some type of resolution. You may have to sacrifice at least 50 percent of the debt to collect anything at all. This may mean that, at some point, you will have to be willing to sue or send the debt to collections. Either option may be costly, but if the debt is significant enough it may well be worth it. Sometimes you may just need to know when enough is enough, and give up on the debt and chalk it up as a lesson learned. I would expect that should show-

UPCOMING WORKSHOP

Small business workshops are held in the Betty Gibson Hall, room 107C, of Vol State annex next to campus on Gay Boulevard in Gallatin. Registration is required. For more information, visit tsbdc.org.

Government contracting 2-4 p.m., Thursday, June 18. No charge.

The TSBDC also offers free and confidential one-on-one coun-



Latham, owner of Latham's Lighthouse Events Center in Hendersontonville, hosts weddings, class reunions and more at the facility that draws people from Sumner County and beyond. DESSILAVIA YANKOVICH/THE NEWS EXAMINER

Alexander presents 'survival kit' for small businesses

By Scott Wilson
swgallatin@bellsouth.net

With a struggling economy and an unemployment rate approaching 10 percent, Charles Alexander said there are steps any small business owner can do to help his or her business survive the tough times.

Alexander, the director of the Tennessee Small Business Development Center at Volunteer State Community College, was the featured speaker at this week's Gallatin Chamber of Commerce luncheon.

He talked to those in attendance about how in a tough economy, small business owners need to take charge of their businesses and make sure they plan their paths into

the future.

"It is really hard to define the biggest mistake small business owners make during tough economic times. I think probably the biggest mistake is going into panic mode in the first place," Alexander said. "When a business owner is panicked they seem to not be focused and roam from one random task to another. They tend to focus only on the things in front of them and not focus on the big picture."

And Alexander said focusing on the big picture includes three key areas: marketing, financial and management.

"The first thing a small business owner does in a down economy is cut expenses. And the first

expense that gets cut, usually, is advertising. I can't tell you how counter productive that is," Alexander said. "You should not cut your advertising, but you should analyze where you're spending your dollars. You should define what your market is and target your market audience."

However, businesses should not forget about their current customers. Alexander said business owners should remember that it is much easier and profitable to keep an existing customer than create a new one; therefore, they should create a customer loyalty program. "Small business owners should review monthly statements and keep track of cash flow. It is important to look for trends and

upcoming problems," Alexander said. "And if you are a balance sheet because the business and the personal are all together, you must separate them as soon as possible."

Alexander said the financial status of the business is important and he believes that if most business owners are asked how their business is doing, they probably won't know. He said owners tend to just look at the bank statements and see how much money is in the bank and whether there is more or less money than there was last month. He said that's a dangerous way to operate a business.

See 'Survival' on A-10

r, 65, expects to double business

Lava Yankova
EXAMINER

I year has brought much disappointment to me as the owner of Lighthouse Events Center. It recently was named Tennessee Small Business Development Center's 2008 Rising Star Award for utilizing TSBDC's resources to community and make a profit in Hendersontonville, Lighthouse is a restaurant that rents out to groups. I have a special event, such as banquets.

I talked to Margaret (Latham) when she opened for less than a year, she held it made her breakfast point, which benchmark for small businesses to do they're financially stable," said Alexander, director of the Gallatin TSBDC. "I've heard so many other folks say they're very happy to do business with me."

her process for picking a Rising Star an informal one, during which he met with clients and visits their region. "I've heard so many other folks say they're very happy to do business with me," Alexander said he believes her enterprise to grow as a successful service business. People will still get up rates lease clients, exposure

account for roughly 60 per-

JUST THE FACTS

Name: Latham's Lighthouse Events Center
Location: 123 Sanders Ferry Road, Hendersontonville, TN

Contact: Manager and head chef Jim Latham at 590-7068

Latham@LighthouseEventsCenter.com

Web site: LightHouseEventsCenter.com

How long in business: one year

Concept: hosts special events on Old Hickory Lake

Business type: events center

Inspiration: to have a successful and profitable business

Notes: "No other place like it"

Best lesson learned: "Pay attention to detail and treat other people like you want to be treated"

Rootie advice: "Keep in mind you'll have to spend a lot of time getting it going, have a certified public accountant, and visit the Tennessee Small Business Development Center at Vol State."

Photo: DeSSILAVIA YANKOVICH/The News Examiner

cent of all events the center hosts with class reunions coming in second. But residents can rent the two-story, 8,400-square-foot facility for almost any occasion.

When she first opened the venue, which is on Old Hickory Lake off Sanders Ferry Road in Hendersontonville, Latham charged between \$10 and \$12 a guest, with about a 30-percent discount rate to local schools, Chambers of Commerce and other organizations as a showcase initiative.

In fact, she held her first event for free when Latham heard her church's Sunday

school class was fundraising for Relay for Life, she offered catering at the facility for free. The 120 people who attended secured her first leads and most effective marketing source: word-of-mouth.

"Every party we've had we've booked out," she said.

Entrepreneurial background, H.V.

Latham and her husband, H.V., ran the BP gas station on the corner of Sanders Ferry Road and Nashville Pike for 20 years until they sold it back to the multinational oil company in 2003.

"The gasoline business was getting tough and together whenever Walmart and Kroger got into it, because it was hard to compete," she said.

Meanwhile, Latham was involved in another venture. In 1998, she had the white lighthouse-resembling structure built as a trademark for Latham's restaurant upstairs and a sports bar downstairs, aptly called Lighthouse.

She ran it for about a year in hopes her son, Stacy, would take over the business after he graduated from college, but it turned he wasn't interested. Having lost thousands, Latham shut down the venue and leased the building. When the renters saw little success, she decided to test the picturesque location's event-center potential.

"Not knowing how to run such an entertaining, she undertook her own version of training. Latham attended seven classes, including those on how to start a small business and introductory Microsoft Outlook and QuickBooks offered through the TSBDC, where she also received one-on-one business consulting.

■ LATHAM, 84

Testimonials

Charles Alexander has been one of the greatest influences to me and the growth of my business.

I love having this as a source to use as we continue to grow. Thank you.

This small business center provided me with a wealth of information and motivation.

TSBDC has helped me on more than one occasion and I am very happy with the service.

You have a very good program to help businesses especially starting up.

I am growing to appreciate the help and resources that the college provides to business. Charles has been of a great help to me in this last session and I look forward to taking advantage of the resources that the college offers in the future.

**TENNESSEE
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