



## **TriSouth Entrepreneur Network**

news & information for the southern research triangle region

**For Immediate Release**  
Thursday, March 24, 2011

### **"LESSONS LEARNED" SUMMIT TO HELP ENTREPRENEURS OVERCOME OBSTACLES**

SOUTHERN PINES, N.C. - Avoiding common pitfalls and overcoming obstacles are critical for any business. Entrepreneurs can get an inside look at how to navigate for success at a regional entrepreneurial summit being held next month.

**"Lessons Learned" is the theme for the Fifth Annual Sandhills Regional Entrepreneurial Summit, scheduled for April 12 at Sandhills Community College in Pinehurst.**

The free event is sponsored by the TriSouth Entrepreneur Network, a cooperative venture among economic agencies and small business centers in Chatham, Harnett, Lee and Moore counties, along with The Entrepreneur Network, serving Moore, Hoke, Richmond and Scotland counties.

Top small-business advisors and successful entrepreneurs will be on hand at the summit to help participants achieve success.

Robert Moore, director of the Small Business Center at Robeson Community College in Lumberton, opens the session by explaining how to avoid common mistakes that undermine a business.

The summit continues with entrepreneurial panels discussing how to overcome obstacles that can derail success.

Scheduled to participate in the panels are local entrepreneurs Heidi Dent of Hirease, an employment screening services company; Chris Gilder of Meridian Zero Degrees, a manufacturer of self-service kiosks; and Jennifer Lang of Situs Outsourcing Solutions, an operations center serving the commercial real estate finance industry.

Also participating are Cindy Ellison of Pinehurst Patios, a casual furnishings retailer; Rick Hall of Pinehurst Blacksmith/Protech Powder Coating; and Con O'Mahoney of O'Mahoney's Pub and Grill.

A panel of SCC entrepreneurial students will discuss lessons learned, inside and outside of the classroom, from their grant-funded hands-on project involving starting and maintaining a business and supporting the community.

Leslie Scott, director of the Institute for Rural Entrepreneurship at the North Carolina Rural Center, closes the summit after lunch with a look at entrepreneurship across the state.

The event will also feature a mini expo of informational booths staffed by agencies including Sandhills SCORE, the Small Business Administration, and the Small Business & Technology Development Center (SBTDC), among others. This expo will be open from 11:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m., and attendees can visit the booths to ask questions and tap into these valuable resources.

"The summit provides the insight entrepreneurs need to manage and grow their own successful businesses," says Marilyn Neely, director of the Sandhills Community College Small Business Center and coordinator for the event. "It's always valuable to hear from others who have been through the trenches and managed to come out ahead."

The Sandhills Regional Entrepreneurial Summit runs from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. Admission, which includes lunch, is free and open to the public, but reservations are required.

To reserve a seat, contact Neely at 910-695-3938 or [Marilyn.Neely@gmail.com](mailto:Marilyn.Neely@gmail.com).

*The TriSouth Entrepreneur Network helps local entrepreneurs succeed. It is a cooperative venture among economic development agencies and small business centers in Chatham, Harnett, Lee and Moore, four counties forming the southern portion of the world-renowned Research Triangle Region.*

**For more information about the TriSouth Entrepreneur Network, contact:**  
Mari Howe, TriSouth Entrepreneur Network Coordinator  
Entrepreneur Resource Specialist, Chatham County Economic Development Corp.  
919.542.8277 (phone)  
[info@trisouthernet.com](mailto:info@trisouthernet.com)