

Bluffton Center for Entrepreneurs

Helping small businesses grow since 2008



Our Mission...to provide resources – financial, intellectual, and technological – in partnership with local educators and business leaders that will facilitate and nurture growth of new and developing enterprises.

\$7,000 in cash prizes offered in BCE business competition

Cash and in-kind awards valued at \$7,000 are prizes in Bluffton Center For Entrepreneurs' 2017 Ropp Triplett Business Plan Competition set to begin in January.

The contest's **Start-up Division** offers a \$4,000 first place, \$1,000 second place and \$500 third place cash awards, in addition to several in-kind prizes. It is open to contestants from Allen, Hancock, Putnam and Hardin counties.

The contest's **Small Business Improvement Division**, open to established businesses located the 45817 zip area, offers a \$1,000 first place cash prize, in addition to several in-kind prizes.

Bluffton Center for Entrepreneurs

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BCE is affiliated with the
Bluffton Area Chamber of
Commerce

This is BCE's ninth business plan competition and it recognizes the late Ropp Triplett, long-time Bluffton industrial leader and entrepreneur.

The 2016 Start-up Division winner was Easter House Bed and Breakfast of Ada. The Small Business Improvement Division winner was The Dough Hook of Bluffton.

"The competition teaches start-up businesses how to write a business plan that will help them become an established business," said Brendon Matthews, BCE board president.

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Business competition

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“Entrants will focus on ways to add, grow or develop enterprises, which contribute to increase in sales, traffic and jobs to their business and to the Bluffton area,” he added.

The competition’s initial free session is Wednesday, Jan. 11, 2017. It takes place, as all session, in the Bluffton town hall third floor meeting room. All sessions are from 6 to 8 p.m.

Kathy Keller, director, Small Business Development Center (SBDC), Lima, instructs all sessions with class dates and themes following:

Jan. 11: “Launch Your Business Right (free session)”

Jan. 18: “So You Want to be an Entrepreneur” (fees and applications due)

Jan. 25: “Planning to Start a Business”

Feb. 1: “Developing Your Business Idea”

Feb. 8: “Testing Your Business Idea and Getting it to Market”

Feb. 15: “Accounting for Your Business”

Feb. 22: “Financing Your Business”

March 8-9: Business plan dress rehearsal

March 15-16: Business plan presentation to judges

March 23: Bluffton Oscars Mix and Mingle – winners announced

To enter the competition, contestants must complete an entry form and submit a \$150 application fee. The fee for college student to enter is \$75. The deadline to enter the contest is Wednesday, Jan. 18, 2017. Early bird registration by Dec. 31, 2016, is \$125.

Entry forms are available at BCE’s website:
www.blufftonentrepreneurs.com.

For more information contact:

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“Entrepreneur’s road map to success” December BCE workshop topic

“An Entrepreneur’s road map to success,” is the topic of the Friday, Dec. 9, Bluffton Center For Entrepreneurs small business workshop.



Kathy Keller talking with prospective business plan competition contestants.

The free workshop follows the December Bluffton Area Chamber of Commerce breakfast at approximately 8:30 a.m. in the third floor of the Bluffton town hall.

Kathy Keller, a project coordinator for the Small Business Development Center at Rhodes State College, Lima, is the speaker.

Keller will also lead BCE’s Ropp Triplett Business Plan Competition sessions this winter, as she has for the past seven years.

The Small Business Development Center provides a variety of training programs drawing roughly 250 attendees annually.

Prior to joining the SBDC Network in 2005, she served as Director of the Wapakoneta Area Economic Development Council and was the Executive Director for the Wapakoneta Area Chamber of Commerce for a total of 20 years combined service.

Human resources for small business discussion in Nov.

Top five human resource issues for small business owners were addressed in Bluffton Center for Entrepreneurs November Friday Workshop on Nov. 11.

Sally Siferd, HRCI certified Professional in Human Resources (PHR), led the free workshop.

Here’s a summary of her presentation:

- **Hiring Right** – developing job descriptions, posting openings

where the most qualified candidates will find it, compliant applications, consistent and thorough interviewing process

- **Onboarding process** – make them feel welcomed and loved from day one and continue to invest in them as long as they work for you

- **Legal challenges** – stay abreast of the human resource laws, join local SHRM chapter, attend update conferences, engage a consultant and/or have a working relationship with an employment law attorney

- **Employee handbook** – written policies to protect you, give guidance to your employees, written by a professional and updated yearly

- **Document** – good behavior and

not-so-good behavior should be documented and filed to be used for disciplinary purposes, legal needs, rewards and performance plans

Since 1997, Siferd has been an HRCI certified Professional in Human Resources (PHR). In January 2016, Sally earned the Society for Human Resource Management Certified Professional (SHRM-CP) certification.

BCE offers a monthly free workshop focusing on small business.

BCE think tanks assist small businesses in problem-solving

How can Bluffton Center for Entrepreneurs best serve established Bluffton businesses and start-up Bluffton businesses?

BCE posed the question to Bluffton Area Chamber of Commerce members during the September Bluffton Area Chamber of Commerce breakfast.

The question launched small group discussions from chamber members, who offered several suggestions.



BCE offers a think tank when a business identifies a “problem.” BCE assembles six or more professionals to help solve it.

BCE gathers Bluffton businesspersons to help in a 90-minute roundtable discussion. The discussion is confidential. Notes, offering business solutions and ideas, are taken and provided to the business owner. Think tanks cost \$200.

September Bluffton chamber discussion.

Some of BCE’s past think tanks tackled local business problems such as:

- My business needs a marketing plan. What do I do?
- My business wants to attract more customers. Here’s what I’m doing now. What can do to increase traffic?
- My business is very busy in the spring and summer, but business slows in the winter. Help me!
- My start-up business needs to form an LLC and get some accounting help. What do I do?
- How do I reach Bluffton University students with my business? I have products and services that could attract them, but I’ve not succeeded.

Depending upon the needs of the business owner, BCE think tanks have include persons with backgrounds in law, accounting, marketing, retail, public relations, banking and village government. Bluffton University students also participate, depending upon the discussion topic.

BCE: Helping small business grow!

In Bluffton and Allen, Hancock,
Hardin and Putnam counties

Questions?

Contact us at:
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Please forward our newsletter to others who may find it of interest.