

The Entrepreneurial Eye Addresses Business Creation in the Blue Ridge Crossroads

Galax, Va.- On March 26th at the Crossroads Institute, 20 attendees participated in a conference entitled “The Entrepreneurial Eye,” focusing on how entrepreneurs channel their creativity into a business and how they contend with the challenges of running a small business.

“I believe the event was beneficial for everyone,” says Ken McFadyen, Regional Director for Blue Ridge Crossroads Economic Development Authority (BRCEDA). “Learning from entrepreneurs who have real world experience is invaluable. We hope to have more events like this in the future.”

Four local entrepreneurs participated in a moderated panel that addressed such questions as lessons learned, risk taking and financing. Galax native Sam Bartlett moderated the panel and lent his experience and rapport to the event. Bartlett is an ordained minister whose latest entrepreneurial venture is SonFire Media, a Christian publishing company.

Ryan Turman participated as a panelist and heads business development for the Turman Group in Hillsville. Turman develops business relationships for his company in China, Saudi Arabia and Europe. The Turman Group exports fine Appalachian hardwoods around the world.

Dr. Barbara Johnson also served on the panel and operates The Conservatory of Dance and Theater in Galax. In 2004 Johnson, a surgeon, followed her passion for ballet and opened the conservatory. Each year during the Christmas season her dancers perform The Nutcracker – an event that’s open to the public.

Tom McChesney came to the panel with extensive retail experience. He and his wife, Tonya, have operated the Sears dealership in Galax for the last 12 years. They also operate the UPS Store, which is located next door.

The Entrepreneurial Eye attracted 20 attendees from a variety of backgrounds, including wood workers, retirees to the community and a river outfitter. The panel addressed topics ranging from how to find good ideas and how to choose business partners to dealing with a business failure.

When asked, panelists admitted they had considered the possibility that their own venture might fail, however, they have each learned to convert that anxiety into creative energy that gives them the passion and determination to overcome the business world’s inevitable obstacles.

Additional questions asked included how panelists research the market for their products and services, good business ideas waiting to be developed in the region, and the use of technology in everyday business operations.

BRCEDA serves the City of Galax, Carroll and Grayson Counties by supporting and creating entrepreneurial business opportunities. They are co-located and work closely with the Crossroads

Institute, which offers a host of entrepreneurial economic development services through partner organizations under the guidance of a Board of Directors that represents each organization and locality.

###

For More Info Contact:

Oliver McBride, omcbride@crossroadsva.org

Ken McFadyen, kmcfadyen@crossroadsva.org

276-236-0391