

## **KOSBE Hosts Night School Program for Prospective and Existing Small Businesses and Entrepreneurs**

*By Aundrea Wilcox KOSBE Executive Director*

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The Kingsport Chamber of Commerce and KOSBE have teamed up to put on the 4th KOSBE Small Business Night School, on Tuesday and Wednesday, November 17 & 18, from 5:00 p.m. to 9 p.m., at the new downtown Kingsport Center for Higher Education (300 W Market St, Kingsport, TN 37660).

Aundrea Wilcox, KOSBE Executive Director, said her office is focused on supporting the growth, development, and retention of small businesses in and around Kingsport. She said, "This event is for small businesses in Kingsport, and surrounding rural areas throughout the eight-county region including Carter, Greene, Hancock, Hawkins, Johnson, Sullivan, Unicoi, and Washington."

Primarily, the KOSBE Small Business Night School provides free training, peer-to-peer networking, collaborative problem-analysis and problem-solving, and access to contracting opportunities and financing to small business owners and entrepreneurs. During this two-night event, attendees will have a chance to learn about contracting opportunities and stay abreast of current bid lists and add their name or company to vendor mailing lists. Registered attendees will also have the chance to apply for the SBA Community Express Loan for \$5,000 to \$25,000, BERO Microloan for up to \$10,000 and the SBA Patriot Express Loan for veterans and their family members. While in attendance, participants can investigate other sources of capital for their small business. Loan applicants must be 18 or older.

To help business owners and entrepreneurs solve their existing problems, avoid future pitfalls, and incorporate creative brainstorming, a team of experts will present on topics including:

- ? Web-based Startup Business Ideas
- ? Franchising Opportunities
- ? Microsoft Office: Tips and Tricks
- ? Accessing Contracts & Subcontracts
- ? Doing Business with Y-12 National Security Complex
- ? Choosing the Right Business Structure: To LLC or Not to LLC?
- ? Using Social Media (i.e., Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, etc.)
- ? Presentation Design: Selling Yourself and Your Products and Services

On Tuesday night only (Nov. 17), there will be a Contracting Vendor Development EXPO, with procurement officers of Eastman Chemical Company, Bristol Motor Speedway, Domtar, City of Kingsport, Kingsport City Schools, and others who are interested in broadening their vendor base by including small, minority and woman-owned businesses. Gloria Mencer, Y-12 Socioeconomic Programs Office (Oak Ridge, TN), will share with local small business owners how to be better equipped to do business with Y-12 National Security Complex. Paul Middlebrooks, Procurement Technical Assistance Center (Chattanooga, TN), will explain why many small businesses are diversifying their client base with government business leads, how to navigate various useful government web sites, and talk about the importance of Strategic Partnerships and Teaming in contracting and subcontracting. Also on Tuesday night, Ronald Wade, State

of Tennessee Economic and Community Development Business Enterprise Resource Office (BERO), will provide a State of Tennessee Small Business Update.

On Wednesday night only (Nov. 18), there will be a Live SBA Express Loan Clinic, which will entail all interested candidates to complete an actual SBA Community Express Loan application on-site and apply on the spot. Applicants must provide a copy of their valid driver's license and have a business checking account established in the name of their business. Sue Malone, Strategies for Small Business (Danville, CA) –the #1 SBA loan provider for the Community Express Loan Program in the nation –will facilitate the clinic. She has closed over 20,000 SBA Community Express Loans for small business owners. David Tiller, Small Business Administration (Nashville, TN), will be on hand to provide an SBA Update including details of revised small business size standards, recently raised loan caps, new online training opportunities, and more. Also, Hank Helton, Southeast Community Capital, will be available to discuss innovative financing options for building and land purchases and expansion, and purchase order financing, to help grow small businesses.

On both nights, KOSBE staff and volunteers will be available for one-on-one business counseling, match-making, and to answer questions.

Although the Night School was designed with business owners, entrepreneurs, high school and college students, retirees and seniors in mind, the event is open to the general public. There is no cost to attend, but pre-registration is required. You must register whether you plan to attend just one or all sessions. Refreshments will be served. Anyone interested can register online or call (423) 392-8811 for more information. To see the entire class schedule and register, visit [www.kosbe.org](http://www.kosbe.org).

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The mission of KOSBE is to actively assist in the establishment of new small businesses and the growth and development of existing small businesses in Kingsport, Tenn. KOSBE is a nonprofit economic development organization.

Category	Business, Education, Home business
Tags	kosbe, Small Business, kingsport, entrepreneur, startup, start-up, micromentor, business advisor, business mentoring
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