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Big Sandy CTC Faculty/Staff Complete Entrepreneurial Training

PRESTONSBURG, Ky. – Twelve Big Sandy Community & Technical College faculty and staff members earned certificates of completion from Southeast Kentucky Economic Development Corporation's (SKED) Entrepreneurial SMARTS Training in late April.

This is the second of several such training courses to be hosted at campuses throughout the Kentucky Community & Technical College System (KCTCS) in the next year. The goal is to certify faculty and staff to incorporate this valuable entrepreneurship curriculum into their classes, giving their students a jumpstart on their careers.

The course is the result of a partnership between SKED, the National Association for Community College Entrepreneurship (NACCE), Shaping our Appalachian Region (SOAR), the Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC) and the National Center for Resource Development (NCRD).

All graduates of the Prestonsburg session completed the four-session, 12-hour course designed to provide entrepreneurs with the knowledge and resource materials they need to get a new small business off the ground. This training also provides owners of existing small businesses the skills they need to become more successful and grow their companies.

Graduates include: Greta Slone, director of diversity; Tina Terry, coordinator of activities; Connie Estep, director of grants development; Judy Howell, librarian; Danny Tonkin, director of business and industry; Rachelle Burchett, director of Digital Careers Now; Paula Thomson, professor; Janie Beverly, director OSS; Sara Tackett, senior administrative assistant; Conda Little, professor; Stephanie Abshire, liaison Digital Careers Now; and Patsy Jackson, program administrator.

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Amanda Kelly, SKED small business training director, conducts the Entrepreneurial SMARTS classes. Kelly is a certified Core Four® Business Planning Course instructor and is among more than 200 trainers from over 80 organizations across the country who have been certified as Core Four® Business Planning Course instructors.

“The Big Sandy KCTCS campus has some fantastic faculty members,” Kelly said. “I truly enjoyed working with this group. They are extremely motivated to help their students and community in any way they can. This group will have a great impact in the Prestonsburg area.”

SKED conducts the entrepreneurial and small business training program - Entrepreneurial SMARTS: Simple Methods And Reality-based Training for Success – which is based on a nationally recognized training program called Core Four® Business Planning Course. The Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC) has provided funding support for these training sessions.

To date, 524 entrepreneurs and small business owners have gathered in 44 different locations across Southeast Kentucky to receive SMARTS training and gain valuable knowledge that has impacted their business decisions and life plans. Many have gone on to put the knowledge to work in their small businesses, while others have simply benefited from the information. Through it all, the training program has developed into a well-respected and vital part of the region’s small business landscape and has improved the lives of many.

Entrepreneurial SMARTS boasts a 94% completion rate.

At Entrepreneurial SMARTS training sessions, entrepreneurs and small business owners are instructed in how to create a business plan including basic knowledge about starting, financing and operating a business and planning for success. Class participants are also given the tools needed to determine if business ownership is for them.

Upon successful completion of this training, participants receive a certificate recognizing their achievements and are eligible to apply for business startup or expansion funding from SKED’s loan funds.

For information about entrepreneurship training, contact Kelly at (606) 416-2008 or by email at akelly@centertech.com,

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Formed 32 years ago by Fifth District Congressman Hal Rogers to create jobs in Southeast Kentucky, the economic development organization, based in Somerset, serves a 45-county region in Kentucky. Staff works with business owners, small and large, throughout its service area to identify financing solutions to fund their location, expansion and working capital needs.



Big Sandy Community & Technical College graduates are pictured back row from left: Greta Slone, director of diversity; Tina Terry, coordinator of activities; Connie Estep, director of grants development; Judy Howell, librarian and Danny Tonkin, director of business and industry; front row from left: Rachelle Burchett, director of Digital Careers Now; Paula Thomson, professor; Janie Beverly, director OSS; Sara Tackett, senior administrative assistant; Conda Little, professor; Stephanie Abshire, liaison Digital Careers Now; and Patsy Jackson, program administrator.