

Cass County EDC adds second SBDC counselor

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More Small Business Development Center (SBDC) assistance is available in Cass County, as the Cass County Economic Development Corporation (EDC) recently began contracting with a second SBDC counselor.

Since 2004, the EDC, located in Backus, has been a satellite Small Business Development Center, under a contract with the North Central SBDC at Central Lakes College, Brainerd.

“Most months, we provide assistance to 20 to 30 businesses; and with another counselor under contract, we can help a few more,” said EDC Executive Director Gail Levenson.

Professional small business counseling is an essential step in starting a business. In the post-recession economy, new businesses are sometimes required to provide 25 percent of the start-up costs with owner cash, and this can be a huge barrier to a new business start-up. There are many public loans available through cities, regions and foundations to help owners meet that requirement. All of them require a business plan and financial analysis to qualify, and that is where the EDC can help.

As Executive Director, Levenson is certified as an Economic Development Finance Professional (EDFP). EDC consultant Julie Hofius has completed the first two courses of EDFP Certification and is qualified to provide SBDC services under the EDC contract.

Commenting on this expansion of available services, EDC President Dave Holk said, “As a group, our board has been working very hard to improve the overall economic atmosphere here in Cass County, and we are pleased that we have been able to be a part of providing potential and expanding businesses with needed services. This expanded availability of services bodes well for continued improvement in the growth of available jobs and investment opportunities.”

The Cass County EDC office is located at the Cass County Land Office in Backus. Give the EDC a call at (218) 947-7522 to set up a meeting to discuss your business idea. The Cass County EDC is a local nonprofit corporation whose mission is to “Improve the business environment of Cass County by encouraging a strong, diverse and sustainable economy and to build better relationships between business, government agencies and local communities.”