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Increased business planning opportunities set in Cass County

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More Small Business Development Center (SBDC) assistance is available in Cass County, as the Economic Development Corp. (EDC) recently started to contract with a second SBDC counselor.

The EDC has been a satellite Small Business Development Center since 2004 under a contract with the North Central SBDC at Central Lakes College.

"Most months, we provide assistance to 20-30 businesses and with another counselor under contract, we can help a few more," said EDC Executive Director Gail Levenson, in a news release. 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 startup costs with owner cash and this can be a huge barrier, the EDC reported. 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 reported it can help.

As the executive director, Levenson is certified as an economic development finance professional (EDFP).

Julie Hofius, EDC consultant, completed the first two courses of EDFP certification and is qualified to provide SBDC services under the EDC contract.

"As a group our board has been working very hard on improving 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," said Dave Holk, president of the Cass County EDC, commenting on this expansion of availability of services. "This expanded availability of these services bodes well for a continuing improvement in the growth of available jobs and investment opportunities."

For more information, call the EDC at 218-947-7522. The Cass County EDC is a local nonprofit corporation.

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