



"Professional Guidance for Business Growth"

March 9, 2015

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Spotlight on Success – The Butter Churn

Stephanie Freeman first approached the Illinois Small Business Development Center (SBDC) at Blackhawk College in May, 2014 looking to open fresh food market in western Illinois. Ms. Freeman worked with SBDC Director Joel Youngs to create a business plan and apply for financing. With Joel's vital help, Ms. Freeman secured a loan and now operates The Butter Churn in her hometown of Woodhull. She employs 10 part-time and 3 full-time staff.

Ms. Freeman thanked the SBDC by saying, "Joel Youngs at the Illinois Small Business Development Center gave me the tough love and critical thinking that I needed to solidify my commitment to the project and ask the right questions to move forward. Knowing that the ILSBDC was available for continued mentoring gave me security and peace of mind as my project developed."

The Butter Churn offers seasonal and fresh local produce, locally raised and butchered meats, cooking classes, lunch and candy counter and more. Visit <https://thewoodhullbutterchurn.wordpress.com/> for more information.

InnovateHER

SBA's 2015 "Innovating for Women Business Challenge" - InnovateHER is a cross-cutting women's business challenge aimed to "unearth innovative products and services that help impact and empower the lives of women and families." www.SBA.gov/InnovateHER

The workforce looks very different from 50 years ago. Women now make up nearly half of the labor force and play a critical role in our nation's economic prosperity. Most children live in households where all parents work. And as our population ages, families are increasingly caring for aging parents while balancing the needs of work and home. As demands on women and families grow, the need for products and services that address unique challenges increases. This Challenge will provide that platform.

Challenge Criteria

InnovateHER provides an opportunity for entrepreneurs to showcase products or services that have a measurable impact on the lives of women and families (30%), have the potential for commercialization (40%), and fill a need in the marketplace (30%).

Participants must be at least 18 years of age, U.S. citizens or permanent residents, and meet other requirements as defined in the [Competition Rules](#) .

How to Participate

InnovateHER's first round goes live March 1st. Throughout the month of March, universities, accelerators, resource partners and other organizations will host local competitions. A month after going live, each host will select and submit one local winner to the SBA, who will then identify no more than 10 finalists. Finalists will make a live pitch to a panel of expert judges during National Small Business Week, May 4 – 8, 2015, in Washington, D.C. where they will compete for top three awards and prize money totaling \$30,000. ***Finalists will be responsible for covering their own travel costs to DC for the national competition.***

[View the Competition Rules](#)

[View the latest list of InnovateHER host organizations](#)

More Questions?

- Read our [Frequently Asked Questions](#)
- Contact us at womenbusiness@sba.gov

Maximizing Neoserra – Including an Attachment

Please click on the link below to find more information on how to include an attachment with an email sent through the Neoserra system. Please keep in mind there is a 5 MB size limit on the attachment as well as a 250 recipient limit. Learn more at the link below:

<http://support.outreachsystems.com/resources/help/neoserra/faq.jsp?id=n15>

Valued Resources – Wave Accounting

Wave Accounting is a completely free app that helps a small business manage business finances from any place you can get online. It also allows an entrepreneur or freelancer to separate and track personal finances, so they can handle all of their financial management from one location. It includes invoices, expense tracking, reports, and more. It has its limits, of course. It doesn't track timesheets and some of the other features found in a paid app, but for those getting started or with a very small business, it might be the perfect choice. Learn more at: <https://www.waveapps.com/>

Network News and Moves – New Key DCEO Staff

Today DCEO Acting Director Jim Schultz announced the addition of three new key leadership staff. Heidi Brown-McCreery joins DCEO as Chief of Staff and Mike Hoffman is the new Chief Operating Officer. Steve Savage, who stared at the agency last Wednesday, is the new Director of Communications.

Heidi most recently worked on State Farm Insurance Company's Innovation Team as Ideation Manager in the Strategic Foresight Division. Her team focused on developing new, creative products and ways to add value to customers and help State Farm foresee and anticipate changing market conditions and customer needs. Previously, Heidi served on a project team overseeing the design and implementation of Salesforce.com, now the global

leader in customer relation management. Heidi holds a Bachelor of Science degree in Public Relations and Political Science from Illinois State University.

Mike joins DCEO from the RockTenn Company, a Fortune 500 manufacturing company with a strong presence in Illinois. Mike also served 15 years as a commissioned officer in the U.S. Marine Corps. He brings expertise in strategy development, organizational operations management and leading and managing organizations ranging from 10 to 1200 members. Mike earned a Bachelor's degree from Tulane University and a Master's degree from the Naval Postgraduate School in Monterey, California.

Steve has been in the communications industry for more than 30 years and has worked for the world's largest public relations and public affairs consulting firms, Fortune 50 corporations, the White House and the U.S. Department of Agriculture, where he was director of communications for a \$60 billion agency. He has considerable experience in strategic communications planning, news media relations, brand management, crisis communications and product publicity. Steve holds a Bachelor of Arts degree from the University of Iowa.

America's SBDC Network Connect

Please [click here](#) to access the latest issue of [America's SBDC Network Connect Newsletter](#). In this issue you will find a report from America's SBDC Professional Development and Conference Committee about the upcoming Annual Conference in San Francisco on September 8-11, 2015.

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The **WEEKLY CONNECTION** is distributed by the Illinois SBDC and DCEO Office of Entrepreneurship, Innovation & Technology each Monday to members of the DCEO Illinois SBDC Network to provide the service delivery partners with regular updates on small business issues, opportunities and resources. You may send any information to share with the Illinois SBDC Network to Tom.Becker@illinois.gov. Please feel free to forward this update to other interested resource providers and key stakeholders.
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