

## **CVC Community Business Plan Competition Network**

The CVC would facilitate the development of a network of communities that are interested in sponsoring business plan competitions as one of the first local activities in support of creating a community based entrepreneurship center.

1. An Entrepreneur Support Team will be formed by the local sponsoring organization in collaboration with other local development and educational groups including Extension.
2. The Entrepreneur Support Team will develop a concept for the local business plan competition, seek appropriate sponsors to finance the local awards, organize the judging process, and assure that the competition is conducted in a fair and professional manner.
3. The Entrepreneur Support Team will participate in CVC business plan competition network workshops and communications to share ideas, best practices and lessons learned.

Since 2002, the CVC has received three proposals from communities involving variations of the local area/regional business plan competition concept. The business plan competition concept is a technique for developing local community support for entrepreneurs that has been identified by the Kauffman Foundation and National Center for Small Communities as one of the “best practice” concepts in “Grassroots Rural Entrepreneurship” December 2003.

The potential attributes of this approach include:

- Publicity helps to inform the public that local entrepreneur support groups are now open for business and willing to make a commitment to support entrepreneurs.
- Resources pledged ahead of the competition help to assure availability for competition winners. The process reduces search costs for entrepreneurs looking for startup capital and assistance.
- Enhanced publicity lets potential entrepreneurs and other supporters know where the local entrepreneurship support resources and networks are located and where to go for assistance and information.
- The process provides communities with a mechanism for identifying entrepreneurs without diverting costs to locally intensive survey efforts.
- The type of resources pledged (money, space, administrative/secretarial support, gas & electricity, etc.) and criteria specified by the community will typically identify businesses that are a match for the resources available in the local community or region.
- Public offering sends a signal that the competition is open to all and that entrepreneurship can occur in any sector or any income level.
- An opportunity is provided to bring in regional and statewide expertise networks in to assist in judging the competition and to help with follow up support for the winners.

The CVC will publicize the Community Business Plan Competition Network concept and develop a list of communities interested in participating in the network. A workshop will be held at the Community Entrepreneurship Academy during the Fall of 2004 and \$5000 dollar grants will be awarded to seven communities selected from the candidate communities for purposes of helping to defray organizational and implementation costs of the local program. In addition, regional SBDCs and local Extension will receive CVC incentives for participating on the local Community Entrepreneur Development Teams.

To be considered for the candidate community list, contact CVC by email at: [cvc@iastate.edu](mailto:cvc@iastate.edu) .