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Good morning, DeKalb County ...

SBDC organization crucial to business development, growth, crisis management

According to business counselor Jock Sommese, "the Small Business Development Center is one of the best-kept secrets in the country."

The SBDC is the main source of technical and managerial assistance for small businesses in the United States. According to the U.S. Small Business Administration, the mission of a SBDC is to promote growth, innovation, productivity and revenue for small businesses through improvements to their business administration. In 2020, America's SBDC is celebrating 40 years of helping small businesses.

Small business is crucial to the U.S. economy. Independent firms having fewer than 500 employees represent 99.9% of all employer firms according to the SBA.

Small businesses are the lifeblood of the U.S. economy: They employ about half of all private sector employees, they create two-thirds of net new jobs and are the driving force behind U.S. innovation and competitiveness.

As executive director of DeKalb County Economic Development Corp., I know that small business is very important to the county.

The SBA has been particularly crucial to helping small business cope with the impact of COVID-19.

They administer the Payroll Protection Loan Program and the SBA Disaster Loan Program. SBDC counselors like Sommese are working overtime assisting small business with loan applications and management deci-



IEWS

Paul Borek

sions to help them survive the effects of closures and drastically reduced revenues.

Sommese advises that the SBDC is designed to deliver up-to-date counseling, training and technical assistance in all aspects of small-business management. SBDC counselors assist small businesses with financial, marketing, production, organization, engineering, technical problems and feasibility studies.

Special SBDC programs and economic development activities include international trade assistance, technical assistance, procurement assistance, venture capital formation and rural development.

And the cost to the clients is ZERO.

The SBDC serving DeKalb County is funded through the SBA, the state of Illinois' Department of Commerce & Economic Development Opportunity, Waubensee Community College, Kishwaukee College, and other community stakeholders who want to see business succeed.

"As a previous business owner myself, I was always looking for people to help make my business more successful," Sommese said. "And as an educator, I convert the theory into practical

applications. I want to prevent business decision makers from making the same mistakes I made in my own endeavors. In other words, it's like being in a dark room, not knowing where to go or what to do. I turn the lights on."

"We at the SBDC are here to help you start, survive and thrive in your business, no matter what the size company, and we've been doing this long before COVID-19," Sommese said.

Example of questions you should ask about your business:

- Do you need help finding and keeping customers? We can help.
- Are you selling and not getting paid for it? We can help.
- Have you looked at cutting expenses and don't know where to start? We can help.
- Is your work flow the most effective and efficient it can be? We can help.
- Can you get better at marketing, finance, management, leadership, operations? We can help.
- Do you have an issue? We can help.
- Do you have a business idea? We can help.
- Do you need a plan for your business? We can help.
- Do you need a sympathetic ear, or a kick in the rear? We can help.

SBDC counselor Jock Sommese can be reached at sbdcjms@gmail.com or 267-275-6950.

• Paul Borek is executive director of the DeKalb County Economic Development Corp.

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CORRECTIONS

Accuracy is important to the Daily Chronicle, and we want to correct mistakes promptly. Please call errors to our attention by phone, 815-526-4565; email, news@daily-chronicle.com.

ON THE COVER

Genevieve Lindstrom, of Sycamore, waves from the porch of her home Tuesday as she is treated to a parade of friends and city vehicles on the morning of her 105th birthday.

See story on page 3.

Photo by Mark Busch - mbusch@shawmedia.com

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