

**Southeast Kentucky
Economic Development** 
A Regional Growth Corporation

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Link Southeast Kentucky Debuting in Morehead, Ky.

MOREHEAD, Ky. – Southeast Kentucky Economic Development Corporation (SKED) is giving small business owners and entrepreneurs a new way to network and connect beginning this month.

Link Southeast Kentucky is SKED’s most recent initiative designed to give entrepreneurs and small business owners information and guidance that will



help them grow their businesses and form lasting commercial and personal relationships in their own communities and throughout the region.

Link, essentially a coffee shop-style format meeting, is a spinoff of SKED’s highly successful Entrepreneurial SMARTS training course. Staff saw the need to expand upon the resources and training provided by SMARTS by giving small business owners a venue to continue the networking begun during the training. Link meetings are free and open to all business owners.

SKED Small Business Training Specialist Amanda Kelly says the purpose of Link is to bring small business owners and entrepreneurs together to share ideas and experiences allowing them to help one another grow and prosper.

“Quite often during SMARTS trainings we see students come up with very creative solutions to issues small businesses face, just by having a conversation with each other,” Kelly explained. “This networking event will provide that same opportunity for all small business owners in the area. By learning from the experiences of others, we can overcome hurdles and achieve success together. ”

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Link Southeast Kentucky is funded through a partnership between SKED and the Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC). The ARC also provides funding for the Entrepreneurial SMARTS training.

“The ARC is pleased to partner with SKED to bring this new entrepreneurial and small business resource to Southeast Kentucky,” said ARC Federal Co-Chair Earl Gohl. “Link Southeast Kentucky will provide a meeting place where business owners can come to share their successes and their struggles and work together to overcome and celebrate. When businesses in a community combine their resources, it’s the community and its residents who benefit most. Success breeds success, and that’s what Southeast Kentucky needs in all of its communities.”

SKED has received funding to initiate Link Southeast Kentucky in three communities in 2015. Morehead, Ky. will be the site of the kick-off event.

Morehead Link will take place Tuesday, April 7 from 5:30 to 7:30 p.m. at CoffeeTree Books located at 159 E. Main Street, Morehead, Ky. A light dinner of sandwiches and wraps provided by The Fuzzy Duck will be provided free to all attendees.

Other partners for this initial session of Link Southeast Kentucky include: the Kentucky Innovation Center, Morehead Chamber of Commerce, the Small Business Development Center and the Morehead-Rowan County Economic Development Council, Inc. (EDC)

Entrepreneurial SMARTS is a four-session, 12-hour course designed to provide entrepreneurs with the knowledge and resource materials they need to get a new small business off the ground. This training also provides owners of existing small businesses the skills they need to become more successful and grow their businesses.

Today, a total of 383 aspiring entrepreneurs and small business owners have completed entrepreneurial SMARTS training in 31 sessions held across the 45 counties in SKED’s service area.

SKED Executive Director Brett Traver says although SKED and ARC are initiating and funding these pilot Link events, it’s his hope that each community will take ownership of the meetings and develop and grow them to fit the unique characteristics of their own communities and their needs.

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“Helping our Southeast Kentucky businesses grow and prosper has been central to SKED's mission for 29 years,” Traver said. With partners like the ARC and others throughout the region, we will continue to help small businesses make money and employ people.”

Kelly conducts the Entrepreneurial SMARTS classes. She will also facilitate the initial Link meetings.

For information about LINK Southeast Kentucky, contact Kelly at (606) 416-2008 or by email at akelly@centertech.com. For more information on Entrepreneurial SMARTS or to register for SMARTS training in your area, visit www.southeastkentucky.com. Click on the Training link.

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Formed 29 years ago by Fifth District Congressman Hal Rogers to create jobs in Southeast Kentucky, the economic development organization, based in Somerset, serves a 45-county region in Kentucky. Staff works with business owners, small and large, throughout its service area to identify financing solutions to fund their location, expansion and working capital needs.