

**Contact:**

Cheryl Meadows  
SKED Communications Director  
606-677-6101  
[cmeadows@centertech.com](mailto:cmeadows@centertech.com)

## East KY Residents Complete SKED Digital Marketing Course

### *One Local Woman Learns Tips to Help Market the Cumberland Gap Region*

PINEVILLE, KY – Carla Reece didn't retire to the Cumberland Gap region to start a new career, but that's exactly what she's doing at the age of 60.

The New Tazewell, Tenn. native worked decades in the northeastern United States, before coming home for some much-needed rest and relaxation in the valley she calls home. But when she learned how the region had adapted to the loss of coal mining and agriculture jobs through tourism promotion, she got excited to help and career number two was born.

Reece went to work for the Cumberland Gap Region Tourism Association in 2018. Her role there is to promote the three-year-old nonprofit tourism organization through social media.

"I went to work part time, and it blossomed into a passion," she explained.

"This region has so much to offer. We've all got to work together to bring tourists to this region to create the biggest impact."

When Southeast Kentucky Economic Development Corp. (SKED) brought its social media marketing class, Be Boss Online (BBO), to Pineville last month, Reece was one of the first to sign up. She knew it provided skills she could use on the job.

The 12-hour digital marketing course offered in her own backyard was an opportunity she couldn't resist. Each Thursday in March, Reece traveled to the course being taught at the historic Bell Theater in Pineville. She absorbed all of the information she could, and by the third



BBO Graduate Carla Reece

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session she had created a new website for her nonprofit organization and was well on her way to mastering social media marketing and analytics.

During BBO training, clients master: Google business search and services, Google and Facebook advertising, building a simple website, understanding analytics and using social media.

“The neatest thing I’ve learned (in the class) has to be making your own website,” she said. “I had no idea it was that easy. Amanda (Kelly) and Kyle (Smith) are great instructors. Once they showed me the steps, I was amazed at how easy it was.”

Reece’s employer - the Cumberland Gap Region Tourism Association - was winner of the 2018 Destination Marketing Organization of the Year by the Tennessee Hospitality and Tourism Association.

Reece is already working to top that in 2019. Click here to see the website she created: [www.cumberlandgapregion.com](http://www.cumberlandgapregion.com)

She was one of 12 East Kentucky residents to complete the course and receive certificates of completion.

The other graduates include: Jeannie Allen with Selling to the World; Shannon Elliott with E&E Hardwoods, Inc.; Chester Wooton with C&S Lures; James Barrett with Six Zero Six Consulting; Amanda Phillips with Long’s Pic-Pac, Betty Joseph with Bead Unique, Ashley Delk with Long’s Pro Hardware, Jacob Roan with Main Street Pineville, Michael Roan with The Pines, Amy Russell with Today’s Balanced Woman and Diana Woodings with Diana’s This and That Consignment.

SKED Small Business Training Specialist Amanda Kelly describes BBO as: An always current, turn-key digital marketing curriculum that allows you to help clients grow their bottom line by owning their presence on the internet.

“Our simple, innovative and comprehensive curriculum helps business owners feel as confident about using the internet and social media as marketing tools as they are about managing their business,” she said.

The BBO curriculum is customizable and includes four courses, each three hours long, packed with valuable digital marketing how-to information that will produce results for small

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businesses. But clients are not limited to that lineup: The curriculum modules can be separated into one-hour lunch-and-learn sessions, or even two-hour specialty courses on social media. It's completely customizable to meet each client's needs.

“We want to put East Kentucky small business owners on the same “playing field” as businesses across the country,” Kelly added. “Be Boss Online provides the skills and information that give our small business owners the same growth potential as others in more populated areas, because we’re teaching them the tools to market their products and services in ways they once could only dream of.”

Be Boss Online classes are currently under way in Prestonsburg, Ky. Registration is now open for a Corbin, Ky. class.

For more information about BBO, contact Kelly at [Amanda@bebossonline.com](mailto:Amanda@bebossonline.com) , by phone at (606) 677-6119 or visit the website: [www.bebossonline.com](http://www.bebossonline.com).

*SKED is a nonprofit economic development organization and has been designated a CDC by the U.S. Small Business Administration. The organization was formed 32 years ago by Fifth District Congressman Hal Rogers to create jobs in Southeast Kentucky.*

*Its corporate office is based in Somerset and serves a 45-county service region. A staff of nine professionals works with business owners, small and large, to identify financing solutions to fund their location, expansion and working capital needs, and provide them the technical assistance and training they need to succeed.*

*For more information about SKED, visit our website: [www.southeastkentucky.com](http://www.southeastkentucky.com).*

*Pineville BBO graduates are pictured from left: Jeannie Allen, Carla Reece, Shannon Elliott, Chester Wooton, James Barrett, Amanda Phillips and Betty Joseph.*

