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Small Business Owners Get Valuable Training at SKED's SMARTS 2.0

SOMERSET, KY – Southeast Kentucky's entrepreneurs simply must think outside of their brick and mortar walls to succeed in today's business climate.

That's the theory behind Southeast Kentucky Economic Development Corporation (SKED's) newest small business training program, and that's why the 31-year-old, nonprofit economic development organization held its first class in downtown Somerset this summer.

Six local business owners earned certificates of completion from the class held at Station 211 located at 211 S Main St. Somerset.

SKED Small Business Training Specialist Amanda Kelly led the classes. Kelly, who also teaches SKED's Entrepreneurial SMARTS small business training program and leads LINK Southeast Kentucky, developed SMARTS 2.0 as a way to give SKED's Entrepreneurial SMARTS graduates a follow-up course, if you will, to the small business training class.

This three-hour, four-session course is concentrated on utilization of the internet to increase a greater customer base and make online marketing easier and more successful, Kelly said.

The program is focused on existing and startup businesses. Topics covered include: getting found online, utilizing Google and social media for advertising, building a website and building an online brand.

"SMARTS 2.0 techniques help product-based businesses to market and sell outside the region and service-based businesses to attract customers from outside the region to their stores," Kelly explained.

Southeast Kentucky Economic Development



A Regional Growth Corporation

Kimberly Rogers, owner of 3Simple Words, LLC attended the flagship course and said she found the information beneficial to her company. “It was big picture but also personalized,” she said. Rogers, a Pulaski resident who is just getting her business off the ground, learned ways to list her products on Amazon for sale worldwide.

Joy Stoltz attended the training to learn how her two businesses could become more Facebook savvy and draw more clients and customers into Pulaski County from around the region.

Future SMARTS 2.0 courses are currently being planned to cater to local small business owners’ needs. For more information about 2.0, contact Amanda Kelly at akelly@centertech.com. For more information about SKED, visit: www.southeastkentucky.com.

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Formed 31 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.



Five of the SMARTS 2.0 graduates are pictured from left: Chester and Elizabeth Wooton, owners of C&E Outdoors; Joy Stoltz with Total Concept & J&J Farm Produce and Deli; Kimberly Rogers, owner of 3 Simple Words, LLC; and Ashley Stroud with JarFly Brewing. Michelle Richards of Crossroads Rail Car Service is not pictured.