



March 23, 2012

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This newsletter goes to 387 addresses
and is posted on www.explorebluffton.com
Current membership at 165

Business plan competition to award \$6,000

A business plan competition awarding \$6,000 in cash prizes will be conducted by the Bluffton Center for Entrepreneurs, according to Denise Durenberger, executive director of the business incubator.

First place will earn \$5,000 in startup costs. Second place will receive \$1,000. Client memberships from the BCE will be awarded to the top three contestants. The financial awards are being underwritten by Reichenbach & Steiner CPAs and Sielschott, Walsh, Keifer & Regula CPAs.

Durenberger explains that the contest is open to start-up businesses and emerging businesses that are less than three years old.

"The competition teaches entrepreneurs to write a business plan that will help them improve their existing business or to successfully start a new one," Durenberger notes.

The program begins with a free introductory session, "Launch Your Business Right," which will be held at 6 p.m. on Tuesday, April 10, at Bluffton University's Marbeck Center and at 8:45 a.m. on Friday, April 13 at Bluffton town hall; the second option follows the Bluffton Area Chamber of Commerce breakfast.

The introduction and five additional seminars will be taught by Kathy Keller of the Small Business Development Center at Rhodes State College. Keller will teach participants how to complete a business plan suitable for presentation to lenders or investors. Class topics include business planning, testing business ideas, marketing and accounting.

Classes and a presentation practice session will be held at Bluffton University on Tuesday evenings from April 17 through May 22. Final
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Business plan competition - from page 1

presentations and judging will be conducted on June 2.

To R.S.V.P. for the introductory session, request materials, or make other inquiries, phone 419-358-6400 or e-mail info@blufftonentrepreneurs.com. Materials are also available at www.blufftonentrepreneurs.com. To enroll in the competition, individuals must complete the BCE entry form and submit a \$150 application fee; the student fee is \$75. The deadline to enter the contest is Tuesday, April 17.

The competition sponsors are locally-owned CPA firms who are focused on growing and supporting local businesses. The offices of Reichenbach & Steiner CPAs are located in Bluffton; Sielschott, Walsh, Keifer & Regula CPAs have offices in Bluffton and Lima.

The Bluffton Center for Entrepreneurs (BCE), a member of the Bluffton chamber, is a not-for-profit business incubator offering support services and professional guidance to entrepreneurs and small businesses in Allen, Hancock, Hardin and Putnam counties.

BCE clients receive customized mentoring, networking opportunities and access to developmental resources including Bluffton University faculty, student interns and affordable office space. The center is located in the Colonial Surface Solutions building at 505 E. Jefferson St. Bluffton.

On the chamber calendar

March

25th - Swiss Historical Society spring meeting, Maple Crest, 2:30 p.m.

April

4th - Chamber board meeting, town hall, noon

6th - Bluffton Area Ministerial Association Good Friday Procession of the Cross, 11:30 a.m.

13th - Chamber breakfast, Robert Nelson, developer of The Met Block, Lima, town hall, 7 a.m.

8:45 a.m. - Chamber-BCE workshop on starting your own business

21st - Bluffton High School prom

May

4th-5th - Bluffton University spring musical, "The Music Man," Founders Hall

6th - Commencement

6th - Bluffton Sportsmen's Club trout derby

11th - Chamber breakfast

12th - 41st annual Bluffton arts and crafts festival

26th - Bluffton High School commencement

Downtown merchants meeting March 27

Bluffton Area Chamber of Commerce's next meeting for downtown merchants is at 7:30 a.m., Tuesday, March 27, at Jeanne's Kitchen. Jeanne will have breakfast items available for purchase. All downtown merchants are invited to attend.

According to Aphaphanh Nussbaum of Ten Thousand Villages: "The main objective of this meeting is to compare sales and marketing calendars and see if we can do anything jointly to create more of an impact and draw more customers downtown. Bring your calendars."

In preparation for the meeting, could you please answer the following questions:

At our Feb. 27 meeting Vicki Rossman from First National Bank mentioned the 3/50 Project, which is a buy local marketing campaign. To learn more about it go to http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_3/50_Project, where Wikipedia does a great job summarizing the movement since its inception.

Downtown merchants were e-mailed a sample Christmas campaign flyer. For more details and free downloads, you can go to the 3/50 Project website at www.the350project.net. First National Bank and Black Lab are registered supporters of this campaign.

If you have any questions or suggestion, call Aphaphanh (567-204-6334 cell) or Julie Stratton (419-302-0369 cell).

Chamber membership at 165

One additional business has joined the chamber this week, bringing our current membership to 165.

The latest new member is:

Montrose Square Apartments, owned by Lima Properties, Miner Dickason, manager.

Bluffton Area Chamber of Commerce Board:

Sally Siferd, president, Brendon Matthews, treasurer, Tammy Whitlow secretary, Aphaphanh Nussbaum, Robert Neff, Jamie Mehaffie, Matt Luke, Luke Young, Wally Buroker, Alison King. Fred Steiner, CEO Bluffton Area Chamber of Commerce, PO Box 142, Bluffton, OH 45817; blufftonchamber@gmail.com; Phone: 419-369-2985; www.explorebluffton.com

Join us!!!

**April
15
sponsorship
deadline!**

**Spotlight your business...
promote Bluffton... and...
sponsor the arts and crafts festival!**

Level 1 - \$300

- ✓Your business listed on all posters and advertising
- ✓Your business listed on explorebluffton.com as a major sponsor

Level 2 - \$200

- ✓Your business listed on all posters and advertising

Level 3 - \$100

- ✓Your business listed in newspaper ads

Level 4 - \$50

- ✓Your business listed in the chamber newsletter

All sponsors will be listed in chamber newsletters by level of sponsorship.

We wish to spotlight our business, promote Bluffton and help sponsor the arts and crafts show!

Business/organization: _____

Contact person: _____

Telephone: _____

E-mail: _____

Check which level applies:

- Sponsorship Level 1 - \$300
- Sponsorship Level 2 - \$200
- Sponsorship Level 3 - \$100
- Sponsorship Level 4 - \$50
- Please contact us about volunteering

Make checks payable to:

Craft Show Sponsorship
Bluffton Area Chamber of Commerce
PO Box 142
Bluffton, Ohio 45817

**2012 Bluffton Area Chamber of Commerce
40th annual spring arts and craft festival Saturday, May 12**