



Regional Growth Partnership
BUILDING A HIGH-TECH, HIGH PERFORMANCE ECONOMY



NEWS

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Regional Entities Rally to Accelerate Local Economy and Job Growth By Hosting First Ever Entrepreneurial Fair

TOLEDO, Ohio – More than 200 budding entrepreneurs gathered Monday evening for the region’s first ever event designed exclusively for “idea people” who might be interested in starting a new business.

The inaugural Entrepreneurial Fair, hosted by economic development partners across northwest Ohio, took place at the Hilton Garden Inn, Perrysburg. A primary purpose for the fair was to attract entrepreneurs to one location and work with them in determining the viability and marketability of their business idea. WTVG-TV 13abc served as official media sponsor.

“We know this region is filled with many great minds with wonderful ideas,” said Greg Knudson, director of Rocket Ventures, a program of the Regional Growth Partnership, which organized the event. “Our job was to identify these people, draw them to the fair, and then work together in pursuing those ideas and moving them into the marketplace.”

Knudson said that new startup companies provide the bulk of new jobs in most communities, so it makes sense to reach out to the “idea people” and let them know of available services which might help in starting their business.

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“We need to support, nurture and develop an entrepreneurial economy, which will spur the creation of new business and jobs, ultimately allowing us to better compete in the regional, national and global marketplace,” Knudson added.

Overall, more than 300 people were in attendance at the Entrepreneurial Fair to either learn more about the process of business startups or to provide support, guidance and direction for entrepreneurial development. Of great significance was the success in bringing together service providers from across northwest Ohio for one common purpose to grow the regional economy.

“We felt it was critical that this event benefit the entire community – any and all organizations which provide entrepreneurial development services. And that is why we opened this up to all of our valued partners,” Knudson said.

Those organizations providing support represented a diverse group of industries, all which play some role in promoting entrepreneurship and small business development. They included: Regional Growth Partnership, Rocket Ventures, Launch, NORED, Toledo Regional Chamber of Commerce SBDC, SCORE, University of Toledo, Bowling Green State University, Owens Community College, University of Findlay, Bluffton Center for Entrepreneurs, Lourdes College, Northwest State Community College, Terra Community College, Ohio Department of Development, Women’s Entrepreneurial Network, Toledo-Lucas County Port Authority.

In addition, many professional service providers were on hand to offer advice and information on relevant topics related to start-up businesses, such as financing and loans, securing patents, insurance and developing basic Web sites. Those businesses included: KeyBank, Brooks Insurance, Hylant Group, Robison, Curphey & O’Connell, Gilmore Jasion & Mahler, Weber O’Brien, William Vaughn Company, James A. Poure & Associates, Skyline Exhibits, and Webcasters.

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Participants in the Fair had gathered September 29 for a press conference to announce the kick off to a campaign aimed at identifying and bringing forth entrepreneurs. At the conference, the themes of economic growth and job creation took center stage. The Entrepreneurial Fair, according to participating agencies, was to be just the first step in this new long-term campaign to support entrepreneurship.

During the event, two iPod touch media players were raffled. Also, a half-day consulting package was awarded to one attendee who presented the best executive summary.

The Regional Growth Partnership is a private nonprofit development corporation dedicated to fostering local, national and international economic growth opportunities for northwest Ohio. The Regional Growth Partnership acknowledges the contribution of the State of Ohio, Department of Development and Thomas Edison Program, which provide funding in support of the Launch program.

Rocket Ventures is a pre-seed early-stage venture fund for technology-based entities/companies operating within the state of Ohio. It consists of \$15 million in state funding and \$7.5 million in private sector investment.

Launch is a tech-based business incubation program of the Regional Growth Partnership. Launch provides comprehensive business assistance for entrepreneurs and start-up companies that are commercializing revolutionary, world-class technologies, to accelerate growth and time-to-market entry.