

Cloud County Community College

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Cloud's Small Business Development Center and Career Services Celebrate Five Year Relationship

Cloud County Community College was recognized by Wally Kearns, State Director for the Kansas Small Business Network, for providing services to the community's small business owners since 2003. Kearns oversees eight regional Small Business Development Centers, located at four year and two year colleges, and four outreach centers, three of which are located in community colleges. Cloud's KSBDC is the model outreach center used throughout Kansas. Funded through the SBA, Kansas Department of Commerce, Wichita State University, and Cloud County Community College, Cloud's KSBDC serves Cloud County and ten additional counties with free, confidential, one-on-one consulting designed to find practical solutions to business problems. Linda Sutton, KSBDC Consultant, also conducts free and low-cost business seminars that enable business owners and start-up businesses to compete and prosper in today's economy. Sutton organized an informal network for women business owners that meets quarterly to provide support and encouragement. She was awarded the Women's Business Champion Award by the SBA in 2007 for her work with the KSBDC.

Kearns also recognized the partnership between the SBDC and Cloud's Career Center, which serves students, alumni, business owners, job seekers, and other community members in the college's service area and nationwide. Job openings are posted on the college's website for easy access to job seekers. Brenda Hanson, Career Center Director, along with CloudCorp Director Kirk Lowell, assisted with the establishment of the SBDC on Cloud's campus. Wonda Phillips is the Career Center Office Manager and the SBDC Administrative Assistant. The relationship between the SBDC and Career Center is perfect, according to Sutton because, "We are physically housed together and can assist every need a business owner might have, from writing a business plan to collecting resumes of potential employees." As a job service office, the Career Center can quickly connect job seekers and employers, minimizing the efforts of both parties.

Since inception, Cloud's KSBDC has provided services to 93 businesses in Cloud County and conducted training seminars for 222 Cloud County residents. Overall, Sutton has assisted more than 124 business starts in North Central Kansas. In 2008, the Career Center posted 324 jobs and

provided free application assistance to 195 students and 346 community members. Hanson stated, “We take the ‘community’ in community college seriously and appreciate the opportunity to assist employers with their staffing needs. It is also a great benefit to our students who are looking for employment because the employers know who to call.”

Sutton and Phillips were recognized for their service with a 5 year pin.



Photo: L to R
Kirk Lowell, Wally Kearns, Wonda Phillips, Linda Sutton, Brenda Hanson, Dr. Richard Underbakke.