

Grand Enterprise Initiative sees success

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Julie Moseley of Granby wanted to start a pet-sitting and dog swim therapy business in Grand County, but because she was new to the area she lacked the contacts to get started.

A friend told her about the new program in Grand County that helps those with entrepreneurial ideas get their businesses up and running.

"I just can't believe it's free," Moseley said, now owner of K-9 Bliss Pet Sitting and Water Therapy based in east-central Grand County. "It's an excellent resource. I could not have started my business without their help, or it certainly wouldn't have been as easy."

Moseley received help from the program's "facilitator" Patrick Brower. "He helped me to stay on track," Moseley said, with contacts and with a business plan.

"I'm starting out the right way instead of learning everything the hard way."

Called the Grand Enterprise Initiative, the program has just completed its first year and, according to Brower, has helped to add five new jobs and four businesses to the local economy. Having started out a program primarily focused on the vicinity of Granby, the program has recently expanded to incorporate all of Grand County.

The program has been working closely with Grand County's department of economic development headed by DiAnn Butler, which

Learn more

The Grand Enterprise Initiative economic development program is introducing its methods and philosophy at two information meetings.

• 6:30 p.m., tonight, Feb. 6, at the Winter Park Town Hall

• 6:30 p.m. Wednesday, Feb. 13 at the Grand Lake Community Center

seeks to promote economic development in yet other ways. Grand Enterprise Initiative offers free and confidential business management coaching to anyone wanting to start or expand a business in Grand County. Brower provides business development coaching.

"I enjoy working with business owners and entrepreneurs who want to improve their lives by fulfilling their entrepreneurial dreams," Brower said. "I do this by helping build a team that will help them succeed."

The effort has helped two retail businesses and two service-oriented enterprises get off the ground. Brower has met with 51 people who have reached out and asked for some form of assistance. He currently has 16 active clients.

Kirk Main sought the program's help just after he opened his homebrew and wine kit shop in Granby.

Main says he regrets not having had the help before opening his store, saying he may have done some things differently to avoid a few mistakes along the way.

"I was excited about opening and rushed a few things," Main said.

The shop owner is now relocating to save on rent and to perhaps gain better exposure for his business.

"They helped me realize a little better where I was in my business," Main said. Having once owned a successful eatery, Main said owning a retail store is a "whole different animal."

Home cleaning and property watch business owner Annie Griffin found the program to be handy when she took over the family business from her parents. The program helped her with the transition of the family business, and led her in the right direction for marketing it, she said.

"They just want to be able to help out the small businesses around here aspire and grow," she said of the grassroots program.

The Grand Enterprise Initiative is supported by Grand County, Granby, Winter Park and Kapoks, a Colorado-based nonprofit founded by Marise Cipriani, owner of Granby Ranch. Kapok's mission is to empower communities to reach full potential through economic development.

"I think it was a very big success," said Cipriani of the one-year anniversary of the Initiative.

She trusts the program will be sustainable for future years and can only grow.

"I'm very happy it is going county-wide. It's important to get the critical mass. I think the next year is an important year to cement what we've been doing, and for people to understand more and to give more support."