

# **SOUTHERN REGION RURAL ENTREPRENEURSHIP ROUNDTABLE SESSIONS**

**NORMAN, OK**

**October 19, 2005**

**ATTENDEES: 27**

**SPONSOR:**

Southern Rural Development Center

**HOSTS:**

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**Norman, OK Listening Session  
October 19, 2005**

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## **Norman, OK Listening Session October 19, 2005**

### **Summary**

The Oklahoma participants represented a broad cross section of individuals whose primary role, in total or in part, is the support of entrepreneurs and entrepreneurial development in Oklahoma. Represented were government agencies (local, state, and Federal) Native American tribes, nonprofit agencies, and educational institutions. In addition, several entrepreneurs were present. The group started the day with a great deal of enthusiasm and actively participated throughout the entire day.

### **Sharing What Works**

Overall, the group focused on providing some type of help or assistance to business owners, prospective owners, and local communities. Other audiences that group members worked with were elected officials, the educational community, local leadership and civic groups as well as specific subsets of the population such as low-income, Native American, minorities, etc. Ideas of how the participants supported these groups were wide ranging. One common theme mentioned by several participants was work on how communities are impacted by and can impact entrepreneurship development and growth. Other ways that participants offered assistance included helping to develop networks, business plan development, being a resource to other assistance that was available, developing economic support, and helping business owners through the basic steps of starting and operating a business. Participants offered a lengthy list of “best” resources that they used in their efforts.

When summarize what the common themes were, businesses support/development/growth/retention led the list. Also recognized was the need for networking including knowing what was already available and how to best direct an entrepreneur to that source. Leadership and support from family, one’s culture, and government were two other themes acknowledged. What the participants found most innovative or unique were the various inclusive programs, such as the Food and Ag Products Center, Rural Enterprises, Manufacturing Alliance, and some Native American efforts, that existed. Overall, the group was interested in the work being done to bridge from innovation and research to commercialization and efforts such as agri-tourism, what it is and how it might offer to struggling rural individuals, families, and communities. The “cream of the crop” resources included:

- Capital Review – an effort to list available funding sources
- Agri-tourism development work
- Food Products Center (OSU) – Pilot facility
- OSU New Products Development Center
- Partnerships (agencies, organizations)
- Information technology (web resources, video conferencing)
- State and national programs
- Career Tech
- Rural Enterprises in Durant, OK

- Business incentives available in OK

### **Strengthening Oklahoma's Entrepreneurship Efforts**

The thoughts and ideas developed in the first round carried into the second task. As participants became aware of the wide variety and diversity of existing programs already in place, they begin to sense a need to create some order and structure in all of the materials and programs available. Several of the break-out groups suggested the need for a centralized clearing house of resources already available. There was also discussion of increasing on-going cooperation and coordination efforts. Along the lines of cooperation and coordination, it was suggested that entrepreneurial growth efforts might be better done at a regional level.

Distilling the raw data seems to bring out the point that the participants know that simply having the resources available does not necessarily mean success in entrepreneurial development. The group recognized that developing businesses needed support people, whether mentors, volunteers, etc, that such support must be long-term, and that the assistance must be done while working side-by-side with the entrepreneur. Finally, it was recognized that the development of a stream of entrepreneurs required first a constant flow of individuals who perceived owning a business as something desirable and that they wanted to try. This generation of an entrepreneurial spirit would seem to require an educational system, both formal and informal, covering youth and adults, that introduced entrepreneurship to its audiences and helped individuals to look at why they may want to "be their own boss."

To make both the encouragement of entrepreneurship as well as helping the entrepreneur get started and then operate and maintain his or her business, the group looked toward information technology. IT was seen as being able to provide access to resources, timely education and information, and on-going support to entrepreneurs. Another need noted by several of the break-out groups was the need for funding to support assistance programs and in the form of small start-up grants and loans. As noted earlier, while the group saw a wide range of educational programs they noted that gaps remained where new programs needed to be developed or, as in other cases, existing programs needed to be strengthened.

One break-out group called for the inclusion of entrepreneurship opportunities at all job fairs. Another suggested that local communities should identify local entrepreneurs and then develop a directory of those names that could then be made available to elementary and secondary educators. Such identification would also provide useful information to local Chambers about some of the local business owners who may not be known across the community. Finally, two break-out groups suggested that an Oklahoma micro-enterprise association would provide valuable support to entrepreneurs.

### **Designing the Entrepreneurial-Friendly Community**

Many of the ideas suggested of how a community can encourage entrepreneurship at the local level were similar to what was suggested for Oklahoma as a state. One key comment mentioned was the need for an increased entrepreneur's voice at the table when making such decisions. It was recognized that this group had few of such voices. Entrepreneurs needed to be included both at future meetings such as this and at the local level through educational and other programs.

Also, communities need to identify their unique resources and strengths and then determine how each may be used as a building block. This identification process should include an acknowledgement of local champions and pioneers. Comments among the group indicated that what was being discussed represented change and that, to be successful, it would be necessary to educate and support the leadership and the community as a whole to embrace change and diversity. This idea included fostering acceptance of outside ideas and people. Such change also included the development of entrepreneurial-friendly policies and programs.

### **Final Thoughts**

During the rapid response segment, the group encouraged the development of an association that could bring together best practices and technical assistance. Such a team might develop a common vision and even consider the development of service standards and communication links. Another strongly supported idea was the understanding that for entrepreneurship development to work it must be done at the local and/or regional level.

Participants concluded their day by developing a list of what each individual person would do after leaving the session. A long list of activities resulted including raising awareness, doing a follow-up on new contacts and new program ideas, helping to develop the micro-enterprise association called for in today's meeting, and simply sharing the information with others. Future meetings such as this were encouraged as well as meetings of "entrepreneurs-only." Such meetings should be done locally, regionally, state-wide, and at a national level.



## Norman, OK Listening Session

October 19, 2005

### Round 1

#### Three key topics you address in your work

- **Education and Technical Assistance**
  - Technical assistance
  - Training
  - Education – Trends in tourism; Value of current resources; Where to get help
  - PRIDE program
  - Entrepreneurship
  - Business and marketing plans. Developing solid business plans before they get started
  - Business structure, proper paperwork for business loan applications, business plan, and permits/licenses
  - Resource locating
  - Resource supply identification
  - Market/Market development
  - Need for particular business venture in the area, competition and customer demand
  - Determining best possible resources for clients/prospective clients
  - Obtaining a good inventory of what we have to offer
  - Information processing
  - Engineering assistance – process design, product design, equipment design, facility design
  - Technology transfer
  - Proper tax and legal set-up
  - Risk management/Equity
  - Incubator certification
  - Woman-owned business certification
  - Education people who own businesses or people who would like to start a business on the proper way to set the business up and their responsibilities as a business owner
  - Support services to businesses we have funded
  - Tourism
- **Capital Acquisition**
  - Financing
  - Start-up financing/Business licensing information
  - Lack of funding and/or funding education (i.e., approaching a bank, business plan)
  - Capital formation in OK
  - Financial; Financing
  - Financial literacy
  - Credit
- **Networking and Communication**
  - General lack of getting information to “real people” in the process

- Developing networks
- Help build community and regional alliances.
- **Community**
  - Cultural/societal biases (Is my product or service good enough?)
  - Growth and development of entrepreneurial communities in rural OK through coalitions
  - Pro-business issues that support entrepreneurship at the state legislative level
  - How can communities understand and diversify their retail base
  - How can communities be supportive of their emerging entrepreneurs
  - How can communities assist their existing businesses in efforts to expand locally
  - Leadership development

### **Major audiences you target in your work**

- **Businesses**
  - New businesses; Start-ups
  - Pre-venture entrepreneurs
  - Interested entrepreneurs
  - Potential/prospective entrepreneurs; Aspiring entrepreneurs; People who would like to start a business
  - Clients attending workshop
  - New food business start-up
  - Incubators
  - Business owners; Established/existing; Businesses
  - Primarily established entrepreneurs, some recent
  - Business CEOs
  - Spin-offs from industry
  - Existing restaurants to launch retail product
- **Lenders**
  - Lenders
  - Local banks
- **Business Related Organizations**
  - Associations
  - COC's
  - Main Street program
  - ED Specialists
- **Community Leaders**
  - Community leaders – county, city, town, chamber, region
  - Community leadership groups
  - Legislators
  - Local government officials
- **Education**
  - Universities
  - Career Tech
  - Extension office
  - Tech transfer
  - Chamber of commerce

- Civic groups
- Grass roots support
- Native Americans in OK and across US

### **Three products you use to support your work**

- **Technical Assistance and Training**
  - SBA Small Business Guide
  - SBA – Loans & website
  - Dept of Commerce
  - FDIC
  - BR& E material
  - REI Business Center
  - ODOC Manufacturers Directory
  - Inventors Assistance Service
  - Resource – How to get started book
  - Website producer/consumers
  - Business licensing website
  - Workshops/Conferences
  - Custom “short course” training program
  - Small business training courses (Office Dept free downloads)
  - OTC workshop (and other partners’ workshops)
  - Nx Level entrepreneurship training
  - Kauffman T2C Conference
  - Computer research center
  - Library in BIC for various business ventures
  - Agri-tourism
  - On-site visits
  - Interagency referrals
- **Capital Acquisition**
  - Banks
  - Revolving loan funds – IRP, REDL& G
  - Rural Business Enterprises grant
  - Guaranteed business loans
  - Grant writing
  - Value-added producer grant
  - OK Capital Review
  - OCBDC
  - OCAST
  - Revolving loan program (SBA website)
  - Matched savings program
  - REI
  - REI & other agency websites
- **Educational Institutions**
  - OK Alliance for Manufacturing Excellence
  - OSU faculty; OSU system
  - FAPC; Food Business Basics CD

- Higher ed
- Retail studies from OTC, Census, BEA
- **Community Organizations**
  - Local connection – chamber, schools, Career Tech
  - Career Tech – SET classes; Business planning
  - Chambers of Commerce
  - American Indian Chamber of Commerce
  - Native American tribes

**Best resource you want people to know about**

- **Federal and State Assistance**
  - SBDCs
  - SCORE
  - OCAST
  - ODOC
  - OTC
  - BIC
  - Manufacturing Alliance
  - OEPIC Ins for small businesses
  - State Chamber
  - Agritourism Dept
  - State incentives
  - Women’s business support
- **Education**
  - FAPC
  - “Basic Training” at FAPC
  - OSU New Products Development Center
  - OSU Extension; OSU
  - Business Retention & Expansion Industry
  - BREI
  - Career Tech
- **Capital Acquisition**
  - ODOC; ODOC Capital Resources
  - REI
  - USDA Rural Development and loan funds
  - CDC
  - COGs & CAAs
  - Tribes
  - Local professionals who can give back to the community
- **Incubators**
  - Incubators
  - Pilot facility to scale-up recipes – for test marketing
- **Information**
  - Census website; BEA website
  - Census

- Info from Federal Reserve Bank
- BEA
- Planning process
- Internet
- Websites

**As a group, what were the three most common themes/topics?**

- Finance – Knowledge; funding available
- Start-up assistance – Business plans, marketing plans, incubating, etc
- Support structure – Cultural, family, governmental
- Technical assistance
- Creating awareness of possible assistance
- Business development/growth/retention
- Networking and building alliances is important to success
- Leadership development in the community
- Community awareness of what they have to offer

**As a group, what were the most innovative/unique topics?**

- Support structure
- Native American program
- Inclusive programs – REI; Manufacturing Alliance
- Business plans; SBA loans; Incubators
- Value-added ag program
- Bridge innovation and research with commercialization
- Agri-tourism

**As a group, what were the three “cream of the crop” resources?**

- Capital Review
- Agri-tourism
- Food Products Center (OSU) – Pilot facility
- OSU New Products Development
- Partnerships (agencies, organizations)
- Information technology (web resources, video conferencing)
- State and national programs
- Career Tech
- REI
- Business incentives in OK

## Round 2

You have been granted the special powers to “make things happen”!! What **THREE** wishes would you personally grant that would have a positive impact on entrepreneurship in your community, state, or Southern region? Share your ideas with the group at your table.

- **Business Training and Operations**
  - Desire for the entrepreneur to educate themselves
  - Good mentorship program
  - Training to draw out problems to be solved by new ideas
  - Free business planning seminar open to all OK natives in OK city metro area and surrounding towns within a 100-mile radius
  - Seamless education program for growth and development that is adopted and used by all “practitioner” providers.
  - Help entrepreneurs realize the need for training.
  - Have ready-made market for products developed
  - More money to ag ???/marketing utilization program
  - Food-processing incubators in various locations in the state. Kitchen incubators
  - Advertising notice of what programs are available to inspiring entrepreneurs and criteria
  - A comprehensive system of follow-up and tracking of entrepreneurs
- **Elimination of Barriers**
  - Connect those with ideas to the resources to assist them to develop the product
  - Central resource locator that would be used. Single website that goes through different services of agencies that assist entrepreneurs. Everyone should be aware of the resources that exist to help entrepreneurs.
  - Relief from local and state rules
  - Restructured OK tax system. Reduced or no state income tax for 5 years (graduated scale). Tax incentives for equity investment into start-ups.
- **Capital Acquisition**
  - Increased awareness and greater availability of small, low-interest loans for start-ups. Small, low-hassle loans for communities and individuals. More grants for deserving “individuals.” Low interest loans for women
  - Every community would have an “angel” who would fund all the local realistic entrepreneurial activities. Financial backing for start-up businesses
  - Better system for VAP grants
  - Infrastructure grant
- **Community Entrepreneurship**
  - A top-down, directed effort towards a small business development/retention focused at the most local level possible
  - Every rural OK community have a bustling, attractive downtown - This would do incredible things for the state’s image. Less vacant store-fronts on Main St. Small communities are able to retain their personality and economically thrive. More eating establishments in small communities. Let everyone see how great OK is.
  - Learn keys of success from other communities
  - Encourage community leaders to bring in business (attitude)

- An on-going education program for community leaders on resources available for rural development
- Educate the public on the availability of resources
- Theme – entrepreneurs welcome
- Grant vision of economic impact of buying local
- Networking with other programs. Networking group of service providers where each can get to know what the others offer. Market website to the public so that they can find the information.
- Real people networking through conferences with scholarships, email lists, newsletters, etc.
- Increase awareness of local talents, products and opportunities
- Unlimited supply of local community volunteers. Enthusiastic leaders and volunteers.
- **Education**
  - Increased support system for community-based entrepreneurial development (K-12)
  - Promote financial literacy for youth
  - Increased involvement of youth in local leadership positions to increase understanding and representation
  - Make good intentions education driver of econ dev instead of politics)
  - Education. Regional education rather than state, county, or city
  - Commitment to make opportunities for youth to remain in local community

**As a group, select the three most important wishes that you want the whole group attending this meeting to hear about.**

- Foster understanding in local businesses of competitive edge
- Centralized small business development resource communication system. Centralized small business development resource clearing house.
- Awareness and coordination of assistance and resources to support entrepreneur activities, i.e. financial literacy
- Financial assistance, small, no-hassle loans
- Restructure tax system, more tax incentives
- Help entrepreneurs realize they need assistance
- Mentorship program
- Tracking system used by resource providers
- Development of an entrepreneur mindset throughout the educational system. Not just training/education to get a job
- Regional approach to development to promote coordination rather than competition (good intentions education driver of econ dev instead of politics)
- On-going education for community leaders
- Internal and external good image, local and state.
- Volunteers. Enthusiasm in volunteers. Strong leadership, can-do attitude

**For top 3 wishes, identify what it will take to make these wishes a reality in your community, state, and/or Southern region.**

- Develop statewide micro-enterprise group in OK
- Use information technology as a backbone for resource sharing from a centralized portal to collect information from state's resource web. This information is used to education small local businesses on importance of exploiting their competitive advantage. In summary, gather solutions and broadcast these out (local meetings working on solutions, etc).
- Education/communication on "how to do better"
- Education (entrepreneurship incorporated in school system) – Entrepreneurship at job fairs
- Make youth a part of formal and nonformal entrepreneurial efforts
- Engage young persons in the community so they can stay and contribute
- Strengthen lobby to seek tax incentives for small businesses
- Money/Funding. Cooperation among the different resources
- Get bankers involved to provide CRA funds to support entrepreneurship
- Spokespersons who can offer "success stories/testimonies" via the process
- Retired people getting involved (retired CEOs, etc).
- Use media sources to promote success stories and how done (Horizon, Discover OK, Outdoor OK)

**Round 3**

**Think of a community that you would identify as "entrepreneurial friendly." What is this community doing specifically that makes it a great place for entrepreneurs?**

- Ponca City – E.D group seeks outside resources; Requested that our program assist a number of their small businesses; Continually work to connect their businesses to OSU resources
- Antlers – Capitalized on "Deer Capital USA" slogan with related industries
- Perkins – Branding/Slogans - A city without limits, affordable and friendly; Image, cleanliness; Programs like PRIDE
- Caddo – 2 Opera Houses (Nashville West of the Mississippi)
- Networking with all available resources; Embracing the diversity of community; Developing the leadership to create a core group to develop ideas.
- Grove, Jenks, Claremore, Pryor, Buffalo, Vici, Guymon – Education (foundation, volunteer groups, brand campaign); Mentor/support, incubator business program; Quality of life support
- Talahina – Friendly' Wants visitors and community activities; Foliage tours; Bike motocross races; Arts and Crafts events; Beautiful location; Main street
- Durant – Main St program; Pride in community; Tommy Kramer, Econ Dev director; Magnolia festival; Close to Lake Texoma and lake events
- Van Buren, AR – Historic downtown turned into antique, boutiques, restaurants, etc.; Arts and craft days
- Woodward – Maintain downtown as well as business throughout town

- Alva – VAP, Baker Equip; City leadership looks for opportunities
- Stillwater – A more progressive community; Culturally diverse driving a variety of businesses; A draw to sporting events brings money to the community, those coming to town are more educated and have more money
- Buffalo – City bought buildings to open businesses: Sold school on e-Bay to bring in a new business
- Cordell, Sulphur-Davis, Perry, Cherokee
- Main St program; Promotes 4-H as an entrepreneurial program; Visionary person or persons; Have pride in community
- Hugo – Skating park, walking trail; Community pride; Boys and Girls club; American Native beef; Circus USA; Main St program
- Develop a group of town people to visit with people who want to open new businesses in the community; Leadership development classes; Promoter for city, seeing volunteers, promoting tourism; Golf tournament

**As a team, select four key activities a community should undertake if it wants to become recognized as an “entrepreneurial friendly” locality.**

- Plan strategically and follow through
- Utilize local resources, human capital, natural resources
- Utilize local resources where you have a competitive advantage (natural resources, retirees, scenic beauty, culture, history)
- Embrace change – cultural, technology, diversity, new ideas, outsiders
- Keep community clean. Develop a positive image. PRIDE
- Develop community through local newspaper, its own currency, community promoter, active chamber, legislative golf tournament, town clean-up, town BBQ, local activities
- Leadership development. Leaders mentor leaders, entrepreneurs mentor entrepreneurs. Creation of new leadership
- Clearinghouse for business info
- Open to new ideas and outside help
- Seek outside resources
- Parallel movement (infrastructure, housing, businesses)
- Incentives (Fair rent, low interest loans, tax rebates)
- Government support that helps entrepreneurs
- Welcome programs to new businesses – Chamber and City office
- Business-friendly activities
- Market or brand themselves effectively

**What 3-4 activities can we do to help communities become “entrepreneurial friendly?”**

- Encourage communities to adopt entrepreneurial friendly policies and programs, i.e. Main St, incubator business centers
- Help leaders to embrace change and diversity. Foster outside acceptance. Help foster leaders
- Celebrate champions. Promote pioneers

- Celebrate education. School foundations. Spotlight local and other successful entrepreneurs
- Provide a listserv for community leaders to share successful ideas and stories
- Provide a list of resources
- Use their unique resources to their advantage. Help communities find their strengths and unique resources. Strengthen partnerships/bring in resources that can help community be “entrepreneurial friendly.”
- Develop a tourism trail. Market communities
- Exchange of regional tourism activities (newsletters, listserv, etc.)
- User-friendly conferences, bring an entrepreneur with you. Get grass-roots entrepreneurs involved rather than just agency people
- Sample set of ordinances that communities could adopt to support entrepreneurship

## Rapid Response Session

**Topic 1: Building networks/alliances – What type of network/alliance would be most valuable to you. Identify the level at which the network should operate, the specific things this network should do that you would find most valuable, and the people or groups who should be part of this entrepreneurship network.**

VOTES	SUGGESTION
5	OSU Extension, ODOC, SBDCs, Career Tech, & others work together and communicate a common vision to communities (suggested that the state agency coalition might be a beginning (Stacy Cejka))
5	Statewide association of organization that assist microenterprises (small, start-up businesses of 1-5 employees requiring minimal capital – such as daycare, catering, landscaping, auto detailing, etc). services – share best practices and technical assistance - advocate for funding and policy support - establish shared service standards
4	Group of community citizens, business leaders, elected officials, chamber leaders, youth, entrepreneurs come together in a positive manner to set achievable goals for their community (local) - make a short and long list of goals - prioritize goals and begin immediately to start on the 1st set goal
4	More connection with other programs that work with entrepreneurs. Conferences (or roundtable discussions) available throughout the year for the purpose of learning what is working in other communities
3	A clearinghouse of resources available through a website that could continually be updated with contacts and programs. The clearinghouse could also include workshops that are going to be held for entrepreneurs (a calendar of events). We are too fragmented for the ordinary person to know who does what.
3	Develop a statewide microenterprise development association or group. This network would provide information sharing, networking and advocacy. All service providers that assist entrepreneurs should be part of this group.
2	Regional level – Community groups should be part of this entrepreneurship network. Network most valuable asset would be data base list of all local businesses, products, and services the business provides. Also a list of local and state agencies that are available as a resource to local businesses for financial information – funding, loans, grants, business plans, etc.
1	A network of successful or retire entrepreneurs. People get tired of listening to those that have never been an entrepreneur. We need a mentoring program or at least a group that is willing to share their personal experiences to prospective entrepreneurs.
1	Quarterly meeting of statewide providers (different host each quarter, etc). Have 15 minute roundtable discussions on various topics, everyone rotates. Guest speaker on a given topic. State-wide level.

1	A statewide network of service providers working together (i.e. referring entrepreneurs to the other service providers as needed). This group of service providers (i.e. the network) would include OCES, State Chamber, ODOC, Alliance, REI, ...
1	A network of entrepreneurs in conceptual stages on a state and local level. This network should include entrepreneurs who may be interested in commercialization (from research institutions to the private sector).
	A network of other service providers to entrepreneurs on a regional level. The network would list the various services they provide and their level of willingness to help other service providers (ODOC, OCAST, OSU, OS, State Chamber
	Local peer networking/mentoring groups of entrepreneurs with common interests. For example, group of IO ??so people that provide communications/consulting services. Could: share lessons learned buy in bulk collaborate on larger contracts refer clients to other trusted businesses critique business ideas and plans Could be sponsored by Career Tech, chamber of commerce, local bank, etc. at minimal cost

**Topic 2: Policy efforts**

**1. (a) What policies exist right now that you believe are helpful to entrepreneurs and entrepreneurial communities? (b) What policies are needed to build rural entrepreneurship and at what level should they be implemented – local, state, multi-state, federal?**

**2. Who has to be at the table if we want to effect these policy changes?**

VOTES	SUGGESTION
5	1a. Liability issues – for producers that are looking to being agritourism businesses, our legislation needs to be improved to include protection from the inherent risks involved with ag activities. 1b. Insurance for agritourism sites is very expensive due to the diversity of the activities and the misunderstanding of the activities. As agritourism begins to become more popular, a tax credit on the liability insurance premium would be helpful 2. Producers, legislators, and insurance companies
5	1a. Tax incentives for incubator start-ups are helpful Willingness of agencies to work together to promote OK (in general) 1b. Policies are needed that encourage the sharing of resources on the state level so that rural areas do not feel they play second to urban areas 2. Legislators, Board of Regents, politicians, the state’s power brokers
4	Have a meeting like this with only “entrepreneurs” present and ask them these questions. They know more than agency people what their needs are.
4	Review of all federal, state and municipally funded revolving loan funds that support small business development in the state to identify scope, scale, and location of services. Identify and implement policies to promote collaboration of services and

	coordination of funding sources and restrictions
2	Provide additional resources toward training and technical assistance to microenterprise owners.
2	1. Local – A welcome policy with strong encouragement to local entrepreneurship. Encourage diverse participation and put your money where your mouth is. 2. Elected officials, community leaders, bankers
2	1a. I am not sure what policies exist. 1b. Loan policy for small loans We should ask the entrepreneurs, we are probably missing something. 2. We do, legislators, entrepreneurs
2	Entrepreneurs have to understand politics and that their presence at the OK Capitol makes a difference. They have to become involved in the political infrastructure of OK. Policy changes take a state-wide coordinated effort. OK's State Chamber already represents small businesses at the Capitol, but they can't be expected to do it alone.
2	Tax and small business workshops for new and existing businesses. All levels need to implement policies to assist entrepreneurship. 2. Community leaders, entrepreneurs, youth, education leaders, organizations, and the public
2	1a. The fact that so much assistance is available, i.e. business planning, product development, marketing assistance 1b. I don't know what policies are needed to help rural entrepreneurs. Let's ask them 2. The entrepreneurs themselves must be at the table.
1	Target a percentage of state community development block grant funds towards microenterprise loan support – provision of loans less than \$10,000
	1a. Tax incentives for OK inventors and manufacturers that spend money on product development 2. State legislature, state resources (service providers)

### The “AHA” Moments

- Tribal resources
- OSU data base (share!!) – Develop integrated list of clients
- Directory of entrepreneurs to use as resources in the schools

### What should OSU/SRDC do to support the work of this group or to strengthen rural entrepreneurship efforts in the Southern region?

- Get Kansas City Fed involved in national coalition for rural entrepreneurship.
- Convene a policy summit on rural entrepreneurship in OK to discuss important issues and options. Target state legislators (many are new), dept. leadership, universities,
- OSU & SRDC can organize a meeting such as this one with entrepreneurs instead of service providers
- Provide a contact list of participants from today
- Develop an entrepreneur/service provider annual conference to share ideas and network (include all levels of operation up to southern region level)

- Utilize the results published from this meeting
- Present workshops throughout the state on a more frequent basis
- Include more programs as well as small business owners
- Promote participation to workshops and include more organizations from local stand-point
- Regional meetings like this and target the entrepreneur and financial institutions

## **The Next Steps**

### **Three things you are going to do as a result of attending this meeting**

- Talk with other business owners, town leaders concerning some of the ideas exchanged at the meeting that could be used in community
- Write an article for local newspaper
- Offer to hold informative financial literacy information talks with city/community schools to install entrepreneurship “mind set” in youth
- Follow-up with new contacts; Use new contacts
- Communicate the findings to my agency
- FAPC – Basic Training and continued support
- State Specialist – Glenn Muske
- County educators
- Look with new insight into ideas, avoid tunnel vision
- Continue to work with OSU Extension
- Assist in establishment of a state-wide micro-enterprise network in OK in partnership with Association for Enterprise Opportunity
- Look for connections between financial education and small business development efforts
- Organize meeting to try and develop an organized network of service providers to share programs and ideas to better prepare us to assist entrepreneurs; Continue bringing various state resources together to discuss how they can work together
- Raise awareness of existing programs available to help entrepreneurs. This would target both community lenders and entrepreneurs
- Work to develop a “clearing house” of resources
- Help my training center colleague develop a curriculum for elementary school students to introduce entrepreneurship
- Develop a newsletter in my county from Chamber of Commerce directors and 2 Main St managers that tells what is happening in the community (on-line and hard copy)
- Organize the resources we already have
- Help promote a positive image of our state
- Have more entrepreneurs at meetings like this
- Organize a directory of entrepreneurial activities in my community and make it available to school as an educational resource
- Share information with local organizations and co-workers
- Encourage entrepreneurs to attend any workshop that will be a benefit to them