**BRC MISSION AND GOALS**

EWU’s Business Resource Center serves as the business and community outreach component for the College of Business and Public Administration. It provides technical assistance, education, and research to individual businesses and community groups working on local economic development in the Spokane area. It is funded by the University, the Herbert B. Jones Foundation, and contracts with participating partners.

“The BRC’s mission is to generate, exchange, and apply knowledge to improve the economic vitality and quality of life in neighborhoods and communities in the region.”

Goals in carrying out this mission include:
- Provide technical assistance to increase the knowledge and capabilities of community based firms and organizations.
- Conduct research that assists firms, organizations, and communities with improving sustainable business and economic development practice.
- Exercise a collaborative approach that responds to the complex, interrelated issues in distressed communities.
- Support the University and College’s goals of service learning and community engagement by promoting and expanding the capacity to provide needed education, research, service to address community issues in the region.

**PRIEST LAKE CONFERENCE**

The spring planner’s conference at Priest Lake in June focused on “greening community”. Professor Kelley with the BRC joined Seattle and Portland presenters in discussing recent trends in community sustainability. Kelley’s discussion noted the positive response from local small businesses to the BRC’s “green business practice” initiative. Many of the businesses (for example, see Lorien feature) are discovering they can reduce operating costs with improved energy and waste management practices.

**FEATURED SMALL BUSINESS: LORIEN HERBS & NATURAL FOODS**

Dedicated to health and profit, Lorien Herbs & Natural Foods, a 1,000 square foot store in the S. Perry District, embarked on a few simple “green” business practices in 2008. With a small investment of $200 - $300, of which Avista rebated 50%, Lorien was able to increase energy and recycling efficiencies, resulting in an estimated annual savings of more than $2,200.

Lorien began by making better use of the City of Spokane’s recycling program. Realizing that the City of Spokane would pick up its cardboard as part of their normal recycling service if it was set out properly, Lorien began flattening boxes and setting them out so that they could be handled more easily. This allowed them to save $20 per month they had been paying a private contractor for pickup.

Lorien then made a number of changes to its lighting, first clearing their windows of obstructions to allow in the maximum amount of natural light. Next, they replaced three older lighting fixtures with new fixtures that lit a larger area. Finally, they installed CFL bulbs both in the interior and exterior of the store. These changes not only reduced Lorien’s energy use but also enhanced the atmosphere of its store, resulting in longer customer visits and an increased average expenditure per customer visit.

The big savings for Lorien, however, came in changes it made to the appliances used in its business. By consolidating its product offering and reorganizing them more efficiently, Lorien was able to eliminate the need for one freezer. This combined with some basic maintenance of the remaining two freezers and one refrigerator, allowed Lorien to reduce its monthly electrical usage by approximately 50%, resulting in more than $2,000 estimated annual savings.

**OVERVIEW OF WINTER & SPRING 2009 BRC ACTIVITIES**

The BRC had an active winter and spring. Some of the activities included:
- Door to door contact promoting BRC assistance with over 250 small businesses
- Conducted survey in three districts assessing technical assistance for businesses
- Conducted business survey for North Monroe Business Association
- Assisted Garland District with Capital Improvement request for bike racks
- Coordinated joint land use, design, transportation study for North Monroe by three EWU planning classes
- Hosted booth/learning activities during Earth Day celebration at Riverfront Park
- Initiated “Green Business Practice” program to include:
  - Expanded BRC website to include “green business” fact sheets and links
  - Developed and distributed brochures to 300 businesses
  - Presented “green business” overviews to Association meetings
  - Coordinated energy and waste audits for selected businesses
  - Assisted businesses with City’s SMART recognition applications
- Made presentations to one national and one regional conference on BRC activities, particular the recent efforts in promoting “green business”

**BRC STAFF RECEIVES STUDENT SCHOLARSHIP AWARDS**

EWU BRC Research Assistant Leon Letson is the recipient of the 2009 American Planning Association – Washington Chapter Scholarship. Since joining the BRC in January, he has been engaged in promoting green business practices in a number of City of Spokane neighborhood business centers and is working to assist a number of small business owners to reduce their basic expenses (i.e., utilities, waste disposal, etc.) by reducing their impact on the environment. Prior to then, he worked for the City of Spokane Environmental Programs office co-researching and writing the City’s first Greenhouse Gas Inventory.

BRC staff member Kelly Keenan was recently inducted into Phi Kappa Phi, an all-discipline academic honor society. As program coordinator for the Spokane Neighborhood Business Assistance Program (the BRC’s outreach arm) he works with small business owners and operators to provide technical assistance, assess needs, and pair businesses with appropriate service providers.

**NUSA CONFERENCE**

Neighborhood’s USA National Conference was held May 20-23 in Spokane. Faculty from the College of Business and Public Administration made presentations on their work with Spokane Neighborhoods. Dean Rex Fuller facilitated the panel presentations. Dr. Dick Winchell and Rosetta Roads (Whitworth) discussed their award winning collaboration on service learning and outreach activities in the East Central Neighborhood. Wm. J. Kelley highlighted BRC research and technical assistance in business districts throughout the City.
The City of Spokane’s 2009 Earth Day celebration was held on April 26th in Riverfront Park. Eastern Washington University’s Business Resource Center participated as an exhibitor during this event, distributing information regarding its services and discussing small business needs in the City of Spokane. Numerous members of the public participated in the BRC’s “Earth Day Quiz Show”, which included a number of questions centered on energy use and the environment in the Spokane area. A number of children participated in the “Greenie Recycling Game”, which challenged contestants to quickly and accurately sort a bag of refuse into recyclable and non-recyclable containers. This event assisted the BRC in increasing the public’s awareness of its mission and services, while simultaneously putting BRC staff in touch with the concerns of the public regarding the environment and small businesses in the City of Spokane.

Regarding what types of business assistance respondents considered most useful, 31% believed marketing studies in their areas would be valuable, while 27% would like more business/financial planning assistance. The graph below contains the full results regarding this portion of the questionnaire.

Additional questionnaires of this nature will help the BRC and SNBAP gauge its impact with small business owners in the City of Spokane and modify its services as needed.

**SNBAP BUSINESS ASSISTANCE QUESTIONNAIRE**

Program, distributed business assistance questionnaires throughout the South Perry, West Broadway, and Garland neighborhood business centers. Of the 73 distributed, 44 were returned, yielding a 60% response rate. The primary purpose of the questionnaire was to assess small business owners’ familiarity with local business assistance agencies and resources and to gather feedback on how business assistance services can be improved in the City of Spokane.

One notable result from this business assistance questionnaire was that 44% of respondents claimed to be familiar with the BRC and SNBAP, indicating a strong opportunity to increase awareness amongst small business owners in these areas. Of the 44% mentioned above, 58% rated the BRC and SNBAP as being highly accessible.

![Playing the “Greenie Game”]

*What types of business assistance would you consider most useful?*

- Technical Assistance: 13%
- Workshops/Classes: 11%
- Biz/Financial Planning: 18%
- Marketing Studies: 31%
- Other: 27%

**PRESENTATION TO LINCOLN COUNTY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL**

In March, BRC staff developed and gave a presentation to community members in Davenport, WA. The presentation, made at the Lincoln County Economic Development Council’s Annual Dinner, outlined various “green” practices that can help small businesses conserve resources while reducing operating costs. The event provided staff members with the opportunity to synthesize BRC research regarding the application of resource conservation and waste reduction strategies in small business and micro-enterprise settings. Other presenters at the event included representatives from Avista Utilities, NW Industrial Services, and Inland Empire Oilseeds.

**NORTH MONROE BUSINESS SURVEY**

On May 28th, students from Eastern Washington University’s Urban and Regional Planning program presented findings from numerous studies centered on the N. Monroe corridor to the area’s business association and community. These studies included an inventory of current land uses, available parking, and district features (i.e. landmarks, barriers, etc.) Results from a survey of N. Monroe businesses were also presented during the Open House. Finally, business association and community member were asked to list their preferences to a number of alternatives regarding future development of the N. Monroe corridor. Below is a summary of feedback and responses from the business association and community.

- Streetscape Plan: 67% of respondents believed implementing the plan without the proposed median and phasing the project in 5-year intervals were the two best options. 15% opted for implementing the plan as designed.
- Special Events: 47% of respondents believed historical or holiday themed events would be good options. 23% opted for a district sale day event.

Business Improvement District (BID): 30% in favor of creating a BID.

These are just a few of the survey options discovered.

**PROPOSED BUSINESS RESOURCE CENTER ACTIVITIES for 2009/2010**

**Ongoing work:**
- Research on e-commerce for small businesses
- Developing an interview protocol, including trust variables, for SNBAP clients
- Newsletters
- Continued research on sustainable and “green” business practice for micro-enterprise
- Assisting neighborhood businesses to participate in City of Spokane’s SMART program
- Assisting neighborhood districts with research to enhance their economic viability
- Assisting neighborhood districts with evaluation/implementation of sustainable funding options for their organization
- Participating with other partners in the targeted revitalization efforts of E. Sprague
- Preparation of grant requests to continue and expand BRC activities