

Director's Message

Greetings!

There are so many items I would like to include in this newsletter. There are quite a few events, conference and other opportunities that look great this spring and early summer!

Big news on the BERO front during the last quarter: Drum roll please...really! While the legislature is in session for a couple more weeks, BERO was extended by the house and senate for five years. Yes, in case you didn't realize it, BERO was created by statute, and while it is housed within TNECD, it goes through its own sunset process periodically. We are very happy with the five year extension!

A couple funding opportunities not to miss are (1) a [placemaking grant](#) from the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA), and (2) [disaster loans](#) related to the extreme temperatures and flooding we experienced this winter from the US Small Business Administration. Both programs have involved applications and deadlines to apply so see if it is of interest sooner rather than later! The person who runs the NEA program highlighted some very creative ways which both urban and rural projects were able to tie this type of funding into multistage projects.

Last time I mentioned the updated webpage for a simplified step-by-step for registering a new business in Tennessee. The flowchart has now been added to Step 7 (a PDF) and provides an easy to understand version of selecting a business name and legal structure, tax registration, hiring employees, special licensing, which you can find at tn.gov/ecd/smallbusinessguide. Here's what it looks like:

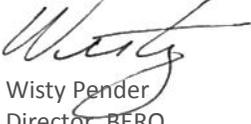


Spring is well underway with a host of conferences and events! Some of the events are the Appalachian Funders Network and USDA Rural Development Conference in April; 36/86 in early June; and the East TN Women's Conference in mid-June. See the [Events and Items of Note](#) section for details. There are a host of other regional and local gatherings on deep technical assistance, strategic networking, procurement and placemaking; and I look forward to hearing how they work for you and your respective clients or community. Look towards the bottom for [Call for Entries](#) to see how.

Look for the new tn.gov site to be launched in May or June, and with it BERO's webpage will have a whole new look and new resources.

I look forward to seeing you soon!

Warm regards,

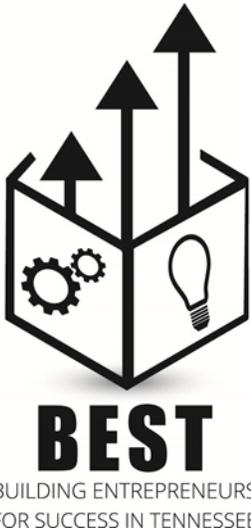


Wisty Pender
Director, BERO

What's in the Spring 2015 quarterly?

- ❖ [DBE/Veteran Practices and Highlights](#): Returning citizens and entrepreneurship training (BEST); LiftTN: Microenterprise
- ❖ [Access to Capital](#): Grant and disaster loan opportunity, et. al.
- ❖ [Events and Items of Note](#): East TN Women's Leadership, 36/86,
- ❖ [Call for Entries](#):
- ❖ [Articles of Interest from the Last Quarter](#): There are quite a few, but remember you can also find them at www.tn.gov/ecd/bero.
- ❖ [Contact Information](#)

➤ **From the Field...**



BEST: From the First Cohort

Authors: Karen Vander Molen and William T.

The first cohort of a groundbreaking new program designed to prepare offenders at Charles Bass Correctional Complex (CBCX) in West Nashville to start their own businesses upon their release from prison has successfully finished the course, and participants are now looking to the future.

October 21, 2014 marked the first day of class for the 22 participants in Building Entrepreneurs for Success in Tennessee (BEST), a program of the Nashville Entrepreneur Center (EC). As offenders arrived for class, they expressed excitement and gratitude for the opportunity to participate in this innovative program, which seeks to reduce recidivism by giving the men in it the tools they need to launch and manage their own businesses. That first week, the BEST Team, volunteer instructors, CBCX Staff and class participants all celebrated the program's launch. CBCX Warden Stevenson Nixon and Dr. Marina Cadreche, Tennessee Department of Correction (TDOC) Assistant Commissioner of Rehabilitative Services, also attended the kickoff party, where everyone expressed their excitement and optimism for the BEST program and looked forward to the coming months.

For the first three months, the curriculum focuses on personal development; getting heads and hearts in the right place. The class is instructed daily by Program Director Karen Vander Molen, as well as a variety of other BEST Team members and dedicated volunteer instructors who cover topics such as conflict management, life skills and basic computer skills. BEST even utilizes the Toastmasters Competent Communicators book to teach the men how to create and deliver speeches. In addition, there are weekly lectures by various local entrepreneurs such as Peter Marcum, Dr. Jeff Cornwall and Dr. Turner Nashe, Jr. Even Dr. Michael Burcham, the 2014 Tennessean of the Year, has visited twice.

The last three months consist of developing PreFlight Launch Plans for the men's business ideas as well as further preparation for success upon release. John Murdock, Director of Education at the Nashville Entrepreneur Center, delivers PreFlight instruction every Tuesday afternoon. Weekly readings and movie segments are delivered via Innertainment Delivery Systems (IDS) electronic tablets. This is the first time the tablet technology has been used by TDOC inmates. In addition, this is also the first time entrepreneurship curriculum has been delivered to inmates using tablets (quite possibly the first time in the world). To further support the development of the Launch Plans, BEST has partnered with Belmont University Professor Erin Anderson's class of 20 upper level students as "EntrePartners" who help provide research and assistance. Mentors from the EC also help participants expand their knowledge and understanding of how to get a business going.

We would like to thank everyone who has been involved in the effort to get the BEST program up and running, including the BEST Team, the many generous volunteers who have helped and TDOC. BEST participants are very excited and optimistic about this unique opportunity and cannot wait to put their new knowledge to work, becoming taxpayers and contributing members of society.



LiftTN: Microenterprise

The program, LiftTN: Microenterprise, alluded to in the previous newsletter was officially launched in February 2015. The initial training for LiftTN: Microenterprise grant recipients was held and now all are working on their respective projects. Expect an update later this year, and in case you missed the press release earlier, the full release is [here](#).

Overview:

The program—funded through the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD)—is aimed at helping businesses that have five or fewer employees expand.

In order to determine the grant recipients, TNECD—through its office of federal programs and the Business Enterprise Resource Office (BERO)—held four meetings across the state in January and February 2014. The purpose of those meetings was to gather information regarding unmet needs of microenterprises from agencies and organizations that work with small, women-owned, minority-owned, veteran-owned, rural and urban core businesses as well as youth entrepreneurs.

The five projects selected are the following:

- Communities Unlimited will use the grant funds to operate the altShops program in the Bolivar and Somerville downtown areas. The altShops program is a business incubator program for popup retail shops that recruits business owners and assists them with startup costs, leasing of commercial property and other technical assistance. The altShops program will fund three microenterprises in Bolivar and three microenterprises in Somerville.
- The Knoxville Chamber will use the funds to operate the Propel, a mentor-protégée program in cooperation with the respective chambers in Knox, Roane, Blount, Jefferson and Anderson Counties. Propel will pair protégés (microenterprises), which are relatively new to business with mentors who are established business leaders. In addition to a mentor, each protégé will receive coaching and technical assistance.

- Growth Enterprises Nashville will use their grant to expand the capacity of the Incubator Without Walls (“Virtual Incubator”), a program that provides virtual business incubation. Participants in the Virtual Incubator will receive one-on-one business counseling, as well as location-based training classes.
- Center for Holistic Ecology currently conducts the Sonnenschein Green Initiative (SGI) that promotes ecologically friendly business activity in the Hohenwald community and surrounding areas. The grant money will allow SGI to establish and operate the Hohenwald Marketplace, a place for local vendors to operate and sell services and goods.
- The TN Code Academy will use grant funds to expand the reach of its TN Code Academy for Youth, a program that conducts one-day workshops, camps and classes to further learning and increase interest in computer science and programming for students between the ages of 12-18. The grant will allow TN Code Academy to offer “Apps and Entrepreneurship”, teaching youth not only how to make an app, but how to monetize what they create.

Read the full release at www.tnecd.com/news/159/pilot-program-encourages-microenterprise/#sthash.3yUv227C.dpuf

Big Recognition for Tennessee at SXSW: ZeroTo510 was ranked 15th in nation



High Ground News: ZeroTo510 Announced as Top Accelerator at SXSW

www.highgroundnews.com/inthenews/zeroto510.aspx
Today, at SXSW and in *TechCrunch*, ZeroTo510 was announced as one of the top 20 accelerators in the United States.

ZeroTo510 was ranked 15th in the nation by the Seed Accelerator Rankings Project.

❖ Access to Capital ❖

Highlighted articles:

The Hamilton Project: Minority and Women Entrepreneurs: Building Capital, Networks, and Skills

www.cdfa.net/cdfa/cdfaweb.nsf/ordredirect.html?open&id=201503-MWE-A2C

As part of a comprehensive strategy to help minority and female entrepreneurs receive the support they need to succeed, this paper outlines three complementary proposals: expand access to capital, expand access to business networks, and expand skills development and training programs.

JD Supra: Federal Crowdfunding Efforts Stall While Tennessee Prepares for Takeoff

www.jdsupra.com/legalnews/federal-crowdfunding-efforts-stall-while-48381/

On January 1, 2015, pursuant to the Invest Tennessee Exemption (ITE), crowdfunding in Tennessee became legal, granting Tennessee-based companies and investors increased access to capital and broadened opportunities to invest. Federal crowdfunding rules, however, are stalled again—now delayed by more than 700 days past the deadline required by 2012’s Jumpstart Our Business Startups Act (the JOBS Act).

HBR: Start-Up Capital Is Spreading Across the U.S.

<https://hbr.org/2015/02/start-up-capital-is-spreading-across-the-u-s>

... Are startup hubs really forming all over the U.S.?... This analysis demonstrates that while a handful of well-known cities continue to dominate the landscape of early-stage venture-backed entrepreneurship, a non-trivial amount of catch-up by other cities has occurred.

The Tennessean: Tennessee Start-Ups See Uptick in Venture Capital

www.tennessean.com/story/money/2015/01/19/tennessee-start-ups-see-uptick-venture-capital/21945947/

...So what’s behind Tennessee’s current success? For one, we now have more private capital flowing throughout the state. Additionally, government supported programs like TNInvestco and INCITE have helped, particularly providing much-needed fuel a few years back when private capital was still on the sidelines following the recession.



New Grant Opportunity for Creative Placemaking in Tennessee

<http://tnartseducation.org/grants/fy2016-17-creative-placemaking-grant-program/>

How can your community enhance its unique assets to strengthen economic vitality, livability and growth? How can your community leverage its arts and culture resources to help address key opportunities and challenges?

The Tennessee Arts Commission has designed a Creative Placemaking Grants Competition to help build stronger communities through the arts. It specifically focuses on the use of arts or cultural assets to enhance the distinctive character of local Tennessee places for positive economic and community outcomes.

... The Commission expects to provide five to ten awards ranging from \$5,000 to \$8,000 for projects that occur in one place. Applications that involve partnerships of two or more towns, cities and/or counties can request up to \$10,000. At least two awards will be made to eligible rural applicants. A total of \$50,000 in grants will be awarded for FY2016. Further details can be found at the link above.



SBA disaster assistance available to Private NonProfit organizations in Tennessee

The U.S. Small Business Administration announced today certain Private NonProfit organizations (PNPs) that do not provide critical services of a governmental nature may be eligible to apply for low interest rate disaster loans. These loans are available following the Presidential disaster declaration for Public Assistance resulting from damages caused by a severe winter storm and flooding on Feb. 15 – 22, 2015.

PNPs located in the following Tennessee counties are eligible to apply to SBA: Anderson, Bedford, Bledsoe, Blount, Campbell, Clay, Coffee, Cumberland, Fentress, Giles, Grainger, Grundy, Hamblen, Hancock, Hardeman, Jefferson, Knox, Lawrence, Loudon, Marshall, McMinn, McNairy, Meigs, Monroe, Moore, Morgan, Obion, Overton, Putnam, Roane, Scott, Sevier, Van Buren, Warren and White. Examples of eligible non-critical PNP organizations include, but are not limited to, food kitchens, homeless shelters, museums, libraries, community centers, schools and colleges.

PNP organizations may borrow up to \$2 million to repair or replace damaged or destroyed real estate, machinery and equipment, inventory and other business assets. The interest rate is 2.625 percent with terms up to 30 years. Applicants may be eligible for a loan amount increase up to 20 percent of their physical damages, as verified by the SBA, to make improvements that help prevent the risk of future property damage caused by a similar disaster.

The SBA also offers Economic Injury Disaster Loans to help PNP organizations meet working capital needs, such as ongoing operating expenses. Economic Injury Disaster Loan assistance is available regardless of whether the organization suffered any physical property damage.

Applicants may apply online using the Electronic Loan Application via SBA's secure website at <https://disasterloan.sba.gov/ela>.

Disaster loan information and application forms may also be obtained by calling the SBA's Customer Service Center at 800-659-2955 (800-877-8339 for the deaf and hard-of-hearing) or by sending an e-mail to disastercustomerservice@sba.gov. Loan applications can be downloaded from the SBA's website at www.sba.gov/disaster. Completed applications should be mailed to: U.S. Small Business Administration, Processing and Disbursement Center, 14925 Kingsport Road, Fort Worth, TX 76155.

The filing deadline to return applications for physical property damage is June 1, 2015. The deadline to return economic injury applications is January 4, 2016.

Released by: Physical and Economic Injury Loans for Businesses; SBA Disaster Assistance – Field Operations Center- East – 101 Marietta Street, NW, Suite 700, Atlanta, GA 30303

There are several more articles worth reading on lending, crowdfunding and access to capital in the [Articles of Interest from Last Quarter](#) section.

❖ Events and Items of Note ❖

➤ **April:**

- April 7-9: GROWCO, Nashville. For more information visit <http://growco.inc.com>.
- April 17: 1st Annual Conference on Financial Literacy. For more information contact Tennessee State University Center for Entrepreneurship and Economic Development at (615) 963-7130.
- April 24: Basics of Doing Business with Local & State Government, Nashville. For more information visit http://events.wsmv.com/Basics_of_Doing_Business_with_Local_State_Government/312748680.html.
- April 29-30: USDA Rural Development Annual Conference, Murfreesboro. For more information visit http://www.rd.usda.gov/files/TN_2015RDConference-AgendaSpeakers.pdf.

➤ **May:** Asian Pacific American Heritage Month, Jewish American Heritage Month

- May 4- 7: Tennessee Basic Economic Development Course. Nashville, TN. For more information visit <https://cis.tennessee.edu/train/programtraining/TNEDPT/Pages/default.aspx>.
- May 13-16: Black Enterprise Entrepreneurs Summit, Atlanta, GA. For details visit <http://www.blackenterprise.com/events/entrepreneurs-conference>.

➤ **June:** National Caribbean-American Month

- June 8-10: 36/86, a meeting of people celebrating Southern Culture and Entrepreneurship, Nashville. For more information visit <http://thirtysixeightysix.com>.
- June 12: East Tennessee Women's Leadership Summit, Hilton Knoxville Airport. For more information visit <http://easttnwomensls.com/>.

➤ **And coming up in 2015...**

- August 25-27: MMBC Continuum Economic Development Forum, Memphis. For details call 901.525.6512.
- October 13-14: Governor's Conference on Economic and Community Development, Nashville. Details at www.govcon.tnecd.com.

❖ Call for Entries ❖

Case Studies: We would like to spotlight how your organization worked with a client. How you plugged the company into resources, and what things that company or individual sought to accomplish. This serves two purposes, to highlight (1) your range of services and (2) the company itself statewide.

Best Practices: Which ones have worked for your organization? Send a short paragraph with any links explaining how and why, and the challenges. Your best practices can be anything from how you process a client to programs developed to fill gaps that are producing good results (i.e. business matchmaking, mentor-protégée programs, loan programs, etc.).

Events: What impactful events are you planning, co-planning or promoting for DBEs? Include the basics of who, what, when, where and how, with a link for more information. Also include the expected number of participants.

Send events that take will place in the next 6 months.

How to submit: There is a lot of great work being done across the state for DBEs. If you have questions that you would like to see how other groups are solving and/or addressing, send them along. Provide enough contextual information so your question can be answered in a relevant manner.

SEND YOUR BEST PRACTICES, QUESTIONS, WELL WISHES, ETC. TO ecd.bero@tn.gov.
WE LOOK FORWARD TO HEARING FROM YOU! REALLY! ALSO, PLEASE FEEL FREE TO FORWARD THIS ON TO OTHERS.

❖ Articles of Interest from the Last Quarter ❖

Do you need a different option to look through these articles?
These articles are also posted in "DBE Topics in the News" section of BERO's website at www.tn.gov/ecd/bero.

◻ JANUARY ◻

Entrepreneur: The Benefits of Launching a Family Business in Your Golden Years

www.entrepreneur.com/article/241625

The idea that older adults can and should start ventures as a viable solution to some of the economic challenges they face seem foreign to my peers and "experts" who want to help.

When Tom Flournoy was laid off at age 61 at the height of the economic recession in 2009, he was unable to find a job. He turned to family business.

Inc.: Success Secrets: What 200 Leading Entrepreneurs Have in Common (video series)

www.inc.com/idea-lab/amy-wilkinson-elizabeth-holmes.html

Entrepreneur and author Amy Wilkinson speaks with Inc. senior editor Maria Aspan about her new book *The Creator's Code* and what she learned from interviewing many of today's most successful entrepreneurs.

Forbes: What it's like being a Woman Who's Building a Dream World in Silicon Valley

www.forbes.com/sites/deniserestauri/2015/01/05/what-its-like-being-a-woman-whos-building-a-dream-world-in-silicon-valley/?ss=forbeswoman

...My story is a great story about a woman, a mom who is creating a product that she wants to see in the marketplace that wasn't available because most games are created by men who are making decisions based on data.

The Tennessean: Immigrant Entrepreneurs Boost 'Main Streets' in Nashville

www.tennessean.com/story/money/2015/01/14/immigrant-entrepreneurs-boost-main-streets-nashville/21723951/

...Nashville immigrants have made a significant contribution to the local economy, especially through an outsized presence among local "main street" businesses, according to a new report by the Fiscal Policy Institute, a New York-based nonpartisan research nonprofit. In the larger Nashville metro area, immigrants account for 8 percent of the population and 9 percent of business owners, yet they make up a disproportionate 29 percent of Main Street business owners.

Entrepreneur: How a Bullied, Dyslexic 16-Year-Old Entrepreneur Fought Back and Found His Way

www.entrepreneur.com/article/236253

...His advice to kids who are bullied in school, due to insensitivity toward a learning difference or otherwise, is to flat-out ignore their harassers. [...] Ollie also suggests that all kids, especially teen entrepreneurs, talk about their hopes, dreams and challenges with successful adults they trust and admire.

WSJ: Businesspeople, Educators Seek Ways to Teach Students Entrepreneurship

www.wsj.com/articles/businesspeople-and-educators-seek-ways-to-teach-students-entrepreneurship-1421885943

...The traditional American education has emphasized preparing kids to execute shift work, and it doesn't tend to give students enough opportunity "to tinker and compete in a fun, competitive landscape," said Brian Meece, chief executive of RocketHub, a crowdfunding website, and a member of the Milstein Symposium panel focused on creating middle-class jobs through entrepreneurship.

Inc.: Why More Women Run Companies in New York Than in Silicon Valley

www.inc.com/steve-blank/more-women-run-companies-in-new-york.html

...I was struck by something that had been slowly percolating through my head during my entire week--there are a higher percentage of women on the founding teams of New York City startups than in Silicon Valley. [...] Does the credibility of female entrepreneurs in the eyes of New York VCs say something about the venture firms, or is it about the industries they are funding?

Teknovation: TN Code Academy Grew beyond Expectations in 2014

www.teknovation.biz/2015/01/28/tn-code-academy-grew-expectations-2014/?utm_source=newsletter&utm_medium=email&utm_content=TN%20Code%20Academy%20Grew%20Beyond%20Expectations%20in%202014&utm_campaign=DC%27s%201/29

...All of this growth resulted in some rethinking of the TN Code Academy model to ensure it scaled successfully based on the opportunities that exist.

As a key component of the new strategy, Lowdermilk announced a new initiative last December to franchise its week-long camps. Called "Digital Pathways," he said the concept is designed to "allow local communities to take more control of their events."

Entrepreneur: 3 Relatively Unknown, But Successful Founders Who Prove Entrepreneurship Is Open to All

www.entrepreneur.com/article/241913

One of the greatest aspects of entrepreneurship is that it's a lifestyle truly open to all. There are no limitations to the number or type of individuals who can choose entrepreneurship and succeed -- it's essentially limitless.

BusinessWire: 2014 Tennessee Early Stage Investments Top \$276 Million

www.businesswire.com/news/home/20150113005528/en/2014-Tennessee-Early-Stage-Investments-Top-276#.VLk7AivF_Tp

"We are tremendously proud of the progress made across the state in strengthening Tennessee's entrepreneurial landscape in 2014," said Charlie Brock, CEO of LaunchTN. "We aim to build on our success and continue to be a key driver of business and innovation in Tennessee and throughout the southeast for years to come."

WSJ: How Children Bickering Inspired a Business

www.wsj.com/articles/how-children-bickering-inspired-a-business-1422244849

Laurie Canata was at her wits' end. While she was there, she found an idea for a business.

Women 2.0: How I Launched a Tech Nonprofit As a High School Sophomore

<http://women2.com/2015/01/27/launching-cssgirls/?hvid=1K99Oi>

...During my sophomore year of high school, after seeing one too many of my friends turn away from pursuing computer science because of the negative stereotypes surrounding the field and the lack of female role models, I decided I needed to do something about it. And so ProjectCSGIRLS was born.

Huffington Post: Small Businesses Can Reap Benefits from Contracted Working Mothers

www.huffingtonpost.com/manon-defelice/small-businesses-can-reap_b_6549818.html?utm_hp_ref=business&ir=Business

...While larger companies are able to avoid such pitfalls by hiring experts and professionals to address knowledge gaps, small businesses rarely have the budget to add full-time salaried employees. Inkwell proposes to solve this problem by offering a pool of professional women that can be contracted by small businesses on a part-time or temporary basis. Highly accomplished working mothers get the flexibility they desire while small businesses get the expertise they need but could otherwise not afford.

Forbes: The Solution That Could Help More Minority Entrepreneurs Get Funding

www.forbes.com/sites/adrianalopez/2014/06/26/the-solution-that-could-help-more-minority-entrepreneurs-get-funding/

...During the weekend of Essence Festival (July 3-6), where Lionel Richie and Prince are set to perform, PowerMoves.NOLA will showcase 40 of the country's top minority entrepreneurs in an effort to break down some of these barriers. Several events – which include three pitches with \$25,000 investment prizes, a two-day intensive startup boot camp presented by Techstars and networking opportunities – will focus on giving minority entrepreneurs access to funds and business connections during one of the country's biggest music festivals, which preeminently attracts a large group of minorities as well as media and V.I.P. attention.

NPR: 'Maker Space' Allows Kids to Innovate, Learn in the Hospital

www.npr.org/blogs/alltechconsidered/2015/01/28/382176898/-maker-space-allows-kids-to-innovate-learn-in-the-hospital?utm_source=newsletter&utm_medium=email&utm_content=%27Maker%20Space%27%20Allows%20Kids%20to%20Innovate%2C%20Learn%20in%20the%20Hospital&utm_campaign=DC%27s%201/29

...At Vanderbilt University's Monroe Carell Jr. Children's Hospital in Nashville, Tenn., the maker space comes in the form of a large metal cart, carrying materials and tools young patients can use to create objects. The hospital services patients from all over the region, and many of those kids routinely experience long hospital stays.

Teknovation: Courtney Jones Kept Trying to Find "A Better Way"

www.teknovation.biz/2015/01/14/courtney-jones-find-a-way/?utm_source=newsletter&utm_medium=email&utm_content=Courtney%20Jones%20Kept%20Trying%20to%20Find%20&utm_campaign=DC%27s%201/15

... Over a two-year period, Jones, who describes herself as well-connected professionally, introduced three "amazingly talented mothers" to prospective employers. It was all gratis. "I'm a connector by nature," she admits... Today, the start-up has six staff members, all operating in a virtual environment; represents 2,000 individuals in East Tennessee; and just announced a move into Chattanooga. Turnover among those MomForce Network helps place is less than two percent annually.

The Kauffman Foundation: Are Young American Entrepreneurs Becoming Extinct?

http://www.kauffman.org/blogs/policy-dialogue/2015/january/are-young-american-entrepreneurs-becoming-extinct?utm_source=Newsletter&utm_medium=Email&utm_campaign=PDE2015-01-26

The idea of youthful entrepreneurs diminishing in numbers conflicts with the portrayal of entrepreneurship in popular culture and the media as booming in college dorm rooms, with young adults dressed in hoodies, not suit and tie. But the data give reason for the Journal's declaration and should cause policymakers to pause and reflect on the implications.

AS/COA: Immigrant Entrepreneurs and Economic Growth - How Immigrant Small Businesses are Supporting Main Street

www.as-coa.org/articles/summary-immigrant-entrepreneurs-and-economic-growth-how-immigrant-small-businesses-are

... In addition to quantifying the contributions of immigrant small business owners in the country's 50 largest metropolitan areas, Bringing Vitality to Main Street: How Immigrant Small Businesses Help Local Economies Grow, authored by David Dyssegaard Kallik and co-produced with the Fiscal Policy Institute, takes an in-depth look at the economic contributions of Main Street immigrant business owners in three specific metro areas: Philadelphia, Minneapolis–St. Paul, and Nashville.

Entrepreneur: Teen Crafts Low-Cost Braille Printer Out of Lego Kit, Receives Investment from Intel

www.entrepreneur.com/article/242000

... Named the Braigo -- a portmanteau of the words braille and Lego -- the device is a \$350 desktop machine that weighs just a few pounds. Initially concocted by Banerjee last year for a school science fair, the device's second iteration, the Braigo 2.0, can now translate electronic text into braille and then print from a computer or mobile device.

Business Climate: Arts and Culture: Painting Strong Economies

<http://businessclimate.com/blog/2015/01/arts-culture/>

Nashville, Tenn., is Music City USA, where the music industry has charted growth across all genres – not just country tunes, contributing a total economic output of \$9.7 billion to area economy each year. The music business' economic impact delivers a music-activity density two to 30 times greater than the nation overall and up to 10 times greater than New York or Los Angeles.

▫ FEBRUARY ▫

Entrepreneur: 5 Things Millennial Entrepreneurs Can Teach Their Business Elders about Running a Company

www.entrepreneur.com/article/242483

Enter millennials, the generation now 18 to 33 that display the most positive outlook when it comes to the economy and growing their business. Despite having less experience than many of their business peers, they're bringing fresh ideas and skills to the table.

Upstart Business Journal: Anti-Segregation Activist Inspires 'Project Diane' to Change the Way Venture Capitalists Think

<http://upstart.bizjournals.com/entrepreneurs/hot-shots/2015/02/05/anti-segregation-activist-inspires-project-diane.html?page=all>

...Though Finney doesn't believe the venture capital community is overtly racist, she did say there's a belief in the technology industry, generally speaking, that only the kinds of people who have previously been successful will continue to be successful. "There is a myth that diverse companies shouldn't be funded because diverse companies haven't been funded," she said. A report last year that showed less than two percent of the tech community is black.

WSJ: A Lesson in Entrepreneurship from a Doll

www.wsj.com/articles/a-lesson-in-entrepreneurship-from-a-doll-1423704983

More toy companies are rolling out new products designed for young girls that tap into an influential marketing concept: the aspirational allure of an entrepreneur.

Forbes: Will a New Startup Make Startups More Diverse?

www.forbes.com/sites/basharubin/2015/02/05/will-a-new-start-up-make-start-ups-more-diverse/

...Last week, I interviewed entrepreneur Joelle Emerson, CEO of Paradigm, a new company that advises startups on how to build more diverse workforces, who might just be an integral part of the fix. Learn about her approach to startup diversity and what it means for you and your company.

Nashville Business Journal: An Accident, Paralysis, Then an Idea: How This Entrepreneur Created the OpenTable of Health Care

www.bizjournals.com/nashville/bizwomen/news/profiles-strategies/2015/02/02/an-accident-paralysis-and-an-idea-how-this.html

Eleven years, tens of thousands of dollars and countless cross-country trips — from the Mayo Clinic to Vanderbilt, Shriners' Children's Hospital to Frazier Rehabilitation Institute — later, Jessica can walk. And she has become one of the many entrepreneurs who saw business opportunity in their pain points.

Inc.: What Adopting Black Children Taught Me about Business

www.inc.com/geoffrey-james/what-adopting-black-children-taught-me-about-business.html

...When I look at my kids, I just see my kids. I don't really see the color of their skin. And yet, as they've gotten older, and I can see that they're going to face some challenges in the business world, simply because of the color of their skin.

Knoxville Daily Sun: Norman Anderson & Clear Image Solutions Take 2015 INVEST Grand Prize

www.knoxvilledailysun.com/business/2015/clear-image-solutions.html

Master Sergeant Norman Anderson's final pitch at the Tennessee Veterans Business Association's annual business expo earned a \$5,000 grant for his company, Clear Image Solutions, from The Lawyers of Brown & Roberto. Anderson has designed and produced a rifle sight for the AR 15 rifle that is easy to use, easy to maintain, and affordable.

Entrepreneur: How VETTRAN Helped Me Become a Franchisee after 2 Years in the Military

www.entrepreneur.com/article/243017

Eric Stewart spent much of his life overseas in countries including Iraq, Kuwait and Afghanistan. Stewart traveled to these countries first over the course of five tours of combat duty in the U.S. Army, then as a government contractor. However, last year, he decided he was ready to open a business of his own. Here's how he decided that Window Genie was a right fit for him as a veteran.

Madame Noire: MentorMe Founder Brit Fitzpatrick on Revolutionizing Mentorship through Tech

http://madamenoire.com/510575/mentorme-founder-brit-fitzpatrick-revolutionizing-mentorship-tech/?utm_source=newsletter&utm_medium=email&utm_content=MentorMe%20Founder%20Brit%20Fitzpatrick%20on%20Revolutionizing%20Mentorship%20Through%20Tech&utm_campaign=DC%27s%202/13

... For me, the greatest obstacles I've faced, as an African-American woman in tech, probably haven't been as blatant as those generations before me may have encountered. Blatant misogynists aside, I believe the greatest challenges for African-American women in tech today lie in the hidden biases that are still strongly embedded in the culture.

Teknovation: The JumpFund Focused on Start-ups with Women in the C Suite

www.teknovation.biz/2015/02/12/jumpfund-focused-start-ups-women-suite/?utm_source=newsletter&utm_medium=email&utm_content=The%20Jump%20Fund%20Focused%20on%20Startups%20with%20Women%20in%20the%20C-Suite&utm_campaign=DC%27s%202/13

... "I was in the initial conversation," Montague recalls of the discussion that focused on the absence of active female entrepreneurs

in Chattanooga. One meeting led to a series of sessions with a group that ultimately grew to about 20 women. "We were told (that) you are going to move the needle if you address the lack of capital," Montague said.

High Ground: Social Entrepreneur Urges Memphians to "Make Change. Eat More Cookies."

www.highgroundnews.com/features/SweetLaLas.aspx?utm_source=newsletter&utm_medium=email&utm_content=Social%20Entrepreneur%20Urges%20Memphians%20to%20&utm_campaign=DC%27s%202/12

... Instead of incorporating as its own nonprofit organization, Sweet LaLa's is a for-profit operation with a business model that covers its operational costs and allows it to eventually donate its proceeds to JIFF. The bakery also provides job experience and training for JIFF youth.

PBS: Chattanooga Mini Maker Faire (video)

http://video.pbs.org/video/2365414100/?utm_source=newsletter&utm_medium=email&utm_content=Video%3A%20Chattanooga%20Mini%20Maker%20Faire&utm_campaign=DC%27s%202/4

Because knowledge is most powerful when it's shared, makers from the greater Chattanooga area convened for the first annual Chattanooga Mini Maker Faire in October. This short film explores the joy and empowerment of the maker movement and how our community benefits when makers unite and collaborate!

The Tennessean: SBA Launches Program for Nashville Companies

www.tennessean.com/story/money/2015/02/02/sba-launches-program-nashville-companies/22751435/?utm_source=newsletter&utm_medium=email&utm_content=SBA%20Launches%20Program%20for%20Nashville%20Companies&utm_campaign=DC%27s%202/1

... The Emerging Leaders Initiative training program is designed to support company growth and promote economic development through job creation. Participants meet with mentors, work through a business curriculum and develop relationships with city leaders and other executives during the seven-month program offered at no cost.

Nooga.com: City, Chamber Leaders Work to Support Diversity in Business

<http://nooga.com/169042/city-chamber-leaders-work-to-support-diversity-in-business/>

...She would hear about events and wonder how her business could have gotten the chance to cater for it. But as a new business owner, she didn't really know where to start.

The Tennessean: Bright Future Ahead for Tenn.'s Female Entrepreneurs

www.tennessean.com/story/money/2015/02/16/bright-future-ahead-tenns-female-entrepreneurs/23377861/

While the climate for women in the tech startup world has improved, it has a long way to go. In Tennessee, however, female entrepreneurs continue to have strong success in a variety of different industries, and in all stages of their careers.

American Sustainable Business Council: Boosting Women-Owned Businesses Will Boost the Economy

<http://asbcouncil.org/blog/boosting-women-owned-businesses-will-boost-economy#.VSWtMfnF9qW>

... So consider what would happen if the Small Business Administration (SBA) tripled funding for Women Business Centers (WBC) from \$14 million to \$42 million. For an amount that's barely a rounding error in the Federal budget, WBCs would be able to provide 200,000 more women with business advising, planning and mentoring services to help start and grow their businesses.

The Tennessean: Google Fiber a Game-Changer for Nashville's Creatives

www.tennessean.com/story/money/2015/02/06/google-fiber-game-changer-nashvilles-creatives/22952719/

...Google's investment in Music City is just the kind of thing to inspire confidence and capital in other major technology and production players. While we're years away from a fully installed network, Nashville and Nashville's video production industry will be reaping the rewards well before the first fiberhoods are rolled out.

The Huffington Post: People with Disabilities Can Easily Find Accessible Spots with This App

www.huffingtonpost.com/2015/02/22/axs-map_n_6721138.html

Inspired by his own experiences, a filmmaker has created an app to help people with disabilities.

Jason Da Silva was diagnosed with multiple sclerosis, a disease that affects the central nervous system, in 2006, and uses a motorized scooter to get around, according to Mashable.

PIX11 New: Convict to CEO: Defy Ventures Finds Value by Investing in the Futures of Felons

<http://pix11.com/2015/02/03/convict-to-ceo-defy-ventures-finds-value-by-investing-in-the-futures-of-felons/>

... Catherine Hoke, is the founder of Defy Ventures. Their primary mission is teaching ex-cons who have a solid financial plan for a business and assisting them in securing an investment. "We say that at Defy, it is often a legitimate first chance, almost always."

High Ground: Midtown Entrepreneurs Create "Ultimate Collaboration" with Auto Detailing Business

www.highgroundnews.com/devnews/finlinedetailing.aspx?utm_source=newsletter&utm_medium=email&utm_content=Midtown%20Entrepreneurs%20Create%20&utm_campaign=DC%27s%202/25

...A year later, realizing Powell's dissatisfaction with his part-time jobs, McWeeney asked what job would make him the happiest. Powell's response? "Starting my own business." The next week the pair took their small amount of savings and purchased a generator, water tank and pressure washer, and fine line detail was born.

The White House: FACT SHEET: White House Highlights Record U.S. Exports, Announces New Actions to Help More Rural Businesses Export

www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2015/02/26/fact-sheet-white-house-highlights-record-us-exports-announces-new-action

... As part of his "Made in Rural America" initiative launched in February 2014, the Administration is bringing together federal resources to help rural businesses and communities take advantage of new investment opportunities and access additional markets at home and abroad.

Y Combinator Female Founders Conference 2015 (video)

www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLQ-uHSnFig5NECe5MbTzqJaVjxoEjunvB

Are you interested in starting a startup? Then you should watch Y Combinator's second Female Founders Conference, where women we've funded, along with distinguished guests, share their stories and practical advice for building a company.

Knoxville News Sentinel: Gov. Haslam Announces Young Entrepreneurs Academy in Knoxville

www.knoxnews.com/business/gov-haslam-announces-young-entrepreneurs-academy-in-knoxville-31363561?utm_source=newsletter&utm_medium=email&utm_content=Gov.%20Haslam%20Announces%20Young%20Entrepreneurs%20Academy%20in%20Knoxville&utm_campaign=DC%27s%203/2

Knoxville will be home this fall to a national academic program in which middle and high school students learn to start their own businesses, Gov. Bill Haslam announced during a breakfast with the Knoxville Chamber on Friday.

Timesfreepress.com: Mother-Daughter Entrepreneurs: Lily and Renee Sandler Share How They Took a Bright Idea from Their Kitchen across the Country

www.timesfreepress.com/news/life/entertainment/story/2015/feb/26/mother-daughter-entrepreneurs/290049/?utm_source=newsletter&utm_medium=email&utm_content=Mother-Daughter%20Entrepreneurs%3A%20Lily%20and%20Renee%20Sandler%20Share%20How%20They%20Took%20a%20Bright%20Idea%20from%20their%20Kitchens%20across%20the%20Country&utm_campaign=DC%27s%202/27

... Seven years ago, at ages 9 and 10, the sisters were whipping up batches of lip balm in the kitchen sink of their Atlanta home. With help from their mom, Renee, the Sandler sisters co-founded Blamstastic, a lip balm made from natural ingredients that they could proudly say was made in the USA. Renee also took on the title of CEO because, well, she was the only female who wasn't a minor and could legally sign contracts.

Southern Alpha: There are More Female Mentors than Ever in Nashville

http://southernalpha.com/female-mentors-nashvilles-entrepreneur-scene-ever/?utm_source=newsletter&utm_medium=email&utm_content=There%20are%20more%20female%20mentors%20than%20ever%20in%20Nashville&utm_campaign=DC%27s%202/24

It's difficult for young women in Nashville to make business connections with more experienced entrepreneurial women. Thankfully, although Nashville has a long way to go, there are more women participating in mentorship than ever before.

◊ MARCH ◊

Knoxville News Sentinel: Memphis, Nashville, Chattanooga Included in Obama's TechHire Jobs Initiative

www.knoxnews.com/business/memphis-nashville-chattanooga-included-in-obamas-techhire-jobs-initiative?utm_source=newsletter&utm_medium=email&utm_content=Memphis%2C%20Nashville%2C%20Chattanooga%20Included%20in%20Obama%27s%20TechHire%20Jobs%20Initiative&utm_campaign=DC%27s%203/10

...Memphis also will launch an effort to increase the number of women, veterans, low-income community citizens and job-seekers ages 18 to 24 entering into IT as a career and will direct students on how to tap Workforce Investment Act and private funding to finance accelerated training.

IRS: IRS Releases Tax Time Guide: Get Free Tax Help with Free IRS Online Tools

www.irs.gov/uac/Newsroom/IRS-Releases-Tax-Time-Guide

...“We are doing everything we can to help taxpayers get the assistance they need this tax season,” said IRS Commissioner John Koskinen. “Our phone lines are extremely busy this year, so this series will offer taxpayers tips on how to get help along with important options and issues to keep in mind as the April 15 deadline approaches.”

Timesfreepress.com: Co.Starters Expands to Aid Rural LaFayette Entrepreneurs

www.timesfreepress.com/news/business/aroundregion/story/2015/mar/08/boosting-businesscostarters-expands-aidrural/291762/?utm_source=newsletter&utm_medium=email&utm_content=Co.Starters%20Expands%20to%20Aid%20Rural%20LaFayette%20Entrepreneurs&utm_campaign=DC%27s%203/9

...Ford is also emblematic of a crippling attitude among aspiring entrepreneurs in rural and less-affluent urban areas...Still, she is one of more than a dozen people enrolled in the pilot program of a rural version of Co.Starters, the business-development program that entrepreneur Enoch Elwell started several years ago in Chattanooga and now is offered in several locations across the nation.

Memphis Daily News: Chef Jenn Products Now Sold in Wal-Marts Across the Country

www.memphisdailynews.com/news/2015/mar/11/building-a-brand/?utm_source=newsletter&utm_medium=email&utm_content=Building%20a%20Brand%3A%20Chef%20Jenn%20Products%20Now%20Sold%20in%20Wal-Marts%20Across%20the%20Country&utm_campaign=DC%27s%203/11

...“One thing about my plans and goals that’s very important to me personally – Chef Jenn is committed to ‘Made in the USA,’” she said. “Everything I do is manufactured in the U.S. It’s my ultimate goal, after creating a legacy for my son, to do what I can to contribute to U.S. manufacturing, empowering other women – especially other single mothers like myself – and inspiring others to chase their dreams.”

Fibre2fashion: Sarah Bellos to Receive AATCC Young Entrepreneur Award

www.fibre2fashion.com/news/textile-news/newsdetails.aspx?news_id=171125

Sarah Bellos, the founder and president of US-grown natural colour producer Stony Creek Colors, has been selected for this year’s AATCC Young Entrepreneur Award, an accolade that recognises young entrepreneurs operating in broader textile industry.

WSJ: ‘Digital Cobbler’ Feetz Walks Off With \$1.3 Million for 3-D Printed Shoes

http://blogs.wsj.com/venturecapital/2015/03/12/digital-cobbler-feetz-walks-off-with-1-3-million-for-3-d-printed-shoes/?utm_source=newsletter&utm_medium=email&utm_content=%27Digital%20Cobbler%27%20Feetz%20Walks%20Off%20with%20%241.3%20Million%20for%203-D%20Printed%20Shoes&utm_campaign=DC%27s%203/13

...The company, which is presenting this week at the South by Southwest conference in Austin, Texas, aims to have an application up in Apple Inc.’s App Store in a matter of weeks that will enable people to order custom-printed shoes for about \$200, said Feetz Chief Executive Lucy Beard.

Co.Exist: Inside San Francisco's Deaf Owned and Operated Pizzeria

www.fastcoexist.com/3043126/change-generation/inside-san-franciscos-deaf-owned-and-operated-pizzeria?utm_source=mailchimp&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=coexist-daily&position=1&partner=newsletter&campaign_date=03062015

Spend a few minutes inside Mozzarella, a popular San Francisco pizza restaurant, and you might notice that something seems different from all other restaurants. It's not that Mozzarella is particularly quiet, with the din of customer chatter hovering in the background. But the servers aren't speaking out loud. Neither, in fact, are most of the employees. Mozzarella is a deaf owned and operated restaurant—among the first in the U.S. (if not the only one).

Co.Exist: How a Google Science Fair Winner is Using Minecraft to Inspire Kids to Become Inventors

www.fastcoexist.com/3043207/world-changing-ideas/how-a-google-science-fair-winner-is-using-minecraft-to-inspire-kids-to-?utm_source=mailchimp&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=coexist-daily&position=1&partner=newsletter&campaign_date=03122015

...The final Piper product consists of a case, an LED screen, Raspberry Pi, a powerbank, a DIY *Minecraft* controller, a mouse, and all sorts of sensors, buttons, and lights that can be integrated into the kit. To play, kids have to assemble the box and connect all the pieces.

The Tennessean: Entrepreneur Center Launches Metro Schools Program

www.tennessean.com/story/money/2015/03/03/entrepreneur-center-launches-metro-schools-program/24333585/?utm_campaign=%5B%22DC%27s+3%2F5%22%5D&utm_content=%5B%27Entrepreneur+Center+Launches+Metro+Schools+Program%27%5D&utm_source=%5B%27newsletter%27%5D&utm_medium=%5B%27email%27%5D

... The Nashville Entrepreneur Center and Metro Nashville Public Schools are launching TeacherPreneur, a program that will help high school business teachers connect students with information on building companies.

Venture Nashville Connections: Nashville's Longer-Term Role as StartupBus Destination Not Guaranteed

www.venturenashville.com/nashvilles-longer-term-role-as-startupbus-destination-not-guaranteed-cms-1061?utm_source=newsletter&utm_medium=email&utm_content=More%20on%20Startup%20Bus%27%20Decision%20to%20Come%20to%20Nashville&utm_campaign=DC%27s%203/4

... Each traveler is to be essentially hand-picked, based on prior StartupBus participation or recommendations by other alumni and staff, to ensure that teams are both talented, tight and populated with people who can tolerate the "pretty grueling" race to create a newborn company in just three days. Each regional bus "conductor" is asked to shoot for a 50:50 Male-Female team mix, though that's remains tough, said Neff.

Southern Alpha: Adorable Specialty Clothing Store, Little Fishkopp, Launches with Global Mission

http://southernalpha.com/adorable-specialty-clothing-store-little-fishkopp-launches-global-mission/?utm_source=newsletter&utm_medium=email&utm_content=Knoxville%20Entrepreneur%20Center%20Grad%2C%20Little%20Fishkopp%2C%20Launches%20with%20Global%20Mission&utm_campaign=DC%27s%203/3

... Uta Preston launched the retail website for Little Fishkopp, a children's clothing brand specializing in sleep bags for babies and toddlers. The brand's mission is to make organic and eco-friendly clothing in colorful Nordic designs reminiscent of Preston's upbringing in Northern Germany.

The Tennessean: Pathway Lending Helps Las Paletas, Others Succeed

www.tennessean.com/story/money/2015/03/19/pathway-lending-las-paletas-nashville-your-healthy-vending/25031203/?utm_source=newsletter&utm_medium=email&utm_content=Pathway%20Lending%20Helps%20Las%20Paletas%2C%20Others%20Succeed&utm_campaign=DC%27s%203/20

...When Las Paletas began selling 1,000 paletas in a day, the Paz sisters realized they would need more room. They were renting a 600-square-foot space and wanted to buy a larger building down the street, but needed more capital. Local banks directed them to Pathway Lending, which offered Paz a 20-year loan, with 100 percent financing.

The Tennessean: Women's Business Center Offers Path for Female Entrepreneurs

www.tennessean.com/story/money/2015/03/19/womens-business-center-offers-path-female-entrepreneurs/25030439/

Courtney Lewis, a military veteran, a single mother and a Memphis native, came to Nashville in 2012 with a duffel bag and the dream of running her own film business...When she discovered a new business center was launching in Nashville for women entrepreneurs, she showed up the week it opened.

Business Climate: Volunteerism Pays Dividends for Economy, Quality of Life of Communities

<http://businessclimate.com/blog/2015/03/volunteerism-pays-dividends-economy-quality-life-communities/>

Volunteerism creates more than just good vibes for communities. It can also contribute to economic growth and boost the quality of life for workers and philanthropic companies looking to give back...Giving back is so much a part of the culture the region is also becoming a hot spot for social enterprise firms launched by community-minded entrepreneurs.

Women 2.0: Growth is on the Horizon for Classpass, NextDoor and PITCH Finalists

http://women2.com/2015/03/09/growth-horizon-classpass-nextdoor-pitch-founders/?utm_source=Women+2.0+Mailing+List&utm_campaign=77889d8ab8-12_24_2013_Weekly_Newsletter&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_8e8e6a075d-77889d8ab8-310376849

We can hardly stay on top of the stream of good news we're hearing from members of the Women 2.0 community. Founders are making headlines left and right as they raise massive rounds of funding, expand to new markets and continue to innovate.

Johnson City Press: 100 Girls of Code Receives Hefty Turnout for Johnson City Session

www.johnsoncitypress.com/article/125314/100-girls-of-code-receives-hefty-turnout-for-johnson-city-session?utm_source=newsletter&utm_medium=email&utm_content=100%20Girls%20of%20Code%20Receives%20Hefty%20Turnout%20for%20Johnson%20City%20Session&utm_campaign=DC%27s%203/23

...Johnson City turned out the most participants for the 100 Girls of Code program in the project’s history. Thirty-five girls and young women signed up for the Saturday afternoon class on programming and coding, filling Spark Plaza with the clicking of students’ typing and the whiz of laptops as female instructors squeezed by chairs in the crowded room to help individual students.

Shockwave Motors, Inc.: Shockwave Motors Receives \$5,000 Grant

www.shockwavemotors.com/download/shockwavemotors_5000_grant.pdf

Shockwave Motors, Inc. received a grant from Jonathan Williams, founder of the Tennessee Veterans Business Association; the grant was made possible by Eric W. Barton, President and CEO of Vanquish Worldwide. Accepting the grant was John McMillian, CEO of Shockwave Motors, Inc. John said, “I appreciate that both Jonathan and Eric believe in what we are working to accomplish at Shockwave Motors and this grant will help move us closer to full scale manufacturing of our high performance electric roadster.”

❖ **Contact Information** ❖

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About BERO: BERO serves as a voice for and advocate of economic inclusion for Tennessee’s disadvantaged businesses (DBE). The office is tasked to analyze, disseminate and promote best practices and access to capital for DBEs to service providers. It also reports on the status of DBEs across the state. For the purposes of BERO, DBE refers to businesses owned by women, minorities, veterans and persons with disabilities; as well as businesses operating in remote or rural areas of the state.

About ECD: The Tennessee Department of Economic and Community Development's mission is to develop strategies which help make Tennessee the No. 1 location in the Southeast for high quality jobs. The department seeks to attract new corporate investment in Tennessee and works with Tennessee companies to facilitate expansion and economic growth.

