



Linking businesses to the right resources at the right time

SUMMER 2009

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Regional Care: MyBiz Expands to Alabama

MyBiz now links services across Mississippi and Alabama

"Economies are blind to state lines. Workforces are blind to state lines," says Christian B. Reed, director of entrepreneurship development programs at the Montgomery Institute. "As institutions we have to remove the barriers to entrepreneurs and give them the resources and tools they need to launch, survive and grow their businesses."

Reed leads the [MyBiz Network](#), which uses U.S.SourceLink's Resource Navigator to connect entrepreneurs and service provider organizations across Mississippi and, as of July 2009, across the entire state of Alabama.

With help from the University of Alabama and the Department of Labor, MyBiz brings resources and information together to help dislocated workers see entrepreneurship an alternative. Building on its already impressive network of resource partners in Mississippi and west Alabama, MyBiz hopes to add resources across the state that will help create new businesses and new jobs, especially in the rural areas affected by plant closings.

Dr. David Hale, director, Management Information Systems Program and the Aging Infrastructure Systems Center of Excellence at the Culverhouse College of Commerce at the University of Alabama, has been instrumental in building that network—from the ground up. His teams of undergraduate and graduate MIS students have tapped their IT experience to build the Web site and have even worked as the ground team to gather resources in rural communities.

"Before MyBiz, people in rural areas didn't always know where to turn if they needed help starting a business," says Reed. "With Resource Navigator, MyBiz brings all those tools together in one, centralized location."

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Working Collaborations: KC BizCare, OneKC for Women

KCSourceLink resource partners work the system

The economy is taking its toll on everyone—small businesses and large corporations, local governments and nonprofits. Survival will require strategic thinking, responsive action, creativity and innovation.

The Kansas City region, home to KCSourceLink, has found its own way to creatively respond to the needs of its community. Through two innovative alliances—KC BizCare and OneKC for Women—KCSourceLink resource partners are collaborating to streamline efficiency, support and encourage entrepreneurship, and ensure the region's economic stability.

KC BizCare

Kansas City, Missouri, is open for business

You hear it from small business owners across the country: navigating city hall is cumbersome, slow, and redundant. Kansas City decided to challenge the perception and make Kansas City even more small business friendly.

Through an initial collaboration between the City of Kansas City, Missouri, and the Kansas City Economic Development Corporation, City Hall opened the doors to [KC BizCare](#) on June 1.

KC BizCare is a free resource, advocacy and information center for owners of new and existing businesses operating within Kansas City, Missouri. Strategically located across the street from KC's City Hall, the brick and mortar center helps business owners navigate city, state and federal requirements for operating a business.

The center:

- creates business-specific "roadmaps" for opening a business in Kansas City, Missouri
- guides business owners through the city's regulatory licensing, permitting and approval processes
- helps remove barriers that impede a businesses ability to grow

OneKC for Women

Alliance focuses on job development and creation across the bistate region

Kansas City is a bistate metropolis, spreading across 15 counties in Missouri and Kansas. To better meet the needs of women across the region, four business resource organizations formed in alliance—OneKC for Women—to weave a tapestry of services for women at all stages of their careers and business life cycles.

The Women's Employment Network, First Step Fund, Kansas Women's Business Center, and the Women's Capital Connection provide services that create financial growth and independence whether women are looking for a job or launching a business.

Separately, they each provide vital services to women as they start and build their careers. The Women's Employment Network, provides employment preparation and career transition support to women in the Kansas City metro area. First Step Fund helps men and women explore entrepreneurship as an alternative to public assistance or low-paying jobs by helping microenterprises with training, access to capital and ongoing support. The Kansas Women's Business Center focuses their efforts on helping women entrepreneurs grow their businesses. And the Women's Capital Connection is a regional network of accredited angel investors, one of only 12 women's angels groups in the country, dedicated to identifying and funding promising start-ups.

Together, these organizations will offer a continuum of training, mentoring, counseling, and skill-building opportunities to serve clients who are unemployed, underemployed, or changing careers and help women-led businesses launch, grow, and find funding.

The alliance is also a strategic move for nonprofits who are feeling the weight of the current economy. Not only will they be able to serve more clients, but OneKC for Women can also leverage their alliance to build back-office efficiencies, enhance brand awareness, and pursue fundraising opportunities.

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NEWS YOU CAN USE

Tips for Your Trade Show Booth

[Skyline Trade Show](#) offers tips to attract trade show attendees to your booth—from preshow direct mail, e-mail, phone calls to e-newsletters and personal campaigns.

Business 2.0

[Forbes](#) offers a list of concerns to help your small businesses sort through the labyrinth of social networking tools—Twitter vs. Yammer, to blog or not to blog, wikis, discussion forums, FaceBook, LinkedIn, Xing, etc. First order of business: separate external and internal applications and find where the social connections need to happen.

Senate Roundtable Discusses Entrepreneurial Development

A Senate Committee roundtable aired a number of suggestions for driving economic development through entrepreneurial growth, including strengthening Small Business Development Centers (SBDCs), SCORE, Women's Business Centers (WBCs), and the Program for Investment in Entrepreneurs (PRIME). [Read about the discussion and recommendations.](#)

Starting Up in a Down Economy

A [new study from the Kauffman Foundation](#) found that more than half of Fortune 500 companies were founded in a recession or bear market, shoring up the point that challenging economic times can offer opportunities for entrepreneurial capitalism and job creation. And not all of those are created on the backs of fat trust funds. The [Forbes List](#) is heavily peppered with entrepreneurs whose businesses started from humble beginnings.

Economics Bloggers Offers Insights into Economic Recovery

The Kauffman Foundation surveyed America's top economics bloggers and found they largely agree on one important issue: To help speed the recovery, remove barriers to entrepreneurship. [Read the summary](#) or [click through to a PDF of the report.](#)

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DID YOU KNOW?

Welcome Our New Affiliates

U.S. SourceLink reaches into Tulsa and Michigan.

U.S.SourceLink welcomes our new affiliates in Tulsa and the state of Michigan.

SourceLink, powered by the Tulsa Metro Chamber

Tulsa wanted to enhance its small business programming, bolster its communication, and strengthen its network of business resource partners. U.S.SourceLink was the logical choice, providing the components they needed and the ability to track outcomes. Sourcelink, powered by the Tulsa Metro Chamber plans a soft launch for September and hopes to go live by January 2010.

Contact: [Kinnee Tilly](#)

Michigan Business One Stop

As part of the state's larger enterprise initiative [Michigan Business One Stop](#), Resource Navigator links nearly 500 business-building resources across Michigan's 83 counties to each other and to the entrepreneurs who need them. And that help is just in time as Michigan's unemployment hits 14.1 percent and the country looks to entrepreneurs to create jobs.

Contact: [Tom Donaldson](#)

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SHARE YOUR STORY

Connections offers an info-exchange for the many organizations associated with U.S.SourceLink. Share your ideas, best practices, and success stories with our growing network of economic development organizations nationwide.

- How are your resource partners helping small business succeed in this economic climate?
- What lessons have you learned as you've launched and/or developed your network?
- What kinds of questions are you getting from your resource partners and/or their clients?
- How do you plan to use the new Web features to connect resource partners and small business owners?

[E-mail us your thoughts.](#)

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To Unsubscribe, e-mail Jeremy Hegle at heglej@ussourcelink.com

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