



*Linking businesses to the right resources at the right time*

## BEST PRACTICES

### North Carolina Rural Economic Development Center

#### Opening a GATEway to Job Creation

Despite its reputation as a technology-based, New Economy state, North Carolina ranks 24th on the Kauffman Foundation's 2008 State New Economy Index.

"We really have two economies in North Carolina: new and old," Barry Ryan, GATE project coordinator for the North Carolina Rural Economic Development Center.

#### A Tale of Two Economies

The new economy, represented by Research Triangle Park and North Carolina's urban centers, claims top universities, cutting-edge technology companies, global connections, and a highly educated workforce. The old economy, whose job force is rooted in traditional manufacturing and agriculture, is less educated and less-integrated into the innovation infrastructure. In those rural areas, unemployment has soared to well over 10 percent.

"People laid off in those rural areas aren't likely to find another job in that industry. They are looking to make a transition, they are looking to go into another industry," said Ryan. "Our philosophy is that the best industry to be in is entrepreneurship."

#### Project GATE

That philosophy led North Carolina to apply for Project GATE (Growing America through Entrepreneurship), a program of the U.S. Department of Labor, Employment and Training Administration. To date, Project GATE has been implemented in Pennsylvania, Minnesota, and Maine. Current programs are underway (2008-2011) in Alabama (\$1 million), Minnesota (\$2M), North Carolina (\$1.6M), and Virginia (\$2M).

By working within state's existing business development infrastructure, Project GATE helps emerging entrepreneurs in rural and urban communities start and sustain their own businesses. Participants receive training, counseling, and one-on-one technical assistance to develop their businesses and apply for financing. Nonprofit community-based organizations and small business development centers deliver the services.

## SPRING 2009

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## North Carolina Partners for Entrepreneurship

North Carolina's GATE team includes:

- N.C. Department of Commerce, Division of workforce development
- Workforce Development Boards
- JobLink Career Centers
- N.C. Community College System and 58 Small Business Centers
- N.C. Rural Economic Development Center
- NC REAL Enterprises

The program will operate through its extensive network of community colleges. With 58 colleges, 90 percent of the state's population is within 15 minutes of a community college. They've chosen eight brick and mortar sites that will serve more than 700 GATE clients over the next three years. And they'll expand their reach through an additional virtual site—powered by SourceLink.

Each site offers:

- free individual assessment of entrepreneurial skills for dislocated workers
- free entrepreneurship training and coaching for up to three years
- free access to the entire state's active networks of information for small business
- access to a statewide pool of \$400,000 in training dollars that can be used for scholarships to the NC REAL entrepreneurship course and vocational coursework related to the self-employment business.
- access to a statewide pool of \$500,000 in microenterprise loan capital for GATE participants that complete a workable business plan

Dislocated workers must meet the criteria as outlined in the Workforce Investment Act and 75 percent of qualified applicants will receive a GATE scholarship.

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### NEWS YOU CAN USE

## Biz-Trakker™ Gets an Upgrade

You shared your ideas on how to enhance Biz-Trakker. And we listened.

Our updates make Biz-Trakker™ even easier to use for you and your clients. Recent and upcoming changes include:

- Enhanced tracking of snapshot data (February 2009)
  - Record different "types" of snapshots, including baseline vs. annual, fiscal years, and details on funding (angel funding, SBIR/STTR grants, etc.)
- Surveys (March 2009)
  - Clients can easily verify or update information you already have on file (business name, address, etc.)
- Referrals (March 2009)
  - Send uploaded documents through e-mail referrals
- Redesign of client records and "desired fields" (forthcoming, April 2009)
  - Simplified data entry reduces the confusion between similarly named fields
  - Improved data collection consistency with "desired fields" that remind users to fill in information but allow navigating away from the record if the information (e.g., e-mail address) is simply unknown.

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## Send Newsletters using Webplate Now!

Newsletters keep you connected with your Resource Partners and the wider business community—and distributing those electronically can be an effective and economical way to communicate with your audience.

From Business Week: [What Sells Online? Unsexy Newsletters](#)

And now, you can bring the e-newsletter operation in-house with Webplate Now!

™

- Login to your administrative account.
- Redirect your URL to ". . .pcsnap.com/newsletter"
- Click "Administration", "Manage Newsletters", "Add Newsletter".
- Title and describe your newsletter in the "Name" and "Description" fields (e.g., "U.S.SourceLink Connections" and "a quarterly newsletter for the affiliates of U.S.SourceLink").
- Click "Add New" at the bottom of the screen. You'll then be taken to a master list of your newsletters.
- To create an issue of your newsletter, click on the newsletter (e.g., U.S. SourceLink Connections).
- Click on the "Subscribers" tab to add or manage your subscribers.
- Click on the "Messages" tab to add, edit, and send the individual issues of your newsletter. Here, you can design your newsletter in the WYSIWG (what you see is what you get) editor—or click on "Source" to paste in

your html code. Clicking "Source" also toggles between HTML and design views.

- Click on "Convert Content to Plain Text" to send a plain text messages in addition to an HTML message. (Recommended.)
- Click on "Next" to preview your issue or "Save as Draft" to save your issue for later review.
- When you're ready to distribute click "Next" to proceed to scheduling.
- Under scheduling, you can send the message immediately or preset a time to distribute your e-newsletter. Click "Next" to complete the schedule and send your message.

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## Crib Notes to February's U.S.SourceLink Seminar

Seminar spotlights affiliates' best practices and new Webplate Now! features.

U.S.SourceLink affiliates from 14 states came to U.S.SourceLink's two-day seminar.

At the Federal Reserve Bank of Kansas City, affiliates learned firsthand about [Network Kansas' E-Communities Program](#), [Project GATE by the North Carolina Rural Economic Development Center](#), and walked away with their own test site using SourceLink's newly launched features on Webplate Now!™

And we're sure the diverse group will continue to foster great networking and peer-learning opportunities.

Below are a few more highlights from our seminar.

How the Federal Reserve Bank partners with business development organizations  
John Moon, Federal Reserve Bank Board of Governors  
Erika Ramirez, Community Affairs Department, Federal Reserve Bank of Kansas City

- The Federal Reserve focuses efforts on policy ideas and research.
- The Community Affairs Department supports the Fed's overall economic growth objectives by promoting community development and fair and impartial access to credit.
- The Community Affairs Department researches issues that affect low- and moderate-income communities and brings together community development organizations, government, financial institutions, and small business support organizations to explore solutions. Areas of focus include:
  - Community development investments
  - Consumer financial stability

- Economic development
- Neighborhood stabilization
- Sustainability for community development organizations
- To ensure access to credit, the Federal Reserve:
  - surveys senior loan officers to monitor access to credit for small businesses
  - Implemented new lending facility to provide liquidity for secondary market for SBA guaranteed loans
- Find out how to work with the Federal Reserve through [your region's](#) community affairs department:
  - Boston: [www.bos.frb.org/commdev/index.htm](http://www.bos.frb.org/commdev/index.htm)
  - New York: [www.newyorkfed.org/regional/commdev.html](http://www.newyorkfed.org/regional/commdev.html)
  - Philadelphia: [www.philadelphiafed.org/community-development](http://www.philadelphiafed.org/community-development)
  - Cleveland: [www.clevelandfed.org/community\\_development](http://www.clevelandfed.org/community_development)
  - Richmond: [www.richmondfed.org/community\\_development](http://www.richmondfed.org/community_development)
  - Atlanta: [www.frbatlanta.org/comm.cfm](http://www.frbatlanta.org/comm.cfm)
  - Chicago: [www.chicagofed.org/community\\_development](http://www.chicagofed.org/community_development)
  - St. Louis: [www.stlouisfed.org/community](http://www.stlouisfed.org/community)
  - Minneapolis: [www.minneapolisfed.org/community\\_education/community/program](http://www.minneapolisfed.org/community_education/community/program)
  - Kansas City: [www.kansascityfed.org/home/subwebs.cfm?subWeb=3](http://www.kansascityfed.org/home/subwebs.cfm?subWeb=3)
  - Dallas: [dallasfed.org/ca/index.html](http://dallasfed.org/ca/index.html)
  - San Francisco: [www.frbsf.org/community](http://www.frbsf.org/community)

## Marketing Your Organization for Sustainability

Cary Clark, U.S.SourceLink

- Build awareness by distributing brochures to resource partners, libraries, coffee shops, and other public place; share press releases; and make presentations to your Chamber of Commerce, Lion's Club, Bar Associations, Builders' Associations, etc.
- Build relationships with potential referral partners: banks, CPAs, attorneys.
- Share logo links on Web sites with resource partners.
- Generate income to support operating expenses through sponsorships. Find sponsors among community-minded businesses that serve the community (e.g., utility companies) or with businesses that want exposure to small businesses and entrepreneurs. Offer real estate on your Web site, electronic newsletters, etc.

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## Stimulus 2.0

Reid Hoffman, CEO and founder of LinkedIn and investor in more than 60 Web ventures has some strong opinions about how startups can help right the economy. He offers some suggestions in his [guest blog post](#) at TechCrunch.

"I believe the real fix for the economy is massive entrepreneurship and

innovation to create new jobs through new products and services," writes Hoffman.

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## The Desperate Need for Speed

The widespread deployment of broadband services, supported with \$7.2 billion from the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, is about more than speedy surfing, reports [this article](#) from Policy Dialogue on Entrepreneurship.

"If done right, the widespread deployment of [next generation broadband could have transformative effects on the economy](#)."

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### DID YOU KNOW?

## Welcome Our New Affiliates

U.S. SourceLink reaches into Kentucky and Alaska.

U.S.SourceLink welcomes our new affiliates in the states of Kentucky and Alaska.

Kentucky, kyBIZinfo

The Kentucky Small Business Development Center had their eye on U.S. SourceLink for several years. Once they obtained a grant to fund the start-up of the program, they jumped on board. kyBIZinfo plans a soft launch in late May 2009 and hopes to go live across the state in July.

Contact: [Michael Ashcraft](#)

Alaska, AKSourceLink

With its partners, the University Alaska Center for Economic Development formed the Alaska Entrepreneurial Consortium to address the needs of rural small businesses. They discovered that rural business owners either didn't know what help they needed or, if they did, they were unsure where to find it. U.S. SourceLink will provide them with a way to put those business owners in touch with the resources they need, when they need them. AKSourceLink plans a soft launch for June and an official launch in September.

Contact: [Linda Ketchum](#)

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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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