



Rural Entrepreneurship and Applied Technology Project Overview White Paper, CBED Report 04-06-003 (Revised July 9, 2004)

This is one of a series of White Papers on issues of interest to the Center of Business and Economic Development (CBED) and the ESU School of Business. Each White Paper summarizes readings, analysis and synthesis by the Director, William L. Smith, Ph.D., for discussion, to provide background information to direct our planning processes and to build content for the Center web site at:

<http://www.emporia.edu/business/ibed/center/>

Rural Entrepreneurship and Applied Technology (REAT) Project

The **Program** (concept), the **Project** (implementation), and the **Center** (long-term goal) will demonstrate the concept in its implementation toward the long-term goal.

A successful business/organization requires a good idea, a champion with passion, and a wide network of supporting persons and services. This project is intended to help spread this message to all in the broader community who may have such an idea, such passion, or who may be able to support those with an idea and passion.

The **Project** will be carried out in four simultaneous Phases:

- Phase A. Community Education – sharing the concept far and wide in the community
- Phase B. Faculty Research – gaining new information through scientific examination
- Phase C. Grantsmanship – seeking and achieving new resources for the project
- Phase D. Publicity and Integration – assuring that synergy and sharing are working well

Let us now look at each of these Phases, in order, in overview:

Phase A. Community Education

The REAT program has something to offer our broader community audience than either a standard entrepreneurship or technology program. We recognize that our unique blend of rural and urban environment requires a special mix of rural and urban entrepreneurship techniques and support systems, whatever technology is being adopted.

Community education begins with the existing university entrepreneurship courses and business start-up workshops conducted by the Small Business Development Center (SBDC) but will be expanded with additional courses and workshops for special audiences, such as senior citizens, women, artisans and crafters. K-16 entrepreneurship opportunities will be enhanced both through traditional curriculum enhancements, where



possible, and through SIFE Team (Students in Free Enterprise) student presentations in selected middle schools, high schools and youth organizations (including minority based youth organizations).

A structured presentation of the REAT process is under development and will be presented in a series of workshops, tailored to the particular audiences noted above.

The REAT Process is based on a six element format, including three functional elements: Marketing, Finance and Operations, along with three leadership elements: People, Management Team, and Board of Advisors. The process also places a strong emphasis on the use of personal networking techniques to allow each of the elements to be most effective.

Community Education, especially beyond the start-up process, also takes the form of technical assistance and consulting. Technical assistance and consulting is provided by faculty and staff of the CBED based on scientific research in the appropriate areas. Some now occurs on an ad hoc basis. The REAT process should enhance a steady stream of these activities.

Phase B. Faculty Research

Faculty research is the foundation on which expertise is build which can then be shared with the broader community through technical assistance and consulting activities. Externally funded grants are often available for technical assistance activities.

Faculty research then, is the bridge between Phase A and Phase C of this project.

Faculty research is one of the requisites prior to being considered for designation as a Center of Excellence by KTEC. Individual faculty members will be identified to participate in REAT related activities. Faculty members will become engaged and contribute in various ways to the REAT Project and Program.

Beginning in Fall of 2004, a plan is under development to involve several faculty members in survey research in this subject area as part of a Faculty Development program, using a seven step process of involvement: Literature Review, Question Formulation, Survey Method/Audience Determination, Statistical Analysis, Write-Up Results/Conclusions, Review Manuscripts, Manage Submissions. Execution of this plan should lead to an overall increase in the number of publications produced by the faculty of the ESU School of Business.



Phase C. Grantsmanship

A major challenge facing anyone seeking grants and external funding of program activities is proper description and definition of the subject/content area for search. The REAT program/project description in these white papers is such an endeavor.

The search for grants and other external funding began in the spring semester of 2004, continues during the summer and will continue in the fall semester of 2004 under an agreement/grant from The ESU Research and Grants Center.

The search for appropriate grants, from government, foundations, or other sources will continue. The search will include collaboration with other researchers to partner on larger grant requests. These efforts will also be done in concert with other related fund-raising efforts, including overall entrepreneurship, endowed professorships, etc.

Phase D. Publicity and Integration

Appropriate publicity activity is a critical ingredient of any effective community based program. The REAT project will employ the CBED web site, ESU media relations and other available sources to assure that the broader community is made aware of these activities.

Each Phase will be integrated with the others and properly documented along with appropriate publicity to achieve maximum synergy from all activities.