



ENERGIZING ENTREPRENEURIAL COMMUNITIES

A Pathway to Prosperity



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Pomeroy hears Entrepreneurial Communities project pitch,

by Sarah Hawley

POMEROY — The Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC) hopes to collaborate with Pomeroy to develop opportunities for business in the area, as outlined in a Tuesday evening meeting.

In a program introduced by Rural Action (RA), part of the ARC, an invitation was extended to Pomeroy to participate in the Entrepreneurial Communities project.

The Center for Rural Entrepreneurship developed the framework to encourage close relationships between community groups and leverage regional assets.

The goal is to create an environment that produces “stronger and more sustainable local economies” by establishing connections between the business community, church and civic organizations, schools and entrepreneurs and providing skills to see projects to fruition.

RA Community Coach Dan Vorisek led the meeting, and said “Every community and region is different, that is why there is need to develop a strategic plan for Pomeroy. The Entrepreneurial Communities model provides the framework, but everyone is involved in deciding what the plan should be. Our role is to coach and provide resources that will enable your success.”

He said a group that includes himself, Eric Smith and Jenna Horiuchi, is there to answer questions and give guidance, “but it is the community that ultimately is responsible for the success of the project.”

According to the materials provided at the meeting, the model is based on four basic parts: the Entrepreneurial Community Coach, a full time Rural Action employee dedicated to supporting the Leadership Team; the Leadership Team, broad based group of community leaders; stakeholders, individuals and organizations that care about “growing a healthy and more deeply rooted local businesses community; and business owners, people that have already proven a commitment to the local community and work to build the local economy.”

“Our role is to coach the community, to empower the entrepreneurs, to meet real time needs by using models that work in the region, that are evidence based and use practiced tools to ensure the business keeps going,” said Smith. “We are looking at long term success, so it is best to begin with good homework setting up the project to ensure it keeps going.”

Seven towns in Appalachian Ohio have been offered participation, and Pomeroy was selected because of the area’s potential and University of Rio Grande location.



“Rio Grande tells us you are interested in bringing new ideas and development to your community,” Vorisek said. “It was a big factor in our choice of Pomeroy. We want to grow the next crop of leaders, we want to help them develop their idea and make it sustainable.”

He used an example of a student wanting to start a bicycle repair business to illustrate how the model works. The student would have access to a network of people who could help with strategies and business tools.

With positive outcomes early in the process, Vorisek says it helps people to “begin to look at the community differently, everyone is involved in the process, and success stories will move the process forward.”

After the project was presented and questions answered, Vorisek asked if Pomeroy had an interest in becoming involved.

Council member Maureen Hennessy was excited at the prospect of a strategic plan for Pomeroy, and volunteered to move forward developing a steering committee. This would be the first step in the 8 to 10 month process that includes establishing and training the Leadership Committee, making community connections, and identifying stakeholders.

Pomeroy Mayor Don Anderson said “People working together for a common goal is always a good thing.”

