



For Immediate Release

Jill Atherton
Vice President for Economic Development
336-728-9206 • atherton@winstonsalem.com

Winston-Salem Chamber Launches New Business Accelerator Series for 2011

Winston-Salem, NC (December 29, 2010) – The Winston-Salem Chamber has created a new Business Accelerator Series to help business owners, executives, and managers significantly grow and improve their businesses. The 2011 Business Accelerator Series, sponsored by First Tennessee, consists of ten monthly seminars taught by local college and university professors and encompasses the Chamber's small business wisdom into a single package. Using the expertise of professors from Forsyth Tech, Salem College, Wake Forest University, and Winston-Salem State University, each program will provide in-depth information relevant to small and mid-sized business owners.

"The idea for the Business Accelerator Series came from our discussions with literally hundreds of local businesses," Jill Atherton, Chamber vice president for economic development, explained. "Through our daily interactions with our 1,800 members, we know about the latest trends and business needs, and our members have told us they wanted more expert insights and information to grow their businesses. "Additionally, national studies show that businesses that plan for growth and anticipate challenges have higher rates of success than those that don't. But business owners and managers find it difficult to make the time to do that and they don't know where to turn for insights and information that apply to their businesses."

Chamber economic development staff worked with college and university professors who have hands-on experience consulting with local businesses and who understand how to effectively teach adults to develop the program. "The 10 programs encompass all of the major issues business owners should address to succeed in today's highly competitive environment," Atherton said.

The first seminar in the series, to be held January 19, will be presented by Stan Mandell, executive professor and director of the Center for Entrepreneurship at Wake Forest University, and focuses on creating an effective business plan. The session will address market planning, financial planning, and strategic planning and will require pre-reading, much like university seminars.

"Program participants will be examining how to learn more about their target markets and secure a greater portion of that market, how to budget and plan projected cash flows, and how to achieve a sustainable competitive advantage over the competition," Mandell explained. "We will incorporate real-world experiences with classroom learning to be sure the participants can take what they learn and apply it to their businesses."

February's session will be an in-depth look at financial management and cash flow and will be taught by _____. Its focus areas will include _____. Other topics in the series include legal issues, human resources, managing effectively, negotiations, time and stress management, marketing, government contracting, and customer service.



"A business owner who completes the series will be much better prepared to grow as the economy begins to pick up during 2011," said Gayle Anderson, president and CEO of the Chamber. "The Chamber is an information resource for the business community, this program combines much of our knowledge with the outstanding faculty from our colleges and universities to provide cost-effective training not available elsewhere in the community."

About the Chamber

The Winston-Salem Chamber of Commerce is the destination for businesses and organizations of all sizes seeking insights, ideas, and initiatives that can help them be strong, healthy, and prosperous. Representing nearly 1,800 area businesses, the Chamber provides business development assistance, programming and events, and advocacy to support local businesses and improve our economy. Through proactive engagement with the business community, intelligent and clear analysis of the business environment, and a commitment to comprehensive economic development, the Chamber is dedicated to enhancing our community's future.