



Ohio State University



Noble County Community Development

UPDATE

Volume 5, Issue 4

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December
2004

EDITOR'S RAMBLINGS

With the holiday season approaching, the staff of OSU Extension, Noble Co., wishes the best to all of you. Hopefully you have had a productive and prosperous 2004 and will continue to do so for the coming year. Our office has had a successful year in regards to securing new grant funds for the county, details of which will be found in this edition of the newsletter.

Best Regards,

Mike Lloyd
Extension Educator
Community Development



UPCOMING EVENTS

Ohio Basic Economic Development Course, March 2-3 (Columbus) and April 6-7 (Worthington), Contact Ohio Economic Development Association at 614-221-1900, fax 614-221-1989, e-mail OEDA@AssnOffices.com

Washington State Community College will be sponsoring more than 25 various computer classes in January, February and March including classes in Excel, Word, QuickBooks and a variety of other software. Contact WSCC at 740-568-1918

The Learning Center East located in Belle Valley will be having classes from January until June in the following categories: Basic Computer, Word, Internet, E-mail, Publisher, Excel, & PowerPoint. To get more information or register for any of these classes, please call 740-732-2381

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REVOLVING LOAN FUND UP & RUNNING



The Extension Community Development Program was successful in 2004 in securing two new grants for business development in the county.

As reported in the September issue of the newsletter, Noble Co. received a \$60,000 grant from the USDA/Rural Development office Rural Business Enterprise Grant (RBEG) program. These funds are now available to make loans to new or existing small businesses in Noble Co.

Loans under the RBEG program can range up to \$15,000, but are designed to average \$5,000 per business. Loans are for those who are unable to secure a commercial loan or unable to secure a commercial loan at market rates. Loans under this program will be available for fixed assets, including land; buildings; machinery and equipment, inventory, vehicles for business use; and working capital. Loans cannot be made to refinance existing debt; speculative ventures; or training costs.

Loans will be made available with an interest rate of 50% of prime rate with a floor of 2%. Term for loans under the RBEG program can go up to 10 years on fixed assets, but will average somewhat less than that. There is a strong support program to this loan program which will include assistance from the local Small Business Development Center and from the Extension development office.

Loans will be reviewed by a locally formed loan review committee who will make recommendations concerning the funding of the loan to the county commissioners.

Applications for the RBEG loan are currently available from the Extension office or can be obtained on line at <http://noble.osu.edu>. Go to the community development page on this web site.

In November we received notification that the county will also be approved for a \$40,000 CDBG Micro Loan grant from the Ohio Department of Development

This program will provide additional funds for small business loans and will operate under similar rules and regulations as the RBEG program. The CDBG program will contain substantial funds for training. Assisting in this program will be the Small Business Development Center in Marietta and GMN Tri-County Community Action Commission.

The CDBG funds should be up and running around the first of the year.

If you have any questions concerning these loan programs or are interested in applying, please contact Mike Lloyd at 740-732-5681.



NOBLE COUNTY COMMUNITY FUND

Since April of 2004, a dedicated group of individuals have been working to gauge interest in and ability of the community to create a community fund/foundation for Noble County. Working with the Foundation for Appalachian Ohio, the community was introduced to the “Philanthropy Index” a tool used successfully in many southern states to work with communities where a local charitable foundation did not exist.

Following a series of meetings through the summer and fall the committee has agreed to proceed in the creation of the “Noble County Community Fund” to provide a tool to allow individuals or businesses to make tax advantaged donations for charitable use in Noble County. This new foundation should be up and running in early 2005.

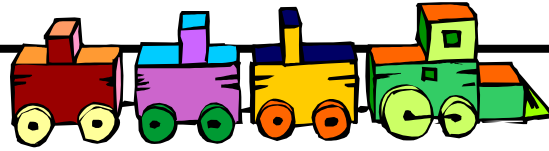
The fund will operate as an affiliate of the Marietta Community Foundation. The affiliate relationship will save the Noble County Community Fund substantial operating and reporting costs and will take advantage of the full time professional staff available at the Marietta Community Foundation.

Individuals will have a variety of options for gifts including unrestricted funds—funds that can be used for the most pressing community needs as determined by the local board of directors—and a variety of restricted funds including donor advised funds, field of interest funds, and a variety of designated funds.

The Noble County Community Fund has been awarded a \$3,000 challenge grant from the Foundation for Appalachian Ohio to kick off the process. The challenge aspect of the grant is that Noble County needs to provide a one-to-one match for the Foundation for Appalachian Ohio funds.

For additional information on the program contact Mike Lloyd at 732-5681.

CLEAN OHIO FUNDS



In mid-November, the Controlling Board of the Ohio Legislature approved approximately \$119,000 for a phase two environmental study of the 20+ acre Belle Valley site owned by the Noble County Chamber of Commerce.

This marks the second grant provided by the state to help develop this site. An earlier grant of nearly \$6,000 funded a Phase I study of the site in 2003. A Phase I study combines a visual inspection of the site with a review of existing documents to determine any areas that contamination may exist.

Based on the findings of the Phase I grant, the Noble Township Trustees applied for a Phase II grant to perform soil and water tests of the site in areas where contamination is most likely to exist. The funds awarded will provide first for a basic level of tests and should these initial tests indicate possible areas of contamination, additional funds are built into the grant to proceed with additional testing at the site.

It is hoped that the result of the Phase II show that contamination is non-existing or if it does exist, it exists at such small levels of concentration to make any cleanup unnecessary. If the Phase II reveals the need for any clean-up of the site, the community then has the opportunity to apply for Phase III funding to assist in the clean-up

Work on the Phase II study should begin in early 2005 and be completed by mid-year.

LEADERSHIP NOBLE



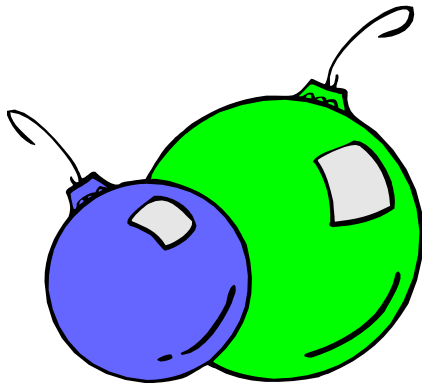
Recruiting is underway for the ninth Leadership Noble class that will begin with an overnight retreat on February 18-19, 2005 in Cambridge. Day long classes will follow on March 17, April 21, May 19, June 16, August 18, and Sept. 15.

Over 100 individuals have now completed Leadership Noble. Participants typically meet for a classroom morning session usually centering on aspects of leadership, team-building, and self improvement. The afternoon sessions are developed by teams of Leadership Noble participants. These afternoon sessions often involve tours and are focused on assigned topics such as education, business & industry, or agriculture.

Applications will be accepted until early January and are available from the Extension office. Cost to participate in the program is \$125 and is often covered by the participant's employer. We do have a limited number of scholarships available to those interested in participating in the program who may lack a sponsor or the ability to self-finance.

This year we conducted a survey of the pre-2004 graduates of the program. Fifty nine percent of the respondents felt that the program had a moderate to large effect in creating a positive belief in the future of Noble County. Forty one percent indicated that the program had improved their personal self confidence. Thirty percent believed that Leadership Noble had increased their trust in local elected leaders, while thirty eight percent felt the program increased their trust in state and federal elected leaders. Thirty one percent indicated that the program had increased the graduate's desire to participate in the political process, while fifty six percent indicated the program had increased their desire to participate in the local civic process, and twenty nine percent of the graduates said that the program had increased their desire to participate in religious activities.

Twenty two of twenty seven survey respondents indicated activities that they had become involved in the community that they had not been involved with before participating in the Leadership Noble program. Fifty nine percent of the graduates indicated that their Leadership Noble experience had been very positive.



This newsletter and other services provided by the Noble County Office of Ohio State University Extension are made possible due to a tax levy supported by Noble County Voters. The levy will supply support through 2007.



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