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Sheboygan County Economic Development Corporation: Entrepreneurship and workforce intrinsically linked

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NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

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Entrepreneurship and Workforce Intrinsically Linked

By Ray York**,** Business Counselor for the Sheboygan County Economic Development Corporation (SCEDC) and the Small Business Development Center (SBDC) at UW-Green Bay

Sheboygan County, WI – According to the Federal Reserve Bank of Kansas City, a function of economic development is bringing jobs to people; most economic development organizations focus on 'workforce development,' which is about

bringing people to jobs. The Sheboygan County Economic Development Corporation (SCEDC) has this focus of 'workforce development' but also believes that entrepreneurship development is intrinsically linked to our workforce needs in Sheboygan County. One of the SCEDC's goals is to work with educational institutions and other nonprofit organizations to create entrepreneurial classes and programming. Expanding entrepreneurship education is essential to addressing our continuously changing workforce needs.

Why are entrepreneurship education and workforce development linked? When entrepreneurship principles are taught, employers get a more adaptable workforce, which is better equipped to deal with a multitude of environments, has better analytic and problem-solving skills, creative and design ability, social awareness, and collaborative communication. "When we see a student with an entrepreneurial education background, we get very interested," said a local college relations recruiter. "These students tend to be years ahead of their peers."

World Learning Inc states that 25% of global youth aged 15-29 are not in school, employed, or in training. In many places, adults are out of work simply because their skills do not match the available opportunities. World Learning Inc believes that entrepreneurship programs build a more promising future by training youth and adults in the skills essential in the modern workplace, encouraging them to respond constructively to community needs and opportunities, and ultimately helping them find or create meaningful work.

Sheboygan County offers a variety of learning experiences focused on entrepreneurship principles. The SCEDC works with the Small Business Development Center (SBDC) at UW-Green Bay to help facilitate individual entrepreneurship and business counseling. The SBDC regularly teaches a business writing class called Entrepreneurial Training Program (ETP). Entrepreneurship education is taught in our postsecondary schools as well, such as Lakeland University and Lakeshore Technical College. Junior Achievement also has a program in our local schools that teaches 4th graders basic entrepreneurship.

According to a Gallup survey, organized by Junior Achievement, 96% of employees feel it is important for the American workforce to become more entrepreneurial in order to keep America competitive in the global market. Also, 46% of employees and 41% of hiring professionals believe the best place to learn entrepreneurship is in grades K-12, surpassing all other options.

Sheboygan County's school districts understand the workforce needs of the future. Sheboygan Area School District (SASD) has recognized that entrepreneurship helps build an adaptable workforce and is working to implement an innovative program called INCubatoredu. "This program offers students an authentic entrepreneurship experience," said Graig Stone, SASD department chair and business education and information technology teacher. "INCubatoredu is a year-long program where students create and fully develop their own product or service. Volunteer experts serve as coaches and mentors helping student teams through the processes of developing hypotheses about a business concept, testing those hypotheses, adapting, and continually learning and improving." This experimentation is combined with foundational marketing and finance content and teaches students the adaptability and communications skills needed in the workforce today.

With the SCEDC, Sheboygan County schools, and Sheboygan County employers working together on entrepreneurial and workforce development, we will be able to meet our fast-changing workforce needs in Sheboygan County and drive more success in our communities!

For more information about SCEDC entrepreneurial services please email at info@SheboyganCountyEDC.com or call (920)452-2479.

For more information about, donating to, or coaching/mentoring opportunities for, the INCubatoredu program at SASD please email Jason Duff, Academic and Career Planning Coordinator, at jduff@sasd.net or call (920)459-6493.

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