



August 2, 2009

Main Street hosts business marketing workshop

PORTLAND - Over 40 business owners and entrepreneurs from across the region filled the second floor of Portland City Hall on July 21 to attend the Michigan Small Business and Technology Development Center's (MI-SBTDC) workshop entitled "Marketing Your Business."

This workshop is the first in a summer series being presented by the Economic Revitalization Committee of the Portland Main Street program.

The workshop, led by MI-SBTDC Senior Business Consultant Gordon Ferguson, discussed the critical need for developing an effective marketing strategy by small business owners.

Ferguson encouraged the audience of business owners and entrepreneurs to understand who their customers are, why they choose a store in which to shop, and the importance of developing a sound market analysis and an effective marketing plan.

Ferguson stated that business owners need to know not only their own products and services, but also need to know those of their competitors as well in order to succeed.

"Business owners have to do their research and must understand their marketplace," said Ferguson. "Owners need to know who is likely to buy products from them and why.

Once business owners know this, then they should develop a marketing strategy that builds on their strengths and embraces their competitive advantages within the marketplace."

Ferguson also discussed various types of promotion and advertising, including the use of print advertising, radio advertising, business Web sites, and the use of social media tools such as "Facebook" and "Myspace."

"The Portland Main Street program was excited to develop this partnership with the MI-SBTDC," said Portland Main Street manager Patrick Reagan.

"Though many people already utilize the MI-SBTDC as a great business resource, some business owners and entrepreneurs don't take full advantage of their services or even know what they do. That is why the Economic Revitalization Committee took full advantage of this opportunity to bring them to downtown Portland - to help our businesses succeed."

The Portland Main Street program will be hosting two more free workshops in conjunction with the MI-SBTDC.

The next presentation - "How to Finance Your Business" - is scheduled for Tuesday, Aug. 18, at Portland City Hall from 6 to 8 p.m. This workshop will discuss the various funding sources available to businesses and will also provide an overview of what's required of businesses and entrepreneurs in order to gain funding. The workshop will be led by Tom Donaldson, the Regional Director for the MI-SBTDC.

Anyone interested in attending this session can register by going to the MI-SBTDC Web site at <http://www.misbtcd.net/workshop.aspx?ekey=80290041> or by calling the MI-SBTDC at (517) 483-1921. For more information, contact the Portland Main Street program at (517) 647-5027.

The goal of the Portland Main Street program is to actively revitalize Portland's vibrant, charming, and unique downtown into a gathering place-one that uses broad-based community support to (1) provide opportunities to entrepreneurs; (2) sustain a strong economic foundation for the region; and (3) safeguard history, tradition, and a sense of community for residents and visitors.

For more information on how you can be part of this mission, visit the Portland Main Street Web site at www.portlandmainstreet.org.

- From Portland Main Street office
