



## Graduate Spotlight: Bobby Thompson The Help Desk llc

My name is Bobby Thompson and I'm the owner of a new business in Emporia, KS named The Help Desk, a small "mom and pop" style computer repair/retail store. I started my business in early May 2008 after dreaming and casually planning for many years. Starting a business was something I always wanted to do, but the idea seemed too overwhelming when thinking about all the details involved. My motivation would always die off as soon as I began thinking about leasing a building, tax liability and the idea of having to deal with creditors.

In early January of 2008 a family member mentioned there was a class beginning at the Flint Hills Technical College. The class was called START YOUR OWN BUSINESS. I hesitantly signed up at the last minute not knowing what to expect. What I discovered was a group of instructors highly motivated and committed to helping people like me take an idea and transform it into an action plan. The learning material was very helpful, but it was the group interaction that made my starting a business become a reality. Through the class we met representatives from every sector related to starting a new business. Suddenly it wasn't so intimidating to think of going to speak with an attorney, an accountant or (gasp) a bank officer. The business plan came together slowly throughout the class and suddenly my thought process changed from "I have a crazy idea" to "Why have I not already started this business?"

I definitely owe a great deal of thanks and gratitude to Flint Hills Technical College, Emporia Main Street Association and the Small Business Development Center for partnering to offer the program and to Mary Helmer, Kim Redeker and Lisa Brumbaugh for teaching the class. I would encourage anyone to take this class even if you are still in the dream stage of planning your own business.

Thank you,  
Bobby Thompson  
Owner

## Graduate Spotlight: Rick Robidou Flint Hills Laser Expressions LLC



Rick Robidou 2007 graduate and owner-operator of Flint Hills Laser Expressions LLC.®

### *Class, Hard Work & Community Support Key to Success*

"I truly appreciate the FHTC Start Your Own Business class and still use the class materials," stated Rick Robidou, owner and operator of Flint Hills Laser Expressions. Robidou is a graduate of the inaugural Start You Own Business Class, completed in spring 2007. This multi-session course hosted by Flint Hills Technical College, Emporia Main Street and the Small Business Development Center (SBDC) helped Rick and his wife kick off in July a multi-faceted engraving business that is expanding far beyond the couple's original business plan. "We originally looked at simple pet stone engraving but have grown into multiple engraving areas since our July

kick-off. Today we engrave glass, photos, awards, plexiglass and woodcarvings."

Now only four months into their new business, the Robidou family is selling products locally and regionally through such destination businesses as Madelynn's, Bluestem Farm and Ranch and direct to customers at their Americus office.

Rick credits his success to hard work, seeing opportunity throughout his career and taking that leap of faith and enrolling in the class. Rick cited several times the importance of the expert contacts he made and the help he received from instructors Kim Redeker & Mary Helmer, as well as guest expert local SBDC director Lisa Brumbaugh.



## BUSINESS & INDUSTRY TRAINING CENTER ENTREPRENEUR PROGRAM

# STARTING YOUR OWN BUSINESS COURSE

- 8-SESSION ENTREPRENEUR TRAINING PROGRAM

### Program Coordinators

- Emporia Main Street
- Flint Hills Technical College
- KS Small Business Development Center @ ESU

Graduates of this course are eligible to apply for Main Street, Trusler and Network Kansas 0% interest loans. Graduates starting a business will receive a free one year membership to Emporia Main Street.

### COURSE DETAILS

## (BUS 251) START YOUR OWN BUSINESS

Location: FHTC Main Campus  
February 26 - April 23, 2009

Thursdays

6:00 PM ~ 9:00 PM

(2 CREDIT CLASS)

TUITION & FEES \$188

(TEXTBOOK PURCHASED SEPARATELY)

ENROLL BY CALLING (620) 341-1392

OR EMAIL ABECKER@FHTC.EDU

### Get the fundamentals to start your own business!

You have mastered a skill or have a product you want to sell to the community. Now you need the business skills to start and grow a business.

Consider this course, START YOUR OWN BUSINESS (SYOB) to get you started. At the B&I Training Center (B&I), we believe in a three-level approach to making you a successful business owner: master a skill, get the education you need to run a business, and expand your business through the use of the many tools and resources available in our region.

For this course, we have partnered with the Emporia Main Street Organization and the ESU Small Business Development Center to offer a comprehensive training program for potential and current small business owners who bring talent and opportunity to our business community.

Our goal is to show you the resources and knowledge to make you successful. Your training and support only begins with this course. Graduates of SYOB will be eligible to apply for several financial opportunities to make starting a business more affordable and successful. Keep reading this brochure to learn more.



2008 Graduate Bobby Thompson  
Owner and operator of The Help Desk

## Session Descriptions for "Start Your Own Business"

**All sessions can be attended separately for \$49. Call 620-341-1392 to make arrangements.  
The textbook may be purchased separately and is required for enrolled students.**

### Deciding on a Business Plan

This course gives an overview of the business selection process. Students will work through a step-by-step approach to selecting a business that matches their strengths and interests.

### The Business Plan

Students will learn the basics of the business plan format, steps to make your business plan better and an overview of the necessary factors for developing a business plan.

### Market Research

Your business will not succeed just because you want it to succeed. Determining if there is a market for your products or services is the most critical time of planning. Once you decide on your product or service, you must analyze your market; a process involving interviewing competitors, suppliers and new customers.

However, before you begin researching your market, you should take a brief, but close, look at your product or service from an objective standpoint. Market research is extremely beneficial, the information gathered can increase your profit potential.

### Getting Organized

This session will spell out your options for deciding the type of business that is right for you. Should you go into business alone or with a partner? What type of business organization should be used, and how do you select professional advisors?

### Licenses, Permits & Business Names

Choosing a suitable name for your business and finding out what license and permits you may require are daunting tasks. Learn about what you need to do locally, at the state level, and federally to get your permits and name registered.

### Insurance

This course will explain in simple terms the various forms of insurance you will need and explain the importance of each of them.

### Location & Leasing

Your great business can be crippled by a poor location or negotiated lease. Learn how to create your own site model and the important aspects of a lease agreement.

### Accounting and Cash Flow

Before you start your business, you will need to learn how to keep score (basic accounting) and how to maintain cash flow. This session explains both processes in simple terms.

### How to Finance a Business

You will learn how to locate, negotiate and maintain sources of money to get you started and help you expand your business. Topics include identifying how much you need, loans versus investments, funding sources, and what to do after you receive your financing.

### Marketing and Marketing Plans

E-commerce is the fastest growing segment of our economy. It allows even the smallest business to reach a global audience with proper products and message at a minimum cost. This class will focus on the core basics of how and why to setup an e-commerce web site.

### Introduction to Buying a Business or Franchise

Students will learn how to make objective decisions when considering the purchase of a business or franchise--and how to evaluate how much you should pay.

### Employee Relations and Employment Law

Learn where to get the basic requirements for being an employer of others. Discover resources to help you hire, manage, retain and develop loyal employees.

### Daily Operations and Business Processes

Understanding the daily business requirements can be overwhelming. Learn what basic steps are expected daily when running a business.

### Local Resources & Civic Opportunities

Learn how to integrate your business and your plan with local resources, including the Main Street program, the Chamber of Commerce, and the KS Small Business Development Center.



Amy Becker Graduate 2008  
Owner & Operator

## Meet Your Instructors



Mary Helmer  
Co-Instructor  
Assistant State Coordinator for Kansas  
Main Street Programs  
KS Department of Commerce

Mary served as the Emporia Main Street Executive Director for 9 1/2 years before accepting the Assistant State Coordinator position with Kansas Main Street. Mary has extensive experience with public relations, which includes working with all media outlets, one-on-one communication with business owners and presentations to City, County and State officials. Mary has planned and implemented several community events and activities and serves on several community boards. Mary is a graduate of Emporia State University and serves on the Kansas Downtown Development Association Board of Directors. She is a 2004 graduate of Leadership Kansas and was selected as the Main Street Executive Director of the Year in 2004. Emporia has been recognized as a National Main Street Community for several years and was awarded the Great American Main Street Award, the first ever in Kansas, from the National Main Street Center and the National Trust for Historic Preservation in 2005.

Lisa Brumbaugh Co-Instructor  
Director  
The KS Small Business Development  
Center  
@ Emporia State University



The KSBDC at ESU is one of eight regional centers in Kansas dedicated to increasing economic prosperity in Kansas by helping entrepreneurs and small businesses. Director Lisa Brumbaugh is an integral part of this course and can assist your business with the following services:

- Business plan assistance
- Financial projection Development
- Cash flow analysis
- Marketing plan development
- Human resources
- Resources of capital and financing
- Inventory control procedures
- Product cost analysis and pricing
- Advertising strategies
- Sales techniques
- and much more...

**ash llc**  
Property Investment  
& Management

Owner & Founder  
Amy Harmon  
Graduate 2007



Kim Redeker  
Co-Instructor

Owner and Founder  
The Sweet Granada  
Emporia, Kansas

Kim Redeker and her mother Toni Bowling co-own The Sweet Granada, a specialty sweets shop featuring handmade gourmet chocolates as well as other confections and gifts. Kim is a graduate of the University of Kansas School of Journalism and before landing her "dream job" with her own chocolate business, worked as a resource development professional with extensive experience in promotions, new product development and fundraising. She is an active community volunteer and enjoys facilitating leadership development opportunities for local groups and organizations.

The Sweet Granada is certainly a family affair. Kim's husband, Steve, is the bookkeeper, while their children, Emmy (age 14) and Joe (age 11), love to hang out at the shop every chance they get. Emmy waits on customers while Joe is a real pro at handing out fudge samples.