



February 05, 2018

In Today's Weekly Connection:

- ✦ **[Spotlight On Success](#) – Cherokee Asphalt Solutions**
- ✦ **[SBDC's In The News](#) – Illinois SBDCs at SVCC and DACC**
- ✦ **[Maximizing Neoserra](#) – Uploading Documents**
- ✦ **[Valued Resources](#) – SnapRetail's Services**
- ✦ **[Network News & Moves](#) – Rita Haake - Illinois PTAC at the College of DuPage**
- ✦ **[Events](#) - Entrepreneurship Training Program cohort 11- Ultimate Guide to Building a Website**
- ✦ **[Blogs](#) – America's SBDC - fitsmallbusiness**
- ✦ **[Announcements](#) – America's SBDC– SBDC Day 2018 - National Women's History Month**

[Spotlight on Success –Cherokee Asphalt Solutions](#)

CHEROKEE ASPHALT SOLUTIONS LLC

100 North Riverside Plaza, Suite 1670 Chicago, IL 60606 (630) 926-1700 www.cas-asphalt.com

Cherokee Asphalt Solutions LLC (CAS) is a Native American owned, Chicago-based company that provides asphalt pavement preservation, maintenance and installation solutions for airports, roadways and parking lots. When Andrew Johnson, president of CAS, first started working with the Illinois Procurement Technical Assistance Center at the College of DuPage, his focus was on obtaining an MBE or 8(a) certification. He assumed that this would be part of a long road to winning business and achieving profitability. However, in less than a year and with guidance from Rita Haake and Amber Gardner, he was able to secure multiple federal contracts.

Johnson stated that Rita's depth of knowledge and understanding of government contracting was instrumental in the wins. She was able to give him a personalized overview of government contracting basics and opportunities. In addition, Haake provided advice regarding marketing efforts to ensure CAS was presented in the most positive manner.

Andrew applied this information and it wasn't long before he was requesting solicitation reviews and clarification for specific FAR (Federal Acquisition Regulation) clauses related to the different contracts he was bidding on. During this process, certification became less of a priority because numerous active opportunities were discovered. It also became apparent that contracts can be won without having a certification.

Even with the initial success of the company, Rita has followed up with Andrew to help him pursue DBE certifications that will allow the company to be eligible for even more opportunities. The importance of this became even more apparent after she received a bid notification from a large

prime looking for certified DBEs (Disadvantaged Business Enterprises) subcontractors to work at our major airport, O'Hare Airport.

Andrew stated "the success of Cherokee Asphalt Solutions is due to the support, advice, assistance and guidance of PTACs at the College of DuPage, Rita Haake and Amber Gardner. Their knowledge and professionalism accelerated my projection for profitability and established the foundation for a successful, growing company".

You can find more information about CAS at their home page - <http://www.cas-asphalt.com> [Back to top](#)

SBDC's In The News – Illinois SBDCs at SVCC and DACC **Small business services extended to Rochelle**



ROCHELLE — The Rochelle Area Chamber of Commerce Monday announced a new partnership with [Sauk Valley Community College Small Business Development Center](#) in Dixon, to extend its services to businesses in Rochelle and Ogle County.

A temporary office has been set up at the Rochelle Municipal Utilities (RMU) Customer Service Building, 333 Lincoln Highway, in downtown Rochelle. Clients can meet with SBDC representatives by appointment. The Sauk Valley SBDC-Rochelle began serving clients on Jan. 1 because of the financial support of area stakeholders. The City of Rochelle, RMU, Greater Rochelle Economic Development Corporation, Central Bank Illinois, Holcomb Bank, Stillman Bank and First State Bank committed funds to the project. The State of Illinois will match \$10,000 raised locally, adding additional resources. The chamber coordinated the fundraising efforts... [\[Read more\]](#)

DACC plans black business expo and panel

Members of the Diversity Team at Danville Area Community College have announced plans to host a Black Business Expo in Bremer Center, Wednesday, February 7, 2018, from 9-11 am. The event will combine a Panel Discussion about starting and running a minority-owned small business from 9-10 am in the Bremer Theater with a Business Expo in the Bremer Lobby from 10-11 am.

The panel discussion, hosted by Tinisha Shade-Spain from Vermilion Advantage, will feature local business owners Tricia Teague, Think Like an Entrepreneur and Progressive Black News; Tameka Hall, Lifted Up Balloons; Tabatha Forrest, Neveahh Beauty & Boutique; Terri Davis, Total Life Changes; Robert Boyd, State Farm Insurance; Leland Groves, Courtesy Ford Lincoln; and Tim Leek, Leek & Sons Funeral Homes.

In addition to the panelists' businesses, the Business Expo will feature Briana Vaughn, Briana's Creations; Terry Gouard, A+ Cutz; Martha Reeves-Rose, Perfect Reflections; and Bud Gouard, Bud's BBQ.

Carol Nichols, Director of the [Illinois Small Business Development Center at DACC](#) will be on hand to provide information and assistance to potential and existing small business owners. The SBDC offers one-on-one counseling and training sessions for anyone interested in starting or growing a small business.

For more information about the Black Business Expo, please contact Lara Conklin, Ex. Director of College Relations, at 217-443-8798.

[Back to top](#)

Maximizing Neoserra – Uploading Documents

The Illinois SBDC Lead Office asks that SBDC's go as paperless as possible. The Neoserra tip below explains how to upload and manage documents in the CRM.

By default, every Neoserra database is provided with 500MB of attached document storage capacity. Additional storage may be purchased. In this FAQ, we'll discuss how to upload documents, how to edit previously uploaded documents, and how database administrators can manage and allocate this feature.

Find the FAQ at: <https://support.outreachsystems.com/resources/help/neoserra/faq.jsp?id=n51> [Back to top](#)
[Back to top](#)

Valued Resources – SnapRetail's Services

SnapRetail's services are all about bringing brick-and-mortar small businesses into the digital world, through sleek websites, easy-to-manage email campaigns and social media scheduling tools.



SnapRetail also bridges the gap between the offline and online with its Click & Mortar blog.

There, you can read why your business's website [matters just as much as the layout of your store](#), or how [online coupons](#) can bring customers into your store. Read on at www.snapretail.com/blog.

[Back to top](#)

Network News and Moves – Rita Haake - Illinois PTAC at the College of DuPage

It is with great pleasure that we announce our very own Rita Haake, Director of the Illinois PTAC at the College of DuPage has received her Certified Procurement Professional (CPP) certification through the Association of Procurement Technical Assistance Centers (APTAC).

Rita is regarded as the Senior Procurement Specialist in Illinois. Having enjoyed the Level 3 - Certified Contracting Assistance Specialist designation for many years, Rita is now Illinois' first CPP. Her clients love her and have benefited greatly from her experience, knowledge and skills.

Rita said this about her CPP designation: *"For me the pathway to certification was natural and rather simplistic – loved my job and was always wanting to learn more so any professional development I received was paramount. Over 20 years ago I made a promise to myself to become an expert in procurement and receiving this external and independent validation of Certified Procurement Professional (CPP) means I have met the promise and reached my goal."*

Please join us in congratulating Rita on this achievement!!

[Back to top](#)

Area Business 'Incubators' Help Budding Entrepreneurs

The EIGERlab business development space, located in the Northern Illinois University campus in Rockford.



Whether it's Steve Jobs building a computer in his garage or Hector Boyardee cooking pasta at the Plaza Hotel, many American brands and businesses start from humble origins. Current start-ups seek to replicate that success, but they don't do it alone. In this Friday Forum, WNIJ's Chase Cavanaugh discusses the groups that help northern Illinois small businesses get started.

Entrepreneurship is a promising but difficult job. People

who believe they have a great idea for a product or service need to make sure there's a market for it and have a solid business plan. Fortunately, northern Illinois businesses can get help from various incubators.

One of the first stops for many startups is a Small Business Development Center, or SBDC. These are spread throughout Illinois and are distinct for their multiple levels of support. David Buchen directs the [one at Sauk Valley Community College](#).

"Federal funding from the Federal Small Business Administration, it's funding from the State of Illinois Department of Commerce, and then the third partner has to be at least a host, which the college is, and then there's local match money," he said. "We are very unique here because we have over nine providers in the match area."

Those funders include five banks, three communities, and what soon will be three counties. Buchen says the money allows the SBDC to assist startups at no cost. One way it does so is by vetting business plans before an entrepreneur applies for a loan.

"We don't do it for them," he said. "We'll review it. We'll give them ideas for what they need to change, what they need to add. We'll find additional information that they might not be able to get ... and we'll help them get ready to go to the bank."

SBDCs also can refer entrepreneurs to accountants, attorneys and other professionals with specific areas of expertise. Buchen says their advice may help fledgling companies avoid costly, short-term shortcuts... [\[Read more\]](#)

[Back to top](#)

Events - Entrepreneurship Training Program cohort 11- Ultimate Guide to Building a Website



The Entrepreneurship Training Program cohort 11 will start on March 6, 2018 and meet on Tuesday evenings from 6:00-9:00pm for 15 consecutive weeks until June 12, 2018, with a commencement ceremony the following week June 19, 2018. Applications for cohort number 11 are now being taken through February 13, 2018 at 12:00 noon. The information below explains the application process. Please pay special attention to the dates and instructions in the narrative below to make sure you understand the procedure and are able to meet the deadlines and other time requirements for the class. Applications are only accepted electronically so click on the [link](#) to complete Phase 1 of the application and submit your information. If the participants don't have access to a computer to submit your application, there will be an information session (optional to attend but recommended) on February 6 at 5:00 at 4950 W. Thomas St. in Chicago, where potential applicants can attend to meet relevant staff, ask any questions, and if necessary, complete the application. For any other questions or concerns, contact etp@[bethelnewlife.org](mailto:etp@bethelnewlife.org), or call 773-413-3344.

[Get detailed instructions here.](#)

[Back to top](#)

Surefire Local Presents a Webinar: The Home Contractor's Ultimate Guide to Building a Website

Discover How to Win More Referral-Quality Leads Within Your Service Radius - How the top businesses are building websites that impress potential customers and generate more leads. Learn actionable steps to make your website more effective at attracting and converting the right leads. You'll learn:

- How web page performance influences success and new customer acquisition
- Best practices for building a website that ranks high in online search
- Mobile vs. Desktop and how to optimize your site for each
- Tools for reviewing and measuring performance

DATE: TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 13, 2018
TIME: 3:00 PM CST

[Register Here](#)

[Back to top](#)

Blogs - America's SBDC - fitsmallbusiness

10 Ways to Get Money for Your Business



Business ideas come easy to some, but what happens when you have a good idea but no money to get started? Countless entrepreneurs have run into funding challenges when looking to found and build a new business. Here are ten ideas to get you started when looking to get money for your business.

1. Personal Savings

The first place to look for capital when starting a new business is your own bank account. If you are smart with your personal finances and keep good habits, you should have an emergency fund and retirement savings, but you should avoid tapping into those whenever possible.

Instead, try to draw on your own cash and stretch it as far as possible. "Bootstrapping" is a term commonly used to describe starting a business in such a manner. [Succeeding in a bootstrapped business](#) generally requires you to be very thrifty and tight with the budget, but at the end you could come out as the sole owner of a debt free, successful business. That's the best possible scenario for you as a new business founder.

2. Credit Cards

Tread with caution if you want to tap into your credit cards for your business. Credit cards are an easy way to get fast access to cash for your business, but that cash comes with a big price tag. The current credit card average interest rate is 14.87 percent, according to [this household credit card debt survey](#). That expensive credit card interest adds up very fast when you are starting a new business and can't pay the balances off right away... [\[Read more\]](#)

[Back to top](#)

SBA Loan Calculator: Payments, Rates & Qualifications



A loan backed by the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) can be the least expensive way to get capital for many small businesses. They typically offer small businesses lower interest rates and longer terms than other financing options. Our SBA loan calculator will help you see just how affordable your SBA loan can be.

Our recommended SBA loan provider is [SmartBiz](#). They can prequalify you in under 5 minutes with no impact on your credit score. Plus, they have the fastest turnaround time of any SBA loan provider we know, cutting the normal loan period of 90 – 120 days down to just 30 days. [Click here à To apply for SBA SmartBiz loan](#)
[Back to top](#)

Announcements – America's SBDC Final Call – SBDC Day 2018 - National Women's History Month

Annual Conference – Final Call for Presentations



Just a friendly reminder: 4 days left to submit the papers - [LINK](#) is open until 09 February 2018.

[Back to top](#)

America's #SBDC Day 2018



The 2018 SBDC Day promotional toolkit is here! Download and use the resources to promote America's SBDC Day, March 21st, 2018.

- SBDC Day Overview
- Webinars
- Logos
- Videos (*new video coming soon*)
- Social Media Banner & Header Graphics
- Video from America's SBDC Board Chairman
- Video Script Template
- Social Media Posts & Graphics
- Thunderclap Campaign & Guide
- Constant Contact Email Templates (and sign-up has re-opened!)
- Meter board artwork (print ready)
- National Impact Brochure
- National Impact Infographic
- Article/Blog
- Press Release
- Letterhead
- Poster (*coming soon*)
- Ambassador Program & Graphics

...plus take advantage of the additional resources available on the Member's Marketing Resources webpage [here](#).

Sign-up here: [SBDC DAY TOOLKIT](#)

[Back to top](#)

National Women's History Month – Invite Success Stories From The Women Entrepreneurs

Encourage the women entrepreneurs and invite success stories from them. The stories will be acknowledged on Illinois SBDC's social media during the National Women's History Month, i.e. March 01, 2018 through March 31, 2018. **The National Women's History Project** announces the theme for National Women's History 2018:



NEVERTHELESS SHE PERSISTED: Honoring Women Who Fight All Forms of Discrimination Against Women

The 2018 National Women’s History theme presents the opportunity to honor women who have shaped America’s history and its future through their tireless commitment to ending discrimination against women and girls. Through this theme we celebrate women fighting not only against sexism, but also against the many intersecting forms of discrimination faced by American women including discrimination based on race and ethnicity, class, disability, sexual orientation, veteran status, and many other categories.

From spearheading legislation against segregation to leading the reproductive justice movement, our 2018 honorees are dismantling the structural, cultural, and legal forms of discrimination that for too long have plagued American women. [Click here for National Women’s History Project’s 2018 Honorees.](#)

[Back to top](#)



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The **WEEKLY CONNECTION** email is distributed by the Illinois SBDC and the Illinois Department of Commerce’s Office of Entrepreneurship, Innovation and Technology (OEIT) each Monday to members of the Illinois SBDC Network to provide our partners and stakeholders with updates on small business issues, opportunities and resources. Please feel free to share this email with interested partners. Please email Neeru.Singh@illinois.gov any information for future editions.

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Business Questions