



MCDEVCO NEWS

A NOTE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

MCDEVCO continues to support Marathon County with resources such as municipality connection, entrepreneurial development and GAP financing to enhance the landscape of new and expanding businesses. Here is what MCDEVCO has been up to as it relates to each of these objectives since 2022 kicked off!

On behalf of MCDEVCO, thank you for your continued support and partnership in our organization. Whether you contribute your time, funds or support by reading this newsletter...we thank YOU!

As 2022 comes to a close, we reflect on a year of progress and results and look forward to a year of growth achievements.

At MCDEVCO, we are proud of the following milestones for the year and confidently look ahead to a bright 2023 with your support and partnership!

- **Occupancy at the Entrepreneurial & Education Center (EEC):** MCDEVCO assumed the management of the EEC in January 2021. To date, MCDEVCO is happy to report an increase of 23% in occupancy, with 84% of the EEC occupied.
- **GAP Financing:** MCDEVCO has successfully disbursed over \$300,000.00 in GAP financing funds to local business start-ups and expansions. We are only getting started!
- **Entrepreneurial Education:** In 2022, MCDEVCO hosted six workshops for Marathon County Entrepreneurs, and is in the final stages of its cornerstone program: GEARS Certificate of Entrepreneurial Excellence. This 16-week course provides the fundamentals involved in starting a business. MCDEVCO's business launch rate post course graduation is 30%. This is up 20% from years past. Stay tuned for 2023 entrepreneurial education programming from MCDEVCO and reach out to info@mcdevco.org if you would like to receive regularly scheduled updates.

Thank YOU for the continued support and we look forward to providing you more exciting updates in 2023!

Kimm Weber

Kimm Weber, Executive Director



MENTOR SPOTLIGHT

Jesse Furrer, Account Executive & Managing Partner of Spectrum Insurance Group

Area of expertise: Insurance

How long have you been a MCDEVCO Mentor?

I've been participating as a MCDEVCO Mentor for the past 5 years.

What is your background and what programs do you teach at MCDEVCO to educate entrepreneurial students?

I have been a commercial insurance agent and risk manager for the past 30 years in the Central WI area. I have been presenting to GEARS students the basics of commercial insurance products as pertaining to their businesses as well as how best to protect them.

How does the entrepreneurial development program positively impact students? The community?

Starting a new business is exciting, but presents risks and challenges that new owners need to be aware of. The MCDEVCO program gives these new entrepreneurs an opportunity to engage local professionals to assist them in making their new businesses successful.

Communities benefit from home-grown businesses that survive and grow, adding new employees, goods and services to the area.

What do you enjoy most about being a Mentor for MCDEVCO?

I love the new ideas and business opportunities these groups bring. Their enthusiasm for the success of their ideas is contagious. I hope in some small way to be part of their success and to watch them become the next business leaders of this community.

What message would you give to anyone thinking about taking MCDEVCO's entrepreneurial courses?

Simply said..."Do it!" MCDEVCO is offering you an opportunity to engage community experts in many aspects of running a successful new venture. If you are serious about the success of your business, you will find something valuable in this program.

BUSINESS SPOTLIGHT

Martina Strehlow, Clay Corner Studio

How has MCDEVCO supported you in the creation or evolution of your business?

MCDEVCO helped our studio grow and become even more stable by assisting with a down payment to purchase a building. I wish I had known about MCDEVCO when we were in the infancy stages of business as they have so many great programs. I am glad they helped our business when they did.

What have been some of your greatest accomplishments as a business owner?

Our greatest accomplishment has been being able to employ so many people from the Wausau area throughout the years. It is a great honor to be able to contribute to the economy of Wausau and Central Wisconsin.

It is also rewarding to help people who come into our studio and didn't believe they had artistic talent, create beautiful art. However, my personal favorite accomplishment is that I have been able to grow this business from what a lot of people called 'a hobby' to a business that supports our family and contributes to the community.

What message would you give someone looking to start a business?

Do a lot of research. After I was in business and had paid for many things I found out there were grant programs, low interest loans, classes and lots of free business support. Slow down and ask for help!

What can we expect to see from your business in 2022 & 2023?

You will see more events added to the calendar. We will have events based on teaching along with themed events such as Harry Potter and Stranger Things. We will have more classes to teach techniques such as "throwing the wheel," canvas art, string art...and many more!



MEMBER SPOTLIGHT

Associated Bank has been a critical supporting partner to MCDEVCO. You probably remember the final 2022 Concert on the Square celebration. Well, Associated Bank was the sponsor of the evening and they provided MCDEVCO a generous \$45,000.00 check to serve as a three year grant. This grant is a critical component in allowing MCDEVCO to fund its programs and support entrepreneurs and developing businesses in need of resources. On behalf of MCDEVCO, thank you for your support!

Why are you excited to be a MCDEVCO Member?

We are excited to be a member to support the mission of helping businesses in our community be successful and reach their goals. More recently, we were excited to be able to offer a more impactful commitment to MCDEVCO. During our sponsored Concert on the Square in August of this year we were able to present MCDEVCO with a 3-year grant.

How do you see MCDEVCO positively impacting your business and the community?

The greatest impact is developing better community partnerships to help businesses succeed. The common interest, to help local businesses grow, develop, and succeed is vital to a community's ability to thrive. The more organizations that come together for common causes and collaborate to achieve, the better it is for everyone.

What is Associated Bank working on within our community?

Associated Bank is focused on 4 core values to present a well-rounded, amazing customer experience for our community members.

Relentless Focus on People: We want our customers to know how much we appreciate them and strive to fulfill that promise every day.

Winning Spirit: We will do everything we can to win for our customers and do our best to meet their needs.

Listen then Act: We listen to our customers so we can better understand their situations and requests. This allows us to offer individualized products and services to customers that are tailored to their unique financial needs.

Achieving Together: We want all of those around us to achieve success. We will do what is within our power to collaboratively work with everyone in our community. Our involvement with MCDEVCO is a great example of this.

What else would you like readers to know?

Associated Bank is fully committed to serving the consumers and businesses in the communities we serve. We are a full-service Bank that can compete on the largest scale, but we strive to do it with a community rooted feel. We want to help find ways for our communities, the people, and the businesses in them to achieve success and growth.



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