

The Baca County Economic Development Commission (BCEDC) is introducing a new and exciting opportunity for the youth of our rural areas. The Baca County Youth Entrepreneurship Fair is a program set up to encourage our rural youth to build skills and knowledge of business in a rural setting before they ever get to college. In the past, our rural communities were established with the help of entrepreneurs. They set up their businesses and catered to the needs of rural communities during the creation of rural America. Recently, a changing economy and large companies have lured many of our young people away from our rural areas leaving a holes in the community that have not been filled. The skills that our rural community members once had are diminishing. We hope that this program will begin to build business skills and interest in small and home based businesses. We, as a community, need to teach our young people that the opportunities exist for those who seek them. We hope that the Baca County Youth Entrepreneurship Fair will promote community pride, and send a message to our rural youth that we want them to return to our communities.

The Baca County Youth Entrepreneurship Fair will be held during the Spring Equinox Festival in March of 2007. The students will be required to fill out a short application, build a presentation board, and be interviewed by judges concerning their existing or potential business. The student applications are due March 1, 2007 to the address on the application. The grand prize winner will win \$1,000 dollars sponsored by Ogallala Commons. The applications are available online at: www.ogallalacommons.org (under commonwealth communities). All high school and junior high students of Baca County, Kim, and Harding County, New Mexico are eligible to enter.

The Youth Entrepreneurship Fair will be open to the public during the Equinox Festival, and the students will be showing off their businesses, many of which will be operational at that time. We encourage the public to come out and support the youth.

We would like to encourage the community to support the youth through sponsorships of cash prizes and specialty prizes. Our goal is to encourage every student who takes the time to enter a business in the entrepreneurship fair. This is not a school required event, and every student that enters the youth entrepreneurship fair is entering voluntarily. Please take time to consider sponsoring the youth entrepreneurship fair, all donations will be used for the benefit of the youth who are participating. All sponsors will be recognized. Please call Laneha Everett at 719.643.5414, email: laneha.everett@hotmail.com or nikki.johnson@campo.k12.co.us, or mail donations to: Baca County Youth Entrepreneurship Fair, 10754 County Rd 3.1 Pritchett, CO 81064.