

# Creating a Local Culture of Support for Entrepreneurship

**Chilton Rogers**

Former Deputy Director

Appalachian Regional Development Institute

Creating Entrepreneurial Communities  
Conference

Wednesday, November 19<sup>th</sup>, 2008



# One Interpretation of Economic Development

- Where does entrepreneurship fit into economic development?
- “Growing your own” is NOT a new thing – just one that has taken 20 years to catch on!
- Researchers now have data to see what works and what doesn't.

# Local Culture of Entrepreneurship

- First, Why do we need a climate of support for entrepreneurship?
- Second, What are the elements of a “supportive environment?” and
- Thirdly, An empirical example -- WEDP

# Why do we need a climate of support for entrepreneurship?

- Business recruitment
- Homegrown companies in the Watauga County Industrial Park
- New ideas and energy

# Why do we need a climate of support for entrepreneurship?

- Create a community of like-minded people
- Increase employment opportunities and diversify the local economy, and
- Combat “underemployment”

# What are the elements of a “supportive climate?”

- A Supportive Climate must embrace the whole community:

- Business Community
- Emerging Companies
- Professionals

# What are the elements of a “supportive climate?”

- A Supportive Climate must embrace the whole community:

Service Providers

Elected and Appointed Leadership

Non-profit Sector

MEDIA

# What are the elements of a “supportive climate?”

In short, creating a culture of support for entrepreneurship involves buy-in and participation from the whole community – which means energizing and mobilizing a LOT of people over a period of time.

# An Empirical Example

## 1) Watauga Entrepreneur Development Partnership:

Grounding the program in the County's economic development strategy by partnering with local gov't, the Economic Development Director and the EDC.

# The Watauga Entrepreneur Development Partnership (WEDP)

2) Mobilizing the community by creating an  
Entrepreneur Facilitation Committee

3) Contracting with ASU Walker COB  
entrepreneurship professors to teach series of three  
workshops

# High Country Business Network

4) Providing ongoing support on a regional level:

Creating the High Country Business Network

# Local Culture of Entrepreneurship

Next Steps:

WEDP Start Your Own Business Workshop series begins on October 28<sup>th</sup>, with successive workshops on November 11<sup>th</sup> and December 2<sup>nd</sup>.

# Local Culture of Entrepreneurship

And finally, efforts have been initiated to expand the WEDP model to other counties in the region – Appalachian Entrepreneurship Development Partnerships

# Local Culture of Entrepreneurship

What will determine its success?

CONTINUED COMMITMENT, DEDICATION AND  
SUPPORT  
and

The word gets out that the High Country actively  
supports small business and economic development for its  
citizens.

# Thank You – Questions?

Contact Info:

Chilton Rogers  
NC STEP Coach

NC Rural Economic Development Center  
4021 Carya Dr., Raleigh, NC 27610  
(919-250-4314)

[crogers@ncruralcenter.org](mailto:crogers@ncruralcenter.org)

