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# North Country Partnership Provides Entrepreneurial Edge for Small Businesses

By [Denise Hart](#)  
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LITTLETON, N.H.-- A hard winter and a sluggish economy are creating significant challenges for the North Country's small businesses, increasing demand for business assistance programs.



**Left to Right: Deborah Anderton, The Berlin City Bank; Nora Clark, NH SBDC; Natalie Woodroffe, executive director, WREN; Carol Walker, Woodsville Guaranty Savings Bank; Mary Collins, state director, NH SBDC; Brenda Highland, Woodsville Guaranty Savings Banks; and Elizabeth Ward, NH SBDC.**

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"Businesses are looking to revitalize their operations through new markets or improved facilities," says Elizabeth Ward, regional manager for the N.H. Small Business Development Center (NH SBDC) in Littleton.

"We're also seeing a lot of people interested in starting a business. The Entrepreneurial Edge, our new partnership with the Women's Rural Entrepreneurial Network (WREN), will provide focused management assistance and educational programs to address these needs."

"We're bringing the best of both organizations together," says Nora Clark, business counselor for the NH SBDC and long-time WREN member. "The NH SBDC provides the one-on-one counseling, while WREN is expert at running educational programs. By coordinating our efforts, we provide enhanced services to new and existing businesses."

The Berlin City Bank and Woodsville Guaranty Savings Bank are providing funds to underwrite the program. Upcoming educational programs include workshops in media relations, e-mail communications, strategic planning and financial management.

"We realize the value of counseling and educational services in creating sustainable businesses," says Deb Anderton, vice president of The Berlin City Bank, "and we are happy to support the Entrepreneurial Edge." Brenda Highland, assistant vice president of Woodsville Guaranty Savings Bank, adds, "Our institution has a great deal of respect for the experience and integrity that both NH SBDC and WREN bring to a venture of this kind."

The NH SBDC is an outreach program of the University of New Hampshire's Whittemore School of Business and Economics. Through seven regional centers, the NH SBDC provides professional management counseling and educational services, as well as specialized assistance in technology development, international trade, environmental issues and economic development. The NH SBDC has served more than 30,000 entrepreneurs since 1984.

WREN, based in Bethlehem and founded in 1994, engages in community and economic development initiatives. The organization presently has more than 700 members. "WREN is working with more than 300 emerging and established businesses, owned by both men and women," says Natalie Woodroffe, WREN's executive director. "Through WREN, these enterprise owners are able to access entrepreneurial and technology classes, networking opportunities, peer-to-peer support, access to resources and market development assistance. This partnership allows us to extend individual counseling to our members as well."

To learn more about the Entrepreneurial Edge's counseling services and educational schedule, contact Elizabeth Ward at 603-444-1503 or Nora Clark at 603-869-9736.

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