

Tehama County hosts global trade and small business workshop

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Red Bluff >> Those interested in opening or expanding a small business in Tehama County were offered the chance to learn what resources are available in California at the Global Trade and Small Business Workshop held Thursday at the Red Bluff Community Center.

The event was hosted as a partnership between Tehama County Economic Development Department, Rural County Representatives of California and California Centers For International Trade Development, said Tehama County Principal Jobs Coordinator Caylyn Wright.

“We wanted to give our local business owners the knowledge on how to expand through trade and the resources they have access to through the state government,” Wright said.

The event was divided into two panel sessions with Tehama County Supervisor Bob Williams, who has been serving as RCRC chairman, welcoming the audience.

“We’re excited to bring you information to help your bottom line and to help small to medium rural businesses thrive,” Williams said. “We know that small businesses are critical and are the heartbeat to our local economy.”

The first panel on leveraging state and federal resources included Sacramento Regional Center for International Trade Development Director Brooks Ohlson, Far North Center for International Trade Development Director Angela Cordell, Sacramento Regional Center for International Trade Development International Special Projects Coordinator Michelle Nguyen, California Governor’s Office of Business and Economic Development Small Business Program Analyst Megan Hodapp and United States Department of Commerce International Trade Administration Director of Sacramento US Commercial Service George Tastard.

Farmers in rural areas across the state have the same opportunities and struggles, which include over saturation of the domestic market, Ohlson said. Helping small businesses expand to overseas markets is helped by the California name being well-recognized. His organization can assist with things like a container stuck in customs or issues getting paid.

“It’s not as bad as you think it is, if you have access to experts,” Ohlson said.

Ohlson's organization can help figure out where the best market for a company's product is.

Resources to help with the expansion are not lacking, Cordell said.

"One of the biggest challenges is knowing who to call," Cordell said. "We have offices from one end of the state to the other and can share resources"

In addition to resources, center looks for ways to remove barriers businesses might face such as access to high speed Internet. The group's primary focus is on promoting E-Commerce, which is done through a fellowship that teaches students about building websites and international relationships, agriculture export, working on international relationships and offering export trainings.

Nguyen talked about the California State Trade Expansion Program through the Small Business Administration. The program works with the California GO-Biz to offer financial assistance for small businesses wanting to export their products to global markets. To be eligible, businesses must have been in California for at least one year, be in good standing and verified as having met Small Business Administration Standards.

Hodapp talked about the seven departments within Go-Biz and the services offered, such as site selection for companies looking to expand in or relocate to California, assistance with permits and regulatory compliance and advocacy for small businesses.

The US Department of Commerce has hundreds of offices domestically, but has the ability to offer "boots on the ground both on the domestic side and overseas" to help business owners navigate global trade. Tastard's office focuses on export promotion for American made or grown products, export compliance and commercial diplomacy.

Following lunch, a panel was held on Enhancing Your Global Footprint with United States Small Business Administration Western US Office Of International Trade Regional Export Finance Manager Jeff Deiss, Small Business Administration Lender Relations Specialist Darrel Dante, Centers For International Trade Development Global Digital Marketing Director Raj Shea and Exporter Joyce Mikkelson.

For more information on Tehama County Economic Development, visit www.tehama4business.org.

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