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Youth Business Discovery Day Held in Ord

Ord, NE: Fifty-eight students from Valley, Greeley, and Sherman Counties joined twenty area business leaders in a day dedicated to entrepreneurship and business discovery, on Wednesday, January 18, 2012. Guest presenters included Gregg Christiansen, Entrepreneurship Career Education Specialist with the Nebraska Department of Education, Nancy Eberle, Special Projects Coordinator, UNL Extension, and Diane Vigna, Associate Professor and Extension Specialist, Textiles and Apparel, UNL.

Students, business leaders, and guest presenters were welcomed to Ord by Derry Trampe, Ord High School Business Teacher and co-author of the UNL Extension 4-H Entrepreneurship Curriculum. A local entrepreneur, Vicky Hruby-owner of Baking From My Heart made cinnamon rolls for all participants and visited with students about how she started her home-based business through the local Farmer's Market.

Then students began the day by learning how to use their unique qualities and strengths to build a successful life and business. All students completed the Gallup StrengthQuest Survey prior to attending the event and Gregg Christiansen presented an interactive interpretation of the survey results.

Next, students worked in teams with their peers and local business leaders to compete in a Whatchamacallit Competition at the CCC Ord Learning Center! Teams were presented with the challenge of developing a business concept and marketing plan around an unknown object and asked to present their plan to a panel of judges and their peers. The Best Overall Presentation including business concept and marketing plan was awarded to the team that created the "Energy Saver 3000". Team members included Elizabeth Einspahr, Skyler Erickson, Kloreace Pokorny, Kaleigh Koch and Roger Lansman (team mentor). Each student on this team won a \$50.00 cash card and other prizes, donated by Great Western Bank.

Lunch was provided by the Country Neighbor. Owner Marcia Vodenhal visited with participants about how she started her restaurant business and her quest for marketing her salad dressings across the nation!

In the afternoon, students went on guided tours of five local businesses, including Good Life Pharmacy, Valley Cinema, Valley Fire, Anderson's Pharmacy, and Misko Sports. Students learned about the components of successful businesses and were given the opportunity to ask local business owners questions about entrepreneurship and effective rural business practices.



Gregg Christiansen, Entrepreneurship Career Education Specialist with the Nebraska Department of Education, presenting Gallup StrengthQuest Interpretation to help students discover their greatest strengths and use those strengths for success in business and life.

“I was really pleased that we had such enthusiastic participation from Arcadia, Greeley-Wolbach, and North Loup-Scotia students. I was also impressed with the creativity these students had with their business and marketing plan presentations. We seem to have tapped into a real interest that young people have in the economy and in rural entrepreneurship. I am excited for continued activities in engaging our area youth to think creatively about what they want for their futures in rural Nebraska! Another highlight was the involvement of our area business owners and employees who mentored our youth groups through the activities and business tours. Exciting and informative tours of Anderson Pharmacy & Gifts, Good Life Pharmacy, Misko Sports, Inc, Valley Cinema, and Valley Fire & Pottery really inspired all participants,” said Lu Lansman, Ord Rural Community Development Regional Coordinator.

Caleb Pollard, who served as a team mentor and tour guide stated, “Business Discover Day offers our area young adults a chance to see what real opportunities look like in our community. We want our youth to go out, get a worldly education and experience, and bring that home to run successful businesses in the future. Students learned from our local business owners that it IS possible to return home and be successful. I’m very hopeful this message has a strong impact on our future, and I believe it will.” Caleb Pollard is the Executive Director of the Valley County Economic Development and Ord Area Chamber of Commerce.

The day concluded with a challenge to all participating students to get involved in their communities by working with local business leaders, becoming active members of FBLA, and promoting recycling from Jennifer Remmereid, Ord FBLA Coach. Mark Hagge, Ord High School Principal, presented awards and prizes to students and offered students this quote from President Calvin Coolidge, “The business of America is BUSINESS!” Mr. Hagge encouraged students to develop a competitive zeal and embrace the spirit of entrepreneurship throughout their lives.

The Business Discovery Day was hosted by the Ord High School, Ord Future Business Leaders of America Chapter (FBLA), Valley County Community Foundation Fund, and Central Community College/Rural Community Development Initiative Grant-Ord Learning Center. The hosts of this event would like to extend sincere appreciation to all schools, area businesses, entrepreneurs, and community leaders who supported the Business Discovery Day.

