

ECED Hosts The First Lunch & Learn Of 2018

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(Gillette, Wyo.) The Energy Capital Enterprise Center hosted the first Lunch & Learn of the New Year today. The monthly event is open to all local entrepreneurs and also to those thinking about starting a business.

January's featured speakers were Susan Jerke, Regional Director for the Wyoming Small Business Development Center and Gail Lofing, Executive Director of the Campbell County Chamber of Commerce.

Susan Jerke began her presentation by defining small business. "We think of small as maybe just one or two people," said Jerke. "But, actually 99.7 percent of all the business in the United States are small businesses. And the general criteria is 500 employees or less." That dramatically broadens the spectrum of businesses able to use the resources available through the SBDC.

Jerke went on to provide a general overview of the long list of services her organization provides. She also pointed out that Wyoming is full of resources, not just of the mineral kind. "You just enter any one of these doors, people will help you find whatever it is you're looking for. So, don't be shy. We're very accessible and happy to help."

The Small Business Development Center is funded in part through the U.S. Small Business Administration, the Wyoming Business Council and the University of Wyoming.

Chamber Director Gail Lofing, who's been with the organization since 2003 and in her current role since July, explained to the group of gathered entrepreneurs that the goal of the chamber is to help businesses grow to build a better community.

"If you join the Chamber of Commerce it doesn't mean you have to come to every committee meeting we have. It doesn't mean you have to come to every networking event or luncheon or anything else," said Lofing. "You don't have to come to anything to be a member of the Chamber of Commerce. We will help you, regardless."

In addition to networking opportunities and business advocacy, the Chamber of Commerce also puts on the Gillette Area Leadership Institute yearly. GALI is a nine-month program which provides training to enhance leadership skills and develop a strong network of community leaders.

Lofing said the best way to support the chamber is to engage with them. "When you support the work of the Chamber, you are showing support for a better community."

The next Energy Capital Economic Development Lunch & Learn is set for Tuesday, Feb. 6, and will feature Susan McKay, CPA, who will address the effects the new tax laws may have on small businesses.