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Prospering in 2011 Conference January 25 at Blue Ridge Community College

The recession has resulted in lower revenues for many local businesses. The economy has shifted, creating the need for local business to adapt to the new marketplace.

How can local businesses better succeed in 2011? Prospering in 2011 Conference will support local business owners with practical expert advice to increase revenue, lower costs and increase business profit in 2011. Prospering in 2011 Conference will occur on Tuesday, January 25 from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. at the Blue Ridge Community College Campus, conveniently located off Interstate 26 at the Upward Road exit near Hendersonville, North Carolina. Snow date is Tuesday, February 1, 2011. There is no cost to attend, due to sponsor support.

The conference check-in process starts at 8 a.m. The conference starts at 8:30 a.m. with a welcome and the introduction of the 2010 Business North Carolina Small Business of the Year award winner Doug Salkewicz, president of Advanced Technical Welding from Etowah, NC. At 9 a.m. participants will learn ***How to Grow Your Business in a Slow Recovering Economy*** by Robert Papes, author of *Management During an Economic Crisis – Best Practices for Small Business Survival in a Recession*. At 10 a.m., there will be an **Update on the New Tax Laws** and how they impact a business and their owners by Carl E. Shaw, CPA, PLLC. Following at 11 a.m. will be the **2011 Economic Forecast** by Dr. James Smith, former chief economist and member of the forecasting panels of Bloomberg, Business Week and the Federal Reserve Bank of Philadelphia, and participant in economic surveys for the National Association for Business Economics, USA Today and the Wall Street Journal.

The lunch keynote presentation will provide an update on Mobile Technology, Cloud Computing and QR Codes by Philip Davis, co-founder of Jumpscan & Mike McKearin President of Redpoint Logic.

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Mobile technology is exactly what the name implies - technology that is portable. Examples of mobile IT devices include: laptop computers; notebooks; iPad tablets; eReaders or web-enabled smart phones. Cloud computing provides businesses with a way of managing their company and information online, "in the cloud". This makes information accessible from any computer or mobile device with an Internet connection and web browser. A QR Code or quick response is a matrix barcode readable by QR scanners or web-enabled smart phones. The code consists of black modules arranged in a square pattern on a white background. By scanning the image of the QR Code one can access text, contact information, connect to a wireless network, or can immediately open a web page in the mobile device browser. According to Gary Heisey, Director of the Small Business Center at Blue Ridge Community College, companies in the afternoon will have an opportunity to create their own QR Code and acquire a free website analysis to assist in promoting their company.

Any company that is not upgrading their use of technology is setting themselves up for lower profits or business failure. The afternoon technology sessions will consist of three tracks from 1:00-5:00pm, helping companies better integrate technology into their business model for greater success. The three tracks are: creating your own QR Code, free analysis of your company website, and upgrading your social media skills of blogging, Facebook, Linked-in and Twitter to grow your company in 2011. Two addition sessions are available on how to grow your family business in 2011 and booking travel online versus a travel agent.

The conference is open to any business in Western North Carolina and there is no charge to attend, making it possible for any business to get helpful tips thanks to the conference sponsors and partners: Blue Ridge Community College Small Business Center, Blue Ridge Innovation Network, AdvantageWest Economic Development Group, Chamber of Commerce, Henderson County Partnership for Economic Development, Mountain Bizworks, SCORE, Small Business Technology Development Center (SBTDC), Transylvania County Planning and Economic Development, UNC Asheville Family Business Forum, Jumpscan, Redpoint Logic and Bull's-Eye Writing Services.

Seating is limited and pre-conference reservations are required.

To register go to www.blueridge.edu/business_person/events/prosper2011.php

For more information, call Elaine Handville at (828) 694-1779.