

March 22, 2010
Old Town Cape
Cape Girardeau Area Chamber of Commerce
Center for Innovation and Entrepreneurship (CIE) – Southeast Missouri State
University

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PRESS RELEASE – Have You Ever Wanted to Start a Retail Business?

CAPE GIRARDEAU, Mo., March 15, 2010 – According to many business experts, a recession may be the best time to start a new business. Many well-known businesses began during a recession, such as Microsoft, Trader Joe's, HP, and FedEx. If you conduct some market research, create a careful business plan, and adopt a start small – think big attitude, you might decide that now is the time to pursue your dream.

Old Town Cape, the Cape Girardeau Area Chamber of Commerce, and the Center for Innovation and Entrepreneurship (CIE) at Southeast Missouri State University are teaming up to assist aspiring entrepreneurs interested in starting new retail businesses. The local entities have put together a variety of resources to assist entrepreneurs, the core of which is an entrepreneurship training program titled Operation-Jump Start.

The entrepreneurship course, is a nationally-recognized, highly successful training model for individuals considering starting or expanding a small business. Participants in the Operation Jump-Start program learn essential business planning and preparation skills with hands-on, practical training. Upon completion of the course, participants are eligible to submit a feasibility plan and compete for small start-up, micro grants (up to \$5000). An outside review panel will review the plans and select the most viable ventures to receive the funding. Participation in the course does not guarantee start-up grant funding.

Operation Jump-Start has been completed by nearly 700 individuals that have created over 250 new businesses and hundreds of additional jobs. The businesses created have experienced an astounding 95% success rate after two years. Over 66% are still in business after 4 years, a figure that far exceeds the national average of 50%, according to the US Small Business Administration.

”Operation Jump-Start has proven to be an extremely successful model for assisting founders in critical business planning that leads to the successful start-up and continued operation of new ventures,” said Dr. James Stapleton, CIE Executive Director.

Marla Mills, executive director of Old Town Cape said, “This training is an opportunity to raise the awareness about the opportunities for entrepreneurs and retail development in redevelopment areas of Cape Girardeau specifically and in other communities in general.”

If you are interested in attending the 5-week training program, please contact Torie Cox at 573-651-2929 or tc Cox@semo.edu. Classes are scheduled to begin Tuesday, April 20 at 6 pm at the Southeast Innovation Center at 920 Broadway, and will be held on Tues and Thurs nights only. To participate, you must contact the Center for Innovation and Entrepreneurship at 573-651-2929 by no later than April 13. Seating is limited to the first 25 applications.

Partial funding for this program was provided by the local WIRED initiative.