

Business Solutions: Lane's SBDC serves "Vetrepreneurs"



Veteran James Stegall launched Hard Times Distillery with help from the e-Dev program at the Lane's Small Business Development Center.

The transition from military service to civilian life can be challenging. For many veterans, getting career training and education at a community college can be an excellent option. Another great option is going into business.

Veterans are twice as likely to own a small business as non-veterans. According to *Vetrepreneur Magazine*, one in seven veterans owns a small business, whereas only one in 14 non-veterans do. America's most famous "vetrepreneurs" include Ross Perot of EDS, Phil Knight of Nike, and Fred Smith of FedEx.

Locally, many people know businessman James Stegall. An Iraq veteran, James is rapidly becoming a successful liquor distiller. His Hard Times Sugar Momma Vodka can be found in area liquor stores. James used the micro-loan program offered by eDev at the Lane Community College Small Business Development Center.

Other veterans around the state who are interested in entrepreneurship are referred by the state Veterans Administration office to the SBDCs at their local community colleges. Like Lane, all SBDCs provide advising, classes and programs for small start-up businesses.



The state SBDC network is piloting a successful Veterans Small Business Management Program called "Veterans Mean Business" at Clackamas Community College in the Oregon City area. Lane hopes to offer this program locally by next year.

Besides going into business, hundreds of local veterans are getting other education and training at Lane as well. Navigating VA educational benefits can be confusing and difficult so Lane has a VA Educational Benefits office to help veterans and their dependents and survivors. According to Ellen Jones, Lane's VA Certifying Official, 862 students are receiving VA educational benefits.

Whether training for a career or launching a business, Lane Community College is a great place for veterans.