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## Federal Glover: Fishing beats back the poor economy

By Federal Glover  
For the Contra Costa Times

Posted: 09/09/2009 02:43:08 PM PDT

A CHINESE PROVERB says, "Give a man a fish and you feed him for a day. Teach a man to fish and you feed him for a lifetime."

The state, county and cities are hard pressed to maintain public services in this down economy. It becomes imperative that we find new ways to patch the social safety net and create ways for people to improve their situation rather than to rely on government to bail them out.

This September I am scheduling two events that I hope will help our residents and community-based organizations during these tumultuous times.

Two years ago I could see that the county, which provides a vast array of services, was going to be hard-pressed financially to continue to fund much of the human services, health care, financial assistance, food assistance, care for the elderly, child care and more. The county's financial problems, exacerbated by the mortgage crisis and the state's bewildering budget process, have cut into the ability of agencies to provide aid just when that help is most needed.

Therefore, I began offering free workshops for the community-based organizations to seek grants from private foundations.

The annual workshops are "fishing lessons," if you

will. If the agencies can learn to sustain themselves, there will be less of a need to rely on government agencies for their funding. The strategy of holding grant workshops for nonprofits appears to be working. A number of nonprofit organizations and county departments have been able to secure grants after taking the one-day workshop.

The grant-application writing workshop held last February attracted over 90 participants. Many had to be turned away. Because the demand has grown as the community-based organizations with a sprinkling of county agencies find their budgets stretched to the limit, the need to seek other revenue sources has grown more urgent. This week I held a second workshop, given by members of my staff, county personnel and Wells Fargo, with help from a grant from Keller Canyon Mitigation Fund and supplemented by a grant from Wells Fargo.

The community-based organizations are just one sector reeling from the recession. In this faltering economy, many people are finding the idea of being their own boss appealing. Corporations and their employees have shown that loyalty is a fleeting concept in this modern age of instant communication and global competition.

With the negative news generated by the poor unemployment numbers, the number of failed mortgages and the increasing number of newly poor seeking assistance, it is easy to see why we tend to focus on the job picture. Stimulus funds from the federal government are intended to create or save jobs. The numbers of people who have lost their jobs and seeking new employment are easy to understand.

However, there is more to the economy than jobs. The one bright light that has come during these trying times is discovering that America's never-say-die entrepreneurial spirit is still strong. Others see

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this time as an opportunity to become self-employed by starting new businesses or taking their existing business to a new level.

According to the Small Business Administration, recent figures show that small business creates 65 percent or more of net new U.S. jobs and generates more than 50 percent of the U.S. nonfarm private gross domestic product.

In theory, we could have a very healthy economy with no employees at all if everyone were self-employed. But the opposite is not true. We cannot have enough jobs without a healthy economy.

Recognizing that self-employment is a viable option for many would-be entrepreneurs during this economic downturn, I am proud to sponsor a seminar for those who would like to start their own business and/or those people who are just starting out in a new business and want to take the next step to improving their business.

The free event, with the help of Wells Fargo and the Small Business Development Council, is designed to take participants through the creation of a business step-by-step, from fleshing out that dream, getting necessary permits, creating a business plan and finding financial backing.

The New / Small Business Seminar will be from 8 a. m. to 1 p.m. Sept. 26 at the Community Room (L109) of Los Medanos College in Pittsburg. Admission is free but preregistration is required.

Late word indicates that the grant-writing workshop is filled but interested individuals can place their name on a waiting list at my Web site for any future workshops. However, the small business event is still accepting applicants and registration at my Web site: [www.cccounty.us/supervisorlover](http://www.cccounty.us/supervisorlover)

For more information about either of these seminars, call 925-427-8138.

I wish everyone, good luck "fishing!"

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