
Director's Office, 350 Winter St. NE, Room 200, Salem, Oregon 97301-3878

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For more information:
Linda Repp, 503-329-4260

Oregon Small Business Fair offers free tools for small-business success

(Portland) — With Oregon's unemployment rate the third highest in the nation, many people have started exploring small-business ownership.

Those who have always dreamed of starting their business but don't know how to get started can get help at the 16th annual Oregon Small Business Fair on Saturday, Sept. 19, in Portland. The fair, a free event for small-business owners and those thinking about becoming small-business owners, will be from 8:45 a.m. to 5 p.m. at the Oregon Convention Center, at 777 NE Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd.

The fair provides information that will help businesses comply with laws and regulations and is sponsored by local, state, and federal agencies, and nonprofit organizations. Attendees will be able to get free consultations and can attend seminars on critical topics that are taught by agency and business experts, attorneys, and CPAs. Attendees can also learn about a Small Business Administration loan for small businesses and start-ups and can apply for and get approved for a business loan. Local businesses, government representatives, and exhibitors will be staffing information booths.

"The fair unites new and potential business owners with business professionals and agencies and offers free classes and advice. Sometimes, this information will lead potential business owners to go a different direction, but in the end it's really about helping small businesses succeed," said Linda Repp, member of the fair's planning committee. "What's really nice about the fair is that nobody is trying to sell you anything. All this fabulous information is just free. It's all about people making a difference by helping each other."

Professionals tell their own stories and trainers give advice on a host of business topics. Some of the most popular classes currently being offered include:

- Money: How can I get it for my business?
- The art of selling
- How to advertise your business
- Smart marketing
- Successful networking: The key to growing your business

For more information about the Oregon Small Business Fair, call 503-329-4260 or visit www.oregonbizfair.org.

Also, the seventh Rogue Valley Business Resource Fair, which is free, will be held on Saturday, Oct. 3, from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. at Rogue Community College, 101 Bartlett St., in Medford.

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The Department of Consumer and Business Services is Oregon's largest business regulatory and consumer protection agency. For more information, visit www.dcbs.oregon.gov.