Lee County Economic Development office to launch new program

*Lee Entrepreneurs’ Assistance Resource Network starts April 22*

FORT MYERS, Fla. (March 25, 2016) – Small businesses and entrepreneurs can mark their calendars for an April 22 event that will launch the Lee County Economic Development Office’s newest program, LEARN (Lee Entrepreneurs’ Assistance Resource Network).

People interested in starting or growing an existing business can attend the LEARN kickoff and partner expo on Friday, April 22, at Harborside Event Center. The event begins at 8:30 a.m. with the Horizon Council General Membership meeting and LEARN panel discussion, followed by the LEARN Partner Expo from 9:30 to 11 a.m. There is no cost, but attendees are asked to RSVP to Lee County EDO staffer Sarah Newcomb at snewcomb@leegov.com by April 13.

LEARN’s mission is to bring together businesses and entrepreneurs with supporting organizations to promote the establishment, retention and expansion of businesses in Lee County. LEARN partners include the Florida Small Business Development Center at Florida Gulf Coast University, Florida SouthWestern State College, Southwest Florida SCORE, CareerSource, United Way, Goodwill SWFL MicroEnterprise Institute, Fort Myers Technical College, Lee County Library System, Keiser University, Hodges University, Fusion Pointe, Southwest Florida Enterprise Center and Southwest Florida Community Foundation.

LEARN has created an online toolkit and resource clearinghouse to provide business owners with information, contacts and resources on topics such as workforce development and training, maximizing social media, business plan development, tax and legal resources and everything in between.

“The LEARN partners are excited about this opportunity to work collaboratively to promote the establishment, retention and expansion of businesses in Southwest Florida,” said John Boland, executive director, Lee County Economic Development Office. “LEARN creates a one-stop-shop for business owners and allows us to streamline the process of obtaining vital services to help them succeed.”

For more information about LEARN, visit [www.LEARNswfl.com](http://www.LEARNswfl.com) or contact Rachel Busch, Lee County’s EDO Strategic Projects Manager, at rbusch@leegov.com.

The Lee County Economic Development Office works to attract new and diversified businesses to the area, support company growth and expansions, and improve the overall business environment in Lee County. Services include Site Selection Assistance, Demographic and Statistical Information, Business Assistance, Financial Assistance, Employee Training and Recruitment and Community Tours. For more information, visit [www.LeeCountyBusiness.com](http://www.LeeCountyBusiness.com) or 239-338-3161.

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