



800.422.0374  
www.entrepreneurfund.org

## ENTREPRENEURIAL

# spirit

**Our mission: Promoting the entrepreneurial spirit and creating economic wealth and diversity.**

### TOTAL RESULTS SINCE 1989:

Program Participants:  
9481

Businesses Started, Stabilized,  
and Expanded:  
1030

Jobs Created or Retained:  
2656

Dollars Loaned:  
\$7,714,379

### OFFICES:

8355 Unity Drive, Suite 100  
Virginia, MN 55792

Ordean Building, Suite 400  
424 West Superior Street  
Duluth, MN 55802

12 NW 3rd Street  
Grand Rapids, MN 55744

1401 Tower Ave, Suite 302  
Superior, WI 54880

### THANK YOU TO OUR FUNDERS:

Blandin Foundation  
Calvert Foundation  
City of Duluth Community  
Development Block Grant  
City of Superior Community  
Development Block Grant  
Iron Range Resources  
John S. and James L. Knight Foundation  
Lloyd K. Johnson Foundation  
Minnesota Department of Employment  
and Economic Development  
Minnesota Power  
Northwest Area Foundation  
SPEDCO  
St. Louis County Community  
Development Block Grant  
US Small Business Administration  
 3! Women's Business Center  
 3! Microloan Program  
 USDA Rural Development

## Beaner's Central offers up good coffee, good music, good business

Jason Wussow is not your ordinary entrepreneur. A musician at heart, he started hanging out at coffeehouses when he was a 16-year-old growing up in Alexandria, Minn. After graduating from high school, he toured with a band across the country. He was intrigued by many of the coffeehouses they played, taking notes on what he observed, what he liked and disliked about every venue. In the course of his travels, he would often purchase used coffee grinders, bins and other equipment.

Eventually, Wussow settled in Duluth with dreams of owning his own coffeehouse. He worked at Jitters Coffee House in downtown Duluth, and would frequently discuss his vision and ideas with owner Gary Houdek. After two years of learning and planning, Wussow opened Beaner's Central in West Duluth in 1999. After leasing the building for three years, Wussow purchased it in 2002.

Today, the coffeehouse finds itself in the middle of a rejuvenated business district near the intersection of Central and Grand Avenues. Beaner's has become a mecca not just for local residents (who enjoy its variety of caffeinated beverages and menu items), but also for a diverse assortment of musicians who take to its stage three or more nights a

week. "We have a great staff and great customers," says Wussow, who often acts as emcee or performs himself.

Despite its current success—and like every business start-up—Beaner's has encountered its share of adversity along the way, from finding initial financing to building repairs to road construction. (The coffeehouse suffered a 50% decline in sales for seven months while Central Avenue was torn up.) Wussow credits consulting help from Dick Braun at the UMD Center for Economic Development and, more recently, Shawn Wellnitz of the Northeast Entrepreneur Fund for helping him overcome obstacles and adopt a businesslike approach to operating an unusual business.

"I worked with Dick over several years," says Wussow. "He helped me understand budgeting and how to put business expenses into perspective—that I had to watch expenses carefully and treat it as my money."

He met Wellnitz, NEF director of business development, at the 2008 Business-to-Business Expo in Duluth. "Shawn led me through a very thorough planning process," says Wussow. With NEF, he says, "the approach is 'we like who you are and want to help you stabilize and grow.'" Last year, Beaner's used a loan

from NEF to affix new galvanized steel siding around the 130-year-old building and make other improvements.



Beaner's Central proprietor Jason Wussow. The steel siding on his building was funded by a loan from NEF.

"We've restructured our debt and can see a clear path" to continued success, says Wussow, who now employs 10 people and states that 2009 year-to-date has been "our best year ever." He recently expanded Beaner's to include a recording studio in the basement. It also hosts private parties, providing catering and music.

Beaner's Central is located at 324 N. Central Ave., Duluth, MN 55807, phone 218-624-5957.

For hours, menu and a listing of upcoming live music, visit [www.beanerscentral.com](http://www.beanerscentral.com).



The C.RE.A.T.E. program is designed for artists who want to become entrepreneurs.

## Turn your art into an income—here's how!

A new business learning opportunity has been launched to help regional artists develop their entrepreneurial skills and thus turn their work into viable, income-producing businesses.

Community Resources for Artists-to-Entrepreneurs (C.RE.A.T.E.) introduces artists to business fundamentals such as finances, operations, market-

ing and legal considerations. C.RE.A.T.E. is a program of the Northeast Entrepreneur Fund and Growing Neighborhood Businesses (GNB). GNB is part of Duluth at Work, an initiative co-administered by the City of Duluth and LISC (Local Initiatives Support Coalition).

Noted artist-entrepreneur Joyce Yamamoto from Little Marais, Minn., serves as instructor. Class content is based on NEF's nationally recognized CoreFour®

business training curriculum.

The 12-hour C.RE.A.T.E. program is designed for artists in northeast Minnesota and northwest Wisconsin. Eligible participants include but are not limited to: visual artists, sculptors, potters, filmmakers, photographers, musicians and writers. All classes are held at the Duluth Art Institute.

For more information, including class dates and fees visit: [www.entrepreneurfund.org](http://www.entrepreneurfund.org).

## NEF marks 20 years of promoting entrepreneurship

In 2009, the Northeast Entrepreneur Fund celebrates its 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of serving the needs of entrepreneurs and small businesses in northeast Minnesota and northwest Wisconsin.

Founding president Mary Mathews started as NEF's first employee in 1989. "The original business plan called for a staff of four," recalls Mathews. "Today we have a staff of 15 full-time and part-time employees. Our loan fund assets have grown from \$315,000 to nearly \$3.5 million. Holding fast to its mission and vision over

the years, NEF has helped start, stabilize or expand more than 1,000 businesses."



During 2008, NEF disbursed 45 loans totaling \$820,000 to small-business clients in communities throughout the region. Last year, more than 1,500 individu-

als attended one or more business training opportunities offered by NEF.

"Our region was settled in the late 18<sup>th</sup> century and early 19<sup>th</sup> century by visionary entrepreneurs," says Mathews. "With the help of many business and community partners, we want to reinvigorate that spirit of entrepreneurship today and moving forward into the future. Our purpose is the same as it was 20 years ago—helping existing and aspiring entrepreneurs start and grow successful, locally owned businesses."

1ST QUARTER 2009 LOANS DISTRIBUTED	
Oakley's Shooting Range	Superior, MN
Pioneer Recovery Center	Aurora, MN
Smiley's Commercial Vehicle Maintenance	Duluth, MN
Little Lovies Daycare	Deer River, MN
Watersedge Health Center	Two Harbors, MN
Johnny 5's Auto Repair	Aitkin, MN
Tidy Tim's Snow and Mow	Chisholm, MN
D & K Advertising	Cloquet, MN
Portable Bore Repair & Welding	Superior, WI

## NORTHEAST ENTREPRENEUR FUND BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Bill Hansen, Chair  
Sawbill Outfitters, Tofte, MN

Mark Peterson, Vice Chair  
US Bank, Duluth, MN

Sue Collins, Secretary/Treasurer  
Northeast Higher Education District, Chisholm, MN

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Rebecca Spengler  
A Laundry Room, Ely, MN

John Stene  
American Bank, Grand Rapids, MN

Kaye Tenerelli  
Superior Business Improvement District, Superior, WI

## Mike Lattery and Sunny Dilts named business developers

The Northeast Entrepreneur Fund has appointed Mike Lattery as its new business developer to serve the Duluth area and Two Harbors, and Pamela “Sunny” Dilts as business developer for Virginia and surrounding Iron Range communities as well as Ely and the eastern Arrowhead region.

Both will provide business planning and development to

emerging and small businesses, and will work with individuals who wish to start, stabilize or expand their business.

Lattery has 17 years experience owning and operating 12 Domino’s Pizza restaurants in Duluth and throughout Minnesota. Previously he had been a franchise consultant for Domino’s. For several years,

he also owned and operated the Poplar Golf Course in Poplar, Wis.

For the last year, Dilts has served as staff accountant for NEF. Her previous business experience includes owning a bed-and-breakfast in New Mexico, a Curves franchise in Wyoming, and most recently as the proprietor of Sunny’s Deli in the Thunderbird Mall in Virginia.



Sunny Dilts



Mike Lattery

## Greenstone Group hosts “State of Entrepreneurship” event

More than 50 business, community and education leaders attended “The State of Entrepreneurship in Northeast Minnesota,” held March 17 in Duluth. The special event featured presenters Drew Digby, regional labor market analyst for the Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development, and Deborah

Markley, managing director and director of research for the Rural Policy Research Institute’s Center for Rural Entrepreneurship.

The event was sponsored by the Greenstone Group, an NEF initiative that currently supports more than 30 regional entrepreneurs through professional

coaching focused on entrepreneurial skill development and strategies for significant business growth.

Also addressing the group were Mary Mathews, NEF president and founder of the Greenstone Group, and Bill Hansen, NEF board chair and member of the Greenstone Group advisory committee.

Attendees were asked to be champions for locally based entrepreneurship, and to help recruit potential Greenstone Group participants by becoming nominators or talent scouts. They were also asked to identify professional services providers and business performance coaches who could assist the Greenstone Group.

For more information, call the Greenstone Group at 218-623-5735, or visit [www.greenstonegroup.org](http://www.greenstonegroup.org).



NEF board chair Bill Hansen speaks at the Greenstone Group’s “State of Entrepreneurship in Northeast Minnesota” event

### NEW PHONE NUMBERS AT NEF OFFICES

With the installation of a new NEF-wide phone system, the Virginia and Duluth offices have new phone numbers:

Virginia: **218-735-4191**

Duluth: **218-623-5747**

Our toll-free number remains the same: **800-422-6382.**

## NORTHEAST ENTREPRENEUR FUND STAFF

Donna Anthony  
Business Developer

Chelle Bakke  
Coach, Greenstone Group

Erica Bernard  
Loan Program and  
Administrative Assistant

Sunny Dilts  
Business Developer

Rick Hagen  
Director, Marketing and  
Communications

Dawn Johnson  
Director of Training  
Women’s Business Network  
Program Director

Mike Lattery  
Business Developer

Susan Martin  
Campus Entrepreneurship  
Coordinator

Mary Mathews  
President

Jessie Schlosser  
Marketing and  
Communications Assistant

Brenda Shoberg  
CORE FOUR® National  
Sales Director

Carla Tichy  
Chief Financial Officer

Bob Voss  
Director of Lending

Shawn Wellnitz  
Director of Business  
Development Services

Jennifer Young  
Business Developer



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Virginia, MN 55792

WWW.ENTREPRENEURFUND.ORG

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# Entrepreneur spoken here.



At the Northeast Entrepreneur Fund, we help an individual take a business idea and transform it into a reality. And after 20 years of serving entrepreneurs, we're pretty fluent at communicating with them.

Through our consulting and training programs, we help to focus that idea around some business fundamentals—like creating a business plan, understanding cash flows, and developing a sales strategy. Through our loan programs, we may arrange financing to launch the business or purchase equipment or inventory.

But we can also talk about hopes and dreams and visions for the future. The ups and downs of everyday business life. The real language of entrepreneurship.

**Talk to one of our business development specialists. We'll speak Entrepreneur.**

**Mike Lattery**  
Duluth Area,  
Two Harbors  
218-623-5734

**Donna Anthony**  
Grand Rapids,  
Hibbing  
218-735-6026

**Jennifer Young**  
Duluth (Growing  
Neighborhood Businesses)  
218-623-5733

**Sunny Dilts**  
Virginia, Ely,  
North Shore  
218-735-6025

**Shawn Wellnitz**  
Superior, Cloquet  
218-623-5726

**1-800-422-0374**



[www.entrepreneurfund.org](http://www.entrepreneurfund.org)