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SKED Awarded \$1.3 Million ARC Grant to Expand SEED

SOMERSET, Ky. – Southeast Kentucky Economic Development Corp. (SKED) will expand its successful Supplier Education & Economic Development (SEED) training program in 2019, with funding from the Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC).

“This ARC grant will continue the business development work provided by SKED to help prepare local companies for bigger business opportunities with the federal government,” said Congressman Hal Rogers, who launched SKED in 1986 to enhance economic development in Southern and Eastern Kentucky. “Over the last two years, the SEED program has provided local manufacturers with a face-to-face introduction to some of the top defense and automobile contractors in the country. I applaud the ARC for investing in this unique program to help create jobs in Kentucky’s Appalachian region.”

SKED is one of 10 non-profit organizations in Kentucky receiving funding announced this month, as part of the ARC’s POWER (Partnerships for Opportunity and Workforce and Economic Revitalization) Initiative. Key partners in the SEED program are: Advantage Kentucky Alliance (AKA), which provides the training, and the Kentucky Procurement Technical Assistance Center (KYPTAC), which assists participating companies in developing new business relationships with federal prime contractors.

SKED will use its \$1.3 million award to expand the reach and capacity of the SEED Program. Now in its third year, SEED’s training and support services are designed to improve the competitiveness of manufacturing companies in coal-impacted counties of Eastern Kentucky and will help them acquire the competence needed to win government and private contracts.

SKED Executive Director Brett Traver says this funding is expected to create 350 jobs and leverage \$3 million in private funding over a three-year period.

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“It is exciting to have the ability to expand this program with the ARC’s help,” Traver said. “I want to thank Congressman Rogers, our partners and the companies of Eastern Kentucky for making the program what it is today.”

The AKA is a statewide, nonprofit partnership that provides assistance and training to help manufacturers of all sizes grow, improve their manufacturing and business strategies and processes, adopt advanced technologies, increase productivity, reduce costs, and improve competitiveness. The organization is led by Center Director Scott Broughton. Broughton also worked with SKED in 2018 through the SEED: Quality Certification Program.

“I am excited to continue my work with SKED and SEED in 2019,” Broughton said. “We are making real end roads with the small business owners we’ve assisted, and our work has only just begun. This new funding will enable us to give these Eastern Kentucky entrepreneurs the guidance they need to grow and help expand their businesses.”

KYPTAC serves all 120 counties, as well, and provides free, highly personalized procurement assistance to small business owners. Executive Director Darrall Henderson has worked closely with SKED in the deployment of its SEED training over the past two years.

“Our organization has found a great partner in SKED and its SEED program,” Henderson said. “This funding will not only allow this partnership to continue in 2019 but will allow us to expand the program, by adding a counselor to specifically serve the SKED region. This will allow us to reach more business owners, create more connections and deploy more training across Southern and Eastern Kentucky.”

Some 40 small business owners from across the region have participated in SEED training, since its inception in 2017. With this funding, SKED will expand its SEED services to reach even more Eastern Kentucky businesses.

Pulaski County’s Summit Aviation has been a SEED participant since the program’s beginning. Scott Roush is the company’s director of manufacturing.

“Summit Aviation is thrilled that SKED was awarded funding to continue the SEED initiative,” Roush said. “It has provided training programs, connected partners within the region as well as connected business within the region to prime defense contractors. This venture is

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giving opportunities to regional business as well as the workforce that would not be possible without SKED and the grant funds.”

POWER is a congressionally funded initiative that targets federal resources to help communities and regions that have been affected by job losses in coal mining, coal power plant operations, and coal-related supply chain industries due to the changing economics of America's energy production. With today's announcement, ARC has invested over \$144.8 million in 182 projects touching 312 counties across Appalachia since 2015.

“Today's announcement continues an ongoing commitment for innovative economic development in Appalachia's coal-impacted communities,” said ARC Federal Co-Chair Tim Thomas. “Investing in key regional needs now - like comprehensive substance abuse recovery strategies, broadband development, and skilled workforce training - will benefit Appalachia, and the rest of the country, well into the future.”

For more information about the SEED program or other SKED services, contact Traver at (606) 677-6100 or by email at btraver@centertech.com.

Formed 32 years ago by Fifth District Congressman Hal Rogers to create jobs in Southeast Kentucky, the economic development organization, based in Somerset, serves a 45-county region in Kentucky. Staff works with business owners, small and large, throughout its service area to identify financing solutions to fund their location, expansion and working capital needs. For more information, visit: www.southeastkentucky.com.

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