

Biz Bits: Are you out there, angel investors?

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There seems to be a lot of interest in cultivating angel investors so they can reach out to area entrepreneurs.

A few weeks ago, I interviewed MARK NEMANIC of 3CORE about a new business funding program through his nonprofit.

A large funding partner with north-state business, 3CORE was hoping to scare up some local investors who might help area entrepreneurs.

Nemanic said traditional lenders are playing it conservatively with their money, but that entrepreneurs are the new hope for jobs. Investing in those carefully chosen innovators could turn into jobs.

Nemanic said he didn't get any angel bites on the first round, but he has hope for interest later on, especially as news of the program spreads.

I read somewhere that angel investors don't jump at the first open door because there isn't any return on their investments or very little. They want to make sure their funds really count.

Nemanic's program puts an angel investor's money into the North Valley Community Foundation, giving the investor a tax credit. Entrepreneurs carefully screened and showing growth promise would be gifted the money and guided along.

Still a young program, Nemanic and the foundation are concentrating on building funding first, then seeking entrepreneurs.

More information is available on the program through the North Valley Community Foundation, 891-1150, or Nemanic, 893-8732.

A veteran angel investor is coming to Chico to talk about the process.

BILL PAYNE will be presenting "Starting an Angel Organization" from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Oct. 9 at Panighetti's Restaurant, The Esplanade and East Lassen Avenue.

Chico-based Innovate North State is bringing Payne to Chico.

His purpose is to provide an overview of the steps needed to create an angel investment group.

Payne started Solid State Dielectrics Inc. in 1971, sold the company to DuPont in 1982, and has since made angel investments with more than 50 startup companies.

In 2009, he was named U.S. angel investor of the year (Hans Severiens Award), and received a similar acknowledgment as 2010 Arch Angel of New Zealand, according to his website. He also has been entrepreneur in residence at the entrepreneurship enclave Kauffman Foundation of Kansas City, Mo.

But the business arena may be more interested in his response to President Barack Obama's comment, "If you've got a business — you didn't build that. Somebody else made that."

Payne says, "Are you kidding me? What a silly, uninformed statement to make! Wouldn't you think that one of the jobs of the President of the U.S. is to encourage those whose companies create most of the jobs in our country?"

Payne's further thoughts on what entrepreneurs do can be read on his site:
www.billpayne.com/category/bootstrapping.

I like his August comments on entrepreneurs. Here's a couple of excerpts:

"Entrepreneurs risk their financial futures by starting companies. Can the same be said for government employees?"

"The U.S. is suffering from the lowest rate of job creation since the Great Depression. And it is an established fact that new companies create most of the new jobs in this country. It is time for the leaders of our country to recognize who creates jobs in America and take supportive action."

Gregory says the workshop is designed for investors and community leaders interested in starting an angel organization, among others.

The cost is \$150, or \$75 for members of Innovate North State, and includes breakfast, lunch and guidebook. Reservations can be made by calling Gregory at 892-1707.

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