

MINUTES OF THE SENATE COMMERCE COMMITTEE

The meeting was called to order by Chairperson Nick Jordan at 8:30 A.M. on March 3, 2006 in Room 123-S of the Capitol.

All members were present except:

Jay Emler- excused
Susan Wagle- excused

Committee staff present:

Kathie Sparks, Kansas Legislative Research Department
Helen Pedigo, Revisor of Statutes
Alex Lovely

Conferees appearing before the committee:

Steve Radley, Director for the Center for Entrepreneurship
Wally Kearns, Kansas Small Business Development Center
Patty Clark, Department of Commerce

Others attending:

Chairperson Jordan announced the Committee would be working **SB 382-Developing responsible youth act** and introduced Senator Kelly to explain the subcommittee's amendment for the bill. (Attachment 1) Senator Kelly stated the sub-committee met looking for a way to insure if they added the program they were not overlapping any program that already exists and the way to do that was through the Commerce Secretary. The subcommittee more clearly defined what they mean by "after school program". On line 23 of page 2 of the bill striking language and adding "an evaluation of pre-vocational skills and options offered and acquired, physical fitness improvement, academic improvement and mentoring participation, as well as".

Upon the conclusion of Senator Kelly's explanation of the amendment, there was discussion with the Committee.

Senator Wysong made a motion to move the Kelly amendment. Seconded by Senator Reitz. Motion carried.

Senator Kelly made a motion to move the bill out favorably as amended. Seconded by Senator Wysong. Motion carried.

Chairperson Jordan introduced Steve Radley, Director for the Kansas Center for Entrepreneurship to give an update on the Center to the Committee. Mr. Radley presented written testimony. (Attachment 2) Mr. Radley stated the mission of the Center was to be accomplished through the development and maintenance of a comprehensive website of resource providers, the creation of a call center, better coordination of existing and new entrepreneurship education programs and improved access to financing of entrepreneurs. Mr. Radley stated he would be giving the Committee a progress report on these responsibilities as outlined in the Kansas Economic Growth Act of 2004. Mr. Radley stated that on March 9th, the Kansas Center for Entrepreneurship is officially launching the NetWork Kansas call center, networkkansas.com website, and the StartUp Kansas fund. NetWork Kansas will provide the first statewide network of resources that provide business building services to entrepreneurs and small business owners. NetWork Kansas launches with more than 240 resources participating as NetWork Kansas partners. Partners include small business development centers, economic development organizations, Kansas Department of Commerce field offices specializing in local and international issues, workforce development centers, local and regional financial assistance organizations, enterprise facilitation projects, technical assistance centers, organizations that specialize in helping women-owned businesses, and more.

NetWork Kansas provides the following services specific to the vision of the Kansas Economic Growth Act of 2004 including the following: NetWork Kansas provides a seamless integrated network of small business service providers in Kansas; NetWork Kansas provides access through one central portal, our toll

free number and networkkansas.com; NetWork Kansas provides database tools for client tracking and statistical measurement to facilitate evaluation. A part of the Center's responsibilities is to work efficiently and effectively with existing resources. The Kansas Department of Commerce, which by statute administers the Center, contracted with the Kansas Small Business Development Center for the operation of the Center. Fort Hays State provides administrative support for the Center. The Center is provided office space at Wichita State University. Wichita State University faculty provides assistance to the Center and the students are employed as Call Center Staff. Kansas, Inc. has been on the ground floor with development of the evaluation model the Center will use to report back to the administration and the legislature.

The Kansas Economic Growth Act of 2004 also established the Kansas Community Entrepreneurship Fund., StartUp Kansas. The mission of StartUp Kansas is to partner with business support providers who assist in providing or obtaining funding for Kansas entrepreneurs in for-profit business startups and expansions in rural and distressed communities.

The last item outlined in the Kansas Economic Growth Act of 2004 is to inventory all entrepreneurial education currently being offered throughout the state. The Center of Entrepreneurship at Wichita State received a grant from the Center to perform this task.

In closing, Mr. Radley stated that the launch on March 9th will begin an ongoing process of connecting entrepreneurs and small business owners with the education, expertise and economic resources they need when they need them.

Upon conclusion of Mr. Radley's presentation there was discussion with the Committee. Senator Kelly entered the discussion regarding the counselors for the Call Center. Mr. Radley stated the counselors are students from Wichita State University majoring in entrepreneurship and he has been very pleased with their performances up to this point. Mr. Kearns representing the Kansas Small Business Development Center entered the discussion stating that the students do not provide direct services. The students take the information and then call someone from the resource list to research and get the needed information and then call the caller back. Senator Kelly joined asking how to get on the resource list. Mr. Radley stated it is an application process; anyone interested needs to contact the Center and they will send out an enrollment survey. Mr. Radley also stated they have already scheduled 14 town hall meetings to go into the communities and talk about entrepreneurship and what resources are available. Patty Clark with the Department of Commerce entered the discussion stating these guys have done an incredible job getting things done. The next big step is going to be the marketing of the Call Center and the website. Senator Wysong entered the discussion stating he is impressed by the enthusiasm of the Center. Senator Jordan entered the discussion stating the Center is extremely important to the rural communities of Kansas and he is very excited. Mr. Kearns entered the discussion stating that the Center can really make a difference for the Kansas economy.

Meeting adjourned at 9:10 a.m. with the next meeting scheduled for March 7, 2006 at 8:30 a.m. in room 123S.