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INVENTOR AND INNOVATOR PILOT PROJECT PROGRAM

Final Report

August 30, 1991

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Commission for Economic Development in Orem (CEDO)

August 30, 1991

Prepared for

**THE U.S. DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY
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**COMMISSION FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT IN OREM
(CEDO)**

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ABSTRACT

The Commission for Economic Development in Orem (CEDO) has completed its pilot project: setting up an inventor organization, providing knowledgeable speakers for monthly meetings, and trying to assess and meet the needs of that group.

Utah Valley Community College provided space for monthly inventor meetings. It was decided that the monthly meetings would be held as two-hour mini seminar sessions with qualified speakers. The college provided continuing education units free for attendance at the meetings.

Results of two surveys of the group were analyzed. A meeting was held between CEDO and the college's Dean of the School of Business where it was decided that the group should be continued. The college will continue providing space for the monthly meetings and assisting with the attraction of additional qualified speakers. CEDO will continue to locate speakers, put on the monthly meetings, publish the monthly newsletter and provide information and assistance for the group.

It has been determined by CEDO that having a "group" with monthly speakers is only a pacification of the needs of inventors and innovators. This group is in dire need of specialized inventor ASSISTANCE on a no-cost or low-cost basis.

COMMISSION FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT IN OREM FINAL REPORT

History

For several years inventors came into the CEDO offices seeking someone who could help them with their projects. CEDO staff consultants, although excellent at business consulting, had little experience in assisting inventors and little help to offer those who did not wish to start a business. Other local agencies used by CEDO for referral had no real assistance available to the inventor/innovator community either. CEDO staff recognized from those contacts that an unmet need existed, and CEDO had a desire to be helpful to that segment of our population.

Project & Analysis

As a result of this grant from DOE, the Commission for Economic Development in Orem (CEDO) completed its pilot project. This project involved the setting up of an inventor organization, providing knowledgeable speakers for monthly meetings, and trying to assess and meet the needs of that group. When the DOE grant application was approved, it was CEDO's intention to (1) look at results/benefit and (2) determine the feasibility of keeping the "group" going and providing assistance to the group.

Assistance was sought and gained from the local community college (Utah Valley Community College) which provided space for monthly inventor meetings. Press releases and other public announcements were made about the meetings, and mailings were made through a mailing list of all inventors who could be identified, who called for inventor packets, and/or who attended the monthly meetings. Since local inventors had little real knowledge on how to proceed with their projects and could get little real help with their projects, it was decided by CEDO staff that the monthly meetings would be held as two-hour mini seminar sessions with qualified speakers. All meetings were free to the public, and the college provided continuing education units (CEU's) free for attendance at the meetings.

CEDO identified resource people for inventors/innovators. Many of these people were asked to speak to the Utah Valley Inventors/Innovators Forum, and most of them spent at least an hour AFTER the meetings giving individual counsel to the inventors. Some also spent additional personal time assisting inventors.

Information regarding community and other services and financial assistance and/or grant programs available to inventors was supplied: (1) in the inventor

packets distributed as a part of this grant and (2) through speakers at the forum meetings, and (3) through CEDO in-house consulting with clients.

In trying to assist inventors, CEDO also served as a beta test site for one local inventor and supplied computer use, copying equipment, fax machine, and office staff to assist in the use of equipment. At times CEDO staff members also helped with input of data (spreadsheets) and/or gave word processing assistance. No inventors approached CEDO regarding space for development of their prototypes.

CEDO has served a total of 91 individual inventors/innovators through its monthly meetings. Due to advertising and referrals by other inventors and/or other service providers, almost a like number (not members of the inventor group) have called CEDO with questions or come to CEDO for counselling from many parts of the state. The newsletter mailing list has approximately 150 names.

Conclusions

As an economic development organization, CEDO's staff consultants were based in business, financial analysis and area promotion rather than in the invention/innovation process. Although this area is a part of business and is needed by many of our entrepreneurial companies, CEDO staff members were not experienced or knowledgeable in this process. On a positive note, much information was obtained during the process of filling the commitments made as a part of this grant; and CEDO's staff members became very knowledgeable on the general information needed by inventors/innovators and are now able to answer questions and give valuable assistance. They also learned a great deal this past year about the REAL rather than perceived needs of the inventor community.

It has been determined by CEDO staff that having a "group" with monthly speakers is only a pacification of the needs of inventors and innovators. This group is in dire need of knowledgeable, reliable, viable information (which, as stated, CEDO is now able to supply to a helpful degree). More importantly, though, this group is in need of specialized inventor ASSISTANCE, especially in preliminary patent research and market & viability research and needs a one-stop inventor office where comprehensive services are provided, with intensively trained personnel who can help inventors in obtaining and logically assessing information regarding potential of their projects.

Results of two surveys taken of the group were analyzed and are included as Appendices A & B of this report. Fifty-two persons responded to the main questionnaire, which is an excellent representation since the group has served 91

individuals. In essence, the survey results showed that 77% of those who returned the survey wanted to be part of an inventor/innovator group providing networking and informational exchange; 89% wished to listen to qualified speakers who addressed their needs; 89% wanted a monthly inventor/innovator newsletter giving information on local and national activities; and 79% needed general inventor/innovator information. Of a more specific nature, 67% needed help evaluating inventions/innovations; 67% wanted to know how to make contacts in their industries; and 60% wanted information on competitive products.

A meeting was held between CEDO staff and the Dean of the School of Business at Utah Valley Community College. It was decided that the group should be continued. The dean indicated a willingness on the part of the college to continue providing space for the monthly meetings and assisting with the attraction of additional qualified speakers. CEDO indicated a willingness to continue to locate speakers and put on the monthly meetings, as well as to continue to publish the monthly newsletter and provide information for the group. CEDO staff will also continue to share the knowledge they have gained with inventors/ innovators and provide assistance where possible.

DeLance W. Squire, Executive Director
Commission for Economic Development in Orem
Principal Investigator

APPENDIX A

COMMISSION FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT IN OREM

INVENTOR/INNOVATOR QUESTIONNAIRE
RESULTS COMPILATION

Questionnaire Date
October, 1990
Ongoing Collection During Grant Year

Results Compilation
August, 1991

Your Name: TOTAL NUMBER OF RESPONDENTS: 52

Company Name (If Applicable): _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ ZIP: _____

Telephone Number: ()

Please check as many as apply.

No. %

<u>40</u>	<u>77%</u>	1.	Would like to belong to an inventor group providing networking and informational exchange.
			_____ Would _____ Would not be willing to pay
small amount in dues. If Yes, how much? _____
<u>46</u>	<u>89%</u>	2.	Would like to listen to qualified, professional speakers for inventors/ innovators.
<u>46</u>	<u>89%</u>	3.	Would like monthly inventor/innovator newsletter telling what is happening locally and nationally.
<u>41</u>	<u>79%</u>	4.	Need general inventor/innovator information (i.e., listings of patent attorneys and their areas of expertise, non-disclosure agreement samples, licensing information).
<u>35</u>	<u>67%</u>	5.	Need help evaluating my invention/innovation.
<u>31</u>	<u>60%</u>	6.	Would like help getting information on competitive products.

- 35 67% 7. Need to know how to make contacts in my industry.
- 21 40% 8. Would like to be involved in programs to encourage youth to participate in the invention/innovation process.
- 6 11% 9. Am currently working in programs for youth.
- 6 11% 10. Am currently a member of an inventor/innovator group.
- 9 17% 11. Currently have patent(s). 24 How many?
- 8 15% 12. Currently have product(s) in the marketplace.
12 How many?
- 30 58% 13. Want to use my invention(s) to begin my own business.
- 22 42% 14. Want to find someone to produce my product.
- 9 17% 15. Already have contacts in my industry.
- 12 23% 16. Would like to have my product produced by someone else and market it myself.
- 27 52% 17. Would like to license out my product and receive royalties.
- 10 19% 18. Feel that I can successfully take my product to market myself.
- 21 40% 19. Would like to find professionals who can make prototypes of products.
- 34 65% 20. I would like information about Federal Small Business Innovation Research Grants. (Specialized federal grants -- not available to all inventors.)
- 5 9% 21. I have information about Federal Small Business Innovation Research Grants.
- 11 21% 22. At least one of my products is energy related.
(Note: This category is for informational purposes only.)
- 0 0% 23. I have worked with the Federal grant process in helping fund some of my inventions.
- 33 63% 24. I would like to know more about possibilities in my area for Federal research grants.

- 2 3% 25. I have the money to fund my projects myself.
- 31 60% 26. I need funding to assist in the development of my invention.
- 18 34% 27. I am currently employed in a position which I do not intend leave and prefer to pursue my invention/innovation as a side project.
- 17 33% 28. I would like to leave my current employment to pursue my invention/innovation process.
29. Please list other information, services, suggestions for inventor/innovator assistance you would like to have provided.

Need contacts who can help with marketing and development of my product.

Need contacts who can help with marketing and distribution.

Need help with patent searches.

Need library for inventors.

APPENDIX B

COMMISSION FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT IN OREM INVENTOR/INNOVATOR PROJECTS IN PROCESS AND/OR PAST PROJECTS QUESTIONNAIRE

RESULTS CALCULATED

August, 1991

Information from this questionnaire will be used for statistical purposes only and will not be singled out in any way in printed form. Identifying information is optional.

Name: _____ Total Number of Respondents: 11 _____

Address: _____

_____ ZIP: _____

Telephone: Day (801) _____ Evening (801) _____

Yes %

10 91% (1) Do you have inventor/innovator projects in process?
Yes 10 No 1

9 82% (2) Have you had inventor/innovator projects in the past?
Yes 9 No 2

5 46% (3) Have you sold an invention or innovation? Yes 5 No 3

If yes:

6 55% A. Sold to an entity or individual OUT OF OUR AREA?
Yes 6 No 3

3 27% B. Sold to an entity or individual IN OUR AREA?
Yes 3 No 2

How many? 4

5 46% C. Would like to sell my invention or innovation.
Yes 5 No 2

1 9% 4) Have you licensed an invention or innovation? Yes 1
No 10

1 9% A. Licensed to an entity or individual OUT OF OUR AREA? Yes 1 No 3

0 0% B. Licensed to an entity or individual IN OUR AREA?
Yes 0 No 2

4 36% C. Would like to license my invention or innovation.
Yes 4 No 1

6 55% (5) Have you developed an invention or innovation into your
own business? Yes 6 No 3

If yes:

6 55% Were you successful in your business endeavor? Yes 6
No 0

6 55% Would you start a business with your idea again? Yes 6
No 0

9 82% (6) I would like to start my own business. Yes 9 No 1

2 18% (7) Have you started a business with your invention or
innovation which was sold to another entity or
individual later?
Yes 2 No 8

If yes:

1 9% Was the business developed locally? Yes 1 No 1

If yes, when it was sold,

0 0% Was it purchased locally? Yes 0 No 2

Was it sold to an entity or individual out of the area?
Yes 2 No 0

2 18% (8) Is your invention or innovation energy related?
Yes 2 No 9

0 0% (9) Have you looked into grants for funding your invention?
Yes 0 No 10

12 109% (10) Would you like more information regarding the types of
assistance that are available to you? Yes 12 No 0

3 27% (11) Are you aware that market and other research assistance
may be made available to you in evaluating your
invention?
Yes 3 No 9.

Note: If question #10 is answered "YES", or if you need more information
regarding market or other research assistance, please contact CEDO, 777
South State Street, Orem, UT 84058, Phone (801) 226-1521. CEDO's
services are free.

END

**DATE
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