

Bringing Back the Culture of Entrepreneurship

By Terry Whipple and Bonnie J. Peterson

THE INVENTORS AND ENTREPRENEURS CLUB OF JUNEAU COUNTY, WISCONSIN

Are your companies downsizing or moving out of your area? Are you worried about continued economic decline? **Juneau County Economic Development Corporation faced these same issues years ago and began efforts to foster a culture of innovation and entrepreneurship at the grassroots level** with a focus on nurturing business enterprise growth from within the region. This grassroots effort has become a feeder system to all state and local resources. It has proven to be an extremely efficient, cost effective program and has been replicated across the country. Juneau County Economic Development Corporation was recently recognized for its exceptional entrepreneurship program at the International Economic Development Council Annual Conference.

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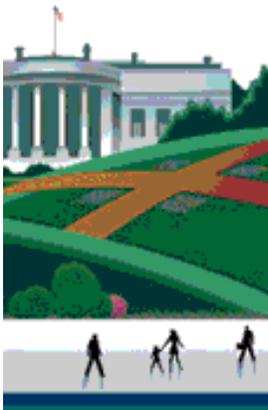
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bringing back

THE CULTURE OF ENTREPRENEURSHIP

By Terry Whipple and Bonnie J. Peterson

Education, networking and access to resources, supplemented with a healthy dose of motivation – that’s the successful recipe used by the Inventors and Entrepreneurs (I&E) Club of Juneau County, Wisconsin. Working from the premise that innovation and entrepreneurship will thrive if cultivated in a supportive environment, the Juneau County Economic Development Corporation (JCEDC) has embraced the club concept as a key component of its strategic plan. On one level, the club concept can be likened to a business incubator. However, rather than incubating emerging businesses, the club provides a nurturing environment for the exploration and development of ideas throughout an entire community or region.

The I&E Club creates a supportive and exciting entrepreneurial environment in which enthusiasm is naturally contagious. Persons wishing to investigate the potential of their ideas can do so with a group of like-minded individuals. I&E Club members are empowered to learn the proper steps to exploring their ideas. Motivated and supported by their peers, the club members freely tap into a vast network of multi-talented and connected people who can quickly direct them to needed resources



The Inventors and Entrepreneurs (I&E) Club meetings began drawing too many participants so the Juneau County Economic Development Corporation began helping other surrounding counties start Clubs of their own to take some of the pressure off Juneau County.



I&E Club Inventor.

or potential partners. An educational component of the monthly meeting provides information on a wide range of specific topics and the evening’s networking session is the highlight of the gathering.

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THE REASONS BEHIND DEVELOPING THE I&E CLUB IN JUNEAU COUNTY

Juneau County is a rural county situated in the west-central portion of “America’s Dairyland” with a population of approximately 27,000. It had once been home to a few major manufacturers that together employed up to 1,500 people in their heyday. However, when three of these big plants closed in 2000 and 2001, insult was added to an already injurious and festering problem of chronically high unemployment in the county. For JCEDC, the plant closings by these major employers pointed out that a dependence on a few major employers puts at risk the health of the entire local economy.

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Are your companies downsizing or moving out of your area? Are you worried about continued economic decline? Juneau County Economic Development Corporation faced these same issues years ago and began efforts to foster a culture of innovation and entrepreneurship at the grassroots level with a focus on nurturing business enterprise growth from within the region. This grassroots effort has become a feeder system to all state and local resources. It has proven to be an extremely efficient, cost effective program and has been replicated across the country. Juneau County Economic Development Corporation was recently recognized for its exceptional entrepreneurship program at the International Economic Development Council Annual Conference.



Cool stuff invented by cool inventors of Juneau County. Clayton McGonigle shows off his arcade game company.

The I&E Club provides a pathway for displaced workers to turn their talents and energies toward their own innovative ideas.

The massive layoffs left the rural county to struggle economically in spite of the many good things Juneau County had going for it: Eight small communities with several smaller employers whose businesses were stable, considerable scenic attributes (picturesque lakes, streams, bluffs, and extensive bike trail systems), and a growing recreational base that supports a vibrant tourism sector. The county is located midway between the Twin Cities, MN, and Milwaukee/Chicago metro areas with Interstate Highways 90/94 bisecting its length.

Juneau County Economic Development Corporation (JCEDC) is a public-private partnership partially subsidized by the county with additional funding received through memberships and grants. The staff consists of one full-time director and three part-time employees who work together to support business retention and expansion, new businesses, workforce development, quality of life, and tourism.

JCEDC began the Inventors and Entrepreneurs Club in 2002 when the unemployment rate in the county was nearly 14 percent and the participation in the workforce was only 64 percent. The JCEDC executive director serves as the club's facilitator and I&E Club board member. JCEDC developed the I&E Club concept to bring back a culture of entrepreneurship that had been dismissed and swept under the rug, if not completely lost. JCEDC realized the Club concept had the potential to dramatically change the local economic landscape by diversifying the local economy in a way that may hedge against rapid changes such as plant closings, policy changes, economic downturns, or disruptive innovations that can quickly and drastically alter an industry's competitive landscape.

Supporting entrepreneurship became a key component of JCEDC's strategic plan because it keeps talent in

the area. Many talented people were left without work when the plants closed.

The I&E Club provides a pathway for displaced workers to turn their talents and energies toward their own innovative ideas. Home grown businesses are also more economical to assist than chasing after large manufacturing firms, hoping they will locate or expand in your area. A small, rural county with a total population of about 26,000, such as Juneau County, Wisconsin, simply could not afford to compete with the incentives being offered elsewhere in the country. This economic development strategy also has a better chance for success. According to the Small Business Administration, only 1 percent of new jobs are created by enticing a business into a community. Compare that with 50 percent of new jobs created by the expansion of existing businesses and 49 percent of new jobs created by entrepreneurial activity.

In a time of rapid change, as we are in today, old business models and mature products are dying away at a quicker pace. It is imperative

Following the announcement that a major GM plant would be closing in southern Wisconsin, many people could only see this as tragic news. But, there is another side to that story. When a company implodes, the knowledge and talent doesn't disappear. Often, these talented individuals have creative ideas and dreams that have never been pursued. An explosion of new innovations and businesses can explode out of the ashes. Although the Juneau County I&E Club meets two and one half hours from the GM plant location, the Club drew a handful of engineers, giddy as school children, to the meeting. These engineers were passionate about their ideas and were looking to create new businesses. That's resiliency!

that we have a base of motivated, educated, and networked entrepreneurs to grasp new opportunities and turn them into businesses to replace those that are being lost. If America loses this critical base of people who possess entrepreneurial spirit coupled with the insight to recognize opportunities, too few communities or regions will be able to seize these new and different opportunities when they arise. For rural communities, this is a very real concern.

The effort to encourage entrepreneurship has helped change the culture of the county. Now, seven years into the I&E Club effort, the Juneau County economy is growing from within and a fresh new attitude prevails around entrepreneurship. There is always an on-going struggle with unemployment as outsourcing, productivity gains,

and automation have replaced the need for unskilled workers. However, the picture is no longer bleak.

Gains made in Juneau County's employment have caught the attention of regional labor economists. Bill Brockmiller, labor market analyst for the Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development, told a meeting of Juneau County community officials in 2008, "Juneau County has come a long way." In presenting current data and trends regarding workforce statistics, he showed that Juneau County cut its unemployment rate in half and was within one-half percent of the state unemployment rate.

Historically, the county had been stagnant in its rating among the bottom five counties out of 72 in the state in terms of highest unemployment rates. The county has since broken out of the lowest tier and has moved closer to mid-point within the state rankings due to diversification and new business growth. This surprised labor economists since the bottom five counties in unemployment never seem to escape the low rankings, but merely exchange places.



Carol Kauscher, founder of D-Bug Lady, poses with her brother Sam.

never try again. That is the real tragedy because they will never know what could have been possible with a little tweaking or a whole new idea.

The stigma and embarrassment associated with failure have stifled many good ideas, but the Club setting aims to change that notion. Part of the Club's effectiveness is based on its ability to assist members in recognizing an important fact up front – failure is an integral component of innovation and entrepreneurship. Disappointments are to be expected along the journey and these must be recognized as a valuable part of the learning process. So, as far as the Club members are concerned, the only real failure is in not trying.



I&E Club President Cary Winch and his partner break ground for their new manufacturing plant. Camp Inn Trailers was voted one of the top 100 new products in Readers Digest in 2005.

THE ENTREPRENEURIAL JOURNEY

The concept behind the I&E Club is geared to changing mindsets and encouraging creative thinking and a quest for opportunities, rather than creating jobs. While economic growth, creating job opportunities, and an increased local tax base are definitely part of the economic equation, these benefits are not the focus of the Juneau County Inventors & Entrepreneurs Club meetings. Instead, the core function of the Club is to engage people in creating a culture shift that will shape their community's future by changing how they view their role in it. In the safe environment of an I&E Club, members are motivated to explore their ideas and dreams, search for opportunities, and move ideas to fruition.

Coming up with an idea for a new product, service or business venture is often the fun and easy part. Figuring out what step to take next and determining the sequences of steps to follow is where the difficulty begins. Therefore, the first and main thing taught at the Club is determining the proper steps to exploring an idea.

Community support for those on an entrepreneurial journey is crucial. Entrepreneurs need grace time to experiment, change directions, and find their place in the sun. They need input, involvement, and encouragement from the community along the way. Yet, especially in small communities, there is often a mindset that makes experimenting in innovative and entrepreneurial ways a treacherous journey fraught with emotion and uncertainty. The stigma of failure holds people back from reaching out to others for help because to admit to failure, unfortunately, brands one as a loser. This means that people will struggle alone, and often after much agonizing they eventually will give up and swear to

CLUB STRUCTURE: THE JUNEAU COUNTY EXPERIENCE

The Juneau County Club is set up separately from JCEDC as a 501c3 non-profit corporation. The Club has its own Board of Directors, but staff support is provided by JCEDC. Meetings are open to the public and occur once a month on the same day each month and same location. The Juneau County I&E Club found that it is important to hold the meetings on the same day each month, largely because many of those who attend learn about the Club through word of mouth instead of announcements or advertised press releases.

The Juneau County Club meets from 6:00 p.m. until the last person leaves, usually around 9:00 p.m. A local business offers its facility and provides coffee free for the monthly meetings. Efforts are made to keep the expenses low. The Club membership fees start at \$35 per year for an individual and his/her immediate family. The membership donation is tax deductible and allows the participant to be eligible for grants to various workshops or conferences and also receive a Club T-shirt. The meetings are open to the public and the Club encourages anyone to attend the meetings and to stay networked, not just paid members.

Creating an I&E Club from the ground up presents some challenges. The makeup of the club is critical. A room full of only inventors will spend much of their time talking about their ideas. But lacking the needed business experience to do anything with these ideas, the meeting will not help the inventors move toward next steps. The best results come with a diverse group of people possessing varied talents. The Juneau County I&E Club has attracted a mix of inventors, entrepreneurs, business people, manufacturers, investors, entrepreneur assistance companies, as well as economic development resources to each meeting.

Regular attendance of 30 to 45 people is the ideal size for the club model. Meetings begin with announcements of new resources that are available, workshops in the area, announcements of grants, and helpful web links. The facilitator gives a brief overview of what the Club is about for those who are new. Often, about 25 percent of the attendees will be new participants, making the overview an important component of the meeting.

The next portion of the meeting is devoted to education. Speakers teach on all aspects of the invention and business processes. The interactive presentations are approximately 30 minutes in length. Topics range from prototype development, market research, intellectual property protection, marketing, website development, sales, and packaging, to hearing from serial entrepreneurs telling how they managed multiple undertakings. Individual corporate sales pitches are not permitted as educational programming.

The last portion of the meeting is an introduction session followed by an opportunity to network with one another. Because every participant is important to the Club's success and the proliferation of the culture, each person is asked to tell their name and why they came. This is a good opportunity for members to hear what stage others are in exploring their idea and how they may help them. It also gives the facilitator a chance to match people up with what resources could help or to introduce them to an industry cluster informally formed by Club members. The introduction session and resource match-up help the participants feel comfortable in networking with others.

Attendees are also asked to tell if they have a talent or experience in certain entrepreneurial activities that they would use to help others in the Club, whether as a volunteer or a for-profit business. Club members will often offer free help in CAD drawings, artwork, electronic design, market research, and many other basic things.

Member businesses offer assistance to inventors and entrepreneurs in intellectual property protection, marketing, prototype development, and manufacturing. Usually these businesses work on reduced fees for Club participants.

Club members are advised that any ideas that they plan to protect should be kept to themselves or use the confidentiality agreement provided by the Club. Usually, no specific information is actually needed in order to learn how the Club can be of assistance.

The best results come with a diverse group of people possessing varied talents. The Juneau County I&E Club has attracted a mix of inventors, entrepreneurs, business people, manufacturers, investors, entrepreneur assistance companies, as well as economic development resources to each meeting.



I&E Club speakers tackle subjects on patents, marketing, sales, business structure, business plans, market research, and much more.



One of the components of Club meetings are educational presentations.



Juneau County I&E Club Treasurer Beth Staplin gives an update on membership. The Club charges voluntary membership dues and needs next to nothing to operate.

By the time introductions are completed, the energy and expectations are high.

Here's an example of how this happened to work during one of the Juneau County I&E Club meetings. An elderly lady who made and sold probiotic health food bars introduced herself and explained that she was looking for new ingredients for her food bar line. The man sitting next to her had a chestnut grove and was looking for a market for the nuts. But the connections didn't stop there! Another woman in the room was looking for products for her health food vending business and the gentleman next to her was a doctor who wanted one of the vending machines put into his clinic. While this situation may seem serendipitous, scenarios like this actually happen fairly often.



Jeff Jones showing off his Intire Industries product after winning a state award for innovative products.

I&E CLUB SUCCESS

Success of I&E Clubs should not be measured by number of jobs created, number of products invented, or number of business startups. While these are good economic indicators, they do not truly capture the purpose of the Club, which is to educate, nurture, and network inventors and entrepreneurs in a way that fosters a culture of idea exploration and opportunity hunting. Metrics are usually left to organizations like JCEDC and others that need to measure the success of their programs or consulting outcomes.

Juneau County's Club success can be attributed to three things: motivation, environment, and networking.

FACILITATOR AS MOTIVATOR – RA RA SIS BOOM BA

Every club needs a champion. The person who acts as Club facilitator is critical to fostering a vibrant and successful Club. Charged with conducting the meeting, the facilitator also encourages networking and acts as a match-maker to fill inventor/entrepreneur needs with the right resource or contact with another Club member. As a champion, motivator, and cheerleader, the facilitator makes meetings fun and entertaining, as well as informative. As the facilitator launches the attendees into their introduction session, a watchful eye will help him/her recommend that certain people get together in the networking session to follow later in the meeting.

Starting a business venture is difficult and inevitably life tends to get in the way. This is true for even established businesses and one reason so many Mom and Pop businesses stall over time. For some people, motivation is the real draw in coming to the Club meetings. Their creativity is sparked and they feel good about their business pursuits. These people may already be operating businesses, yet they still find value in the connections they make and maintain with other Club members.

An example of this is found with a chemist in his mid-60's who came to the Juneau County Club with some incredible innovations. Some of these ideas were com-

pleted a decade ago. When asked why he hadn't done anything with these innovations in the past, he shared how he had studied chemistry while he was a university student but had to leave these pursuits after obtaining his Bachelor's degree because he needed to support his family. However, he continued to love chemistry and after work he would dabble with new processes to create custom aldehydes in order to find a cure for cancer. Since he was doing this in his basement, he had to make them without creating hazardous materials, as was common in the known processes. For 30 years, he worked on great projects, finding many new uses for these aldehydes and stored the results in a file. Life had gotten in the way, but now with help provided by the Club he was motivated to do something with his valuable work. Perhaps some life changing innovations are just sitting dormant in someone's file right now, waiting to be introduced to the world. I&E Clubs are a way to unlock the file drawers to these potential treasures!

ENVIRONMENT – HELP THEM FEEL SAFE

Another key reason the Club is successful is the non-threatening environment that is created. The Club introduces people to the business mindset in an informal, non-academic manner. As a forum of equal peers, the Club holds no hierarchy based on level of educational attainment or social status. We learn best from our peers – those who have been there and done that. It is much easier to learn when, for instance, someone familiar with gaining government contracts puts his arm around you and says, "It is a little scary but I will stop by and walk you through it. And by the way, here is my phone number should you have a question."

It is not the place of Club members to squelch an idea because they do not like it or think it is bad. Through the support of the Club, however, members are taught the steps to take to properly explore an idea. With the support of the Club, the people determine for themselves the worthiness of their ideas. Likewise, it is the support provided by the Club that also gives them per-



Ed Marron and Dan Forss discuss innovations at the Annual I&E Club Rendezvous which brings together seven regional clubs.

mission to kill their idea if it's misguided, alter the idea, set the idea aside if the timing is wrong, or move it forward if it looks promising.

Some inventors can become easy prey for unscrupulous service providers of the "we'll help you get rich quick" variety. Being part of the Club's safe environment eases this concern, especially when Club members seek for-profit assistance. They are much less paranoid when they are with others they can trust or can check with regarding scam companies. In fact, one of the Juneau County I&E Club members even made a scam buster search engine (www.bobharter.com/whototrust.php) for other inventors to check out companies before entering into a business transaction. Most for-profit businesses, recognizing the Club value for potential clients and desiring to foster a good name, will go the extra mile to be fair in their dealings with this group.

NETWORKING: LET THE MAGIC BEGIN!

One of the most intriguing, exciting, and successful aspects of the Club is the networking. You never know when you are going to run into that person or resource that is going to help you succeed. Networking at the I&E Club is like the lottery. You can't win if you don't play. You have to be out there playing or you can be assured that nothing will happen.

The magic of the evening really happens when these people are turned loose to find the few people in the crowd who they really want to meet. In each Club meeting there will always be someone present from whom you can learn. It is here where inventors meet business and sales talent, entrepreneurs meet investors, and stagnant businesses meet new ideas and creative advice. The I&E Club attracts participants of many ages, and as a result, the club provides rich layers of experiences, insights, and mentorship. When structuring an I&E Club meeting, it is best to leave plenty of time for networking.

Very few people possess all the talents that they will need to make a success of their idea. A high percentage of successful businesses are organized as partnerships because this balances skill sets. The Club is where members recognize the talents they possess and those they lack, and connect with people who have the talent and experience that can be leveraged to move ideas forward. To use an analogy of a popular web-based dating site, the Club acts as the "e-Harmony®" for inventors and entrepreneurs. Match-ups are made based on many different variables of talents and needs.

A good example of this is Brian, a member of the Juneau County I&E Club. Brian finished high school but did not know what he wanted to do, so he started

work at the local implement dealer where he worked on repairing pumps. Brian found that he enjoyed it and developed a passion to learn how the pumps could be improved. He began developing his own concept of how to make them more efficient, using what he called a more true centrifugal force. He gleaned information at the libraries and off the Internet and worked his concept through the available formulas. Before putting a lot of expense into a prototype, he wanted to check with someone to see if they were correct.

Brian is an inventor type and was not skilled in selling himself to universities or corporate engineers so he was unable to get the confirmation he needed to move forward. After joining the I&E Club, we were able to get him in front of some engineers at one of the universities that specialized in fluid dynamics. They found that even



One of the product fairs held by the Juneau County I&E Club.

Bob, a six-year member of the I&E Club, admitted he was not good at networking. The I&E Club introduced him to invention brokers, marketing experts, insurance professionals, business consultants, and others. And, through Club mailings, Bob became aware of an inventors contest. He submitted his invention, won the contest, and received a licensing agreement! Where would his invention be today without the Club?

though they did not quite understand Brian's "true centrifugal force theory", the design itself was 10 percent to 15 percent more efficient than any other pumps its size. Brian is now working to finish a prototype. Where would this idea be now if it wasn't for the Club?

Or, take for example the "mitten lady." The "mitten lady" shared with the Club how her mitten-making business was going nowhere. She shared how she invented her own special weave for knitting the mittens and only used Wisconsin wool from farms that she knew a lot

about. She sold her mittens to local people for \$12.50 to keep warm. She had become what our Club calls a "starving artist business." The Club was able to show her that her market was not the local people and her product was not to just keep people warm but the true value was in the story of the mitten lady and the special weave and about the Wisconsin wool. Her new market was global. After changing her marketing and building an Internet presence, she now sells her mittens for \$85.50 per pair and is making more of them than ever.

CHANGE THE FRAMEWORK, CHANGE THE CULTURE

The supportive culture within the Club also greatly enhances the desire for entrepreneurs to give back to their communities.

An anecdotal survey of several successful entrepreneurs gives insight on how important support from the community can be to someone trying to build a business from their idea. Many revealed that they either give back very little to their community or ignore it all together. This stems from feeling that they had to bite, scratch, fight, and kick to make it, while expecting that many in the community were actually hoping their venture would fail. Struggling in a non-supportive environment seems to be a prevalent feeling among inventors living in areas that are already economically distressed. Perhaps that is why the club approach provides such a refreshing, safe environment.

As the I&E Club concept is adopted, we expect to see a change in this pattern. For example, take the experience of Tom, a member of the Juneau County I&E Club, who worked for a machine shop that had him working on gaining government contracts. He grew knowledgeable in this area and decided he wanted to start a business doing government contracts and subcontracting out much of the work. He had a wife and seven kids so this would be quite a challenge and would also be taking a risk with the family's financial future.

As part of the I&E Club, Tom received encouragement from fellow club members and a helping hand in making contacts and preparing orders. Then, he stopped attending the club meetings. Almost a year went by and one hot July evening when the Club meeting was about to start, into the parking lot barreled a \$70,000 Hummer. Out jumped Tom, heading straight to the front of the Club to proclaim that he had made it! He also declared that he would like to give back to the Club members by mentoring them in how to secure government contracts. He announced that he had opened a new machine shop and would help make prototypes for those that needed that type of assistance. And that is just what he has done – providing support, insight, and mentoring to others in the Club. Scenarios like this happen quite often as our entrepreneurs recognize that they are not alone on their journey.

ECONOMIC ECOSYSTEM

The Club concept can embed “a heart and soul” into brick and mortar business incubators to give them more of a community feel. Everyone becomes involved in helping each other succeed and are also there for support during times of failure. Since entrepreneurship is naturally contagious, the Club acts as a feeder system for the entire incubator. Members of the I&E Club, in all of their various stages, are continually creating links with the broader community. From the Club meeting, a wide variety of interactions and activities will grow. As a result, every Club member becomes a “deputy” for local and regional economic development.

Other positive activities that are emanating from the Club are industry cluster groups. Club members are getting together throughout the month to discuss and work on their projects within informal clusters such as alternative energy, writing and publishing, games, foods, government contracting, and so on. For example, the Juneau County I&E Club has a group working on developing a cooperative model for a community fuel alcohol still. The Hickory Hills Arts group is also an offshoot of the Club, as is another cluster of participants exploring the development of a shared-use commercial kitchen.



Representative Sheryl Albers congratulates I&E Club member Todd Bunker on his new start up business, Bunker Water Jet Cutting.

WISCONSIN ENTREPRENEURS FIND SUPPORT IN WEN

I&E Clubs have become a great feeder system into many of the fine federal, state, and local entrepreneur support programs or organizations.

I&E Clubs in Wisconsin are also tied into a larger state-wide effort to promote entrepreneurship. The Wisconsin Entrepreneurs' Network (WEN) is a network of diverse service providers supporting entrepreneurial businesses by sharing information, resources, and access to expertise. WEN partners include the University of Wisconsin System, the Wisconsin Small Business Development Center Network, the Wisconsin Technical College System, Agricultural Innovation Center, regional economic development groups, and others interested in fostering entrepreneurship in Wisconsin. WEN began in June 2005 as a joint venture between the Wisconsin Department of Commerce and the UW-Extension's Entrepreneurship and Economic Development Division. A majority of the services provided by WEN partners are free or low cost.

CONCLUSION

Successful I&E Clubs include a mixture of inventors, entrepreneurs, businesses, investors, and economic development professionals. An engaging facilitator, well connected to other resources, plays the matchmaking

role for networking to begin. The I&E Club provides access to knowledge and resources, in a safe and encouraging environment that minimizes risk, so that Club members can grow into successful business owners.

It is important to remember that the I&E Club concept is about changing culture and mindset. Once a person learns the proper steps in exploring an idea and how to research it, test it, and launch it, they have something that can benefit them each time they recognize an entrepreneurial opportunity.

The Club's primary focus is not directed on creating jobs and new businesses. These will definitely follow, but they are not the emphasis of the Club activities. Instead, the Club provides education, connections, and confidence necessary to help people explore and develop their ideas in a sequence that leads them to success and profit. Club members have successfully found partners, investors, sales people, manufacturers, and many more resources during our meetings. When difficulties are encountered, fellow participants act as a safety net, providing understanding, suggestions, and encouragement.

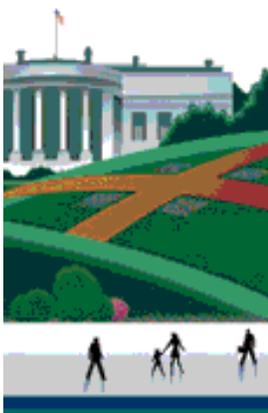
A vibrant Club is alive with peer learning, and as such, the participation of each member is valued. Someone trying to bring in an additional \$3,000 per year with an idea is just as important to the Club as the person working to launch an idea on the level of Google™ or iPod®.

Through the development and nurturing of an I&E Club, a local or regional economy can be strengthened in several ways, including:

- Creating a diversified economic base,
- Providing ready access to imaginative thinkers and solution seekers,
- Encouraging thoughtful preparedness of business plans, and
- Assisting with appropriate responses during times of rapid change.

The I&E Club has proven to be an extremely efficient and cost effective program for Juneau County, Wisconsin. However, it is a model that could easily be replicated throughout the world. The I&E Club model is appropriate for use in suburban and urban communities, as well as rural settings. 

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