



The Ohio Economic Development Association designated Grow! Highland County a recipient of its Excellence in Volunteerism Runner Up Award. Accepting on behalf of the Grow! Highland County resource board members are members of the project management team: (l-r) Sharon Bedard, Melissa Elmore, Brad Elmore, John Joy, and Sid Raisch.

## Grow! Highland County awarded for volunteer efforts

The resource board members of Grow! Highland County received an Excellence in Volunteerism Runner Up Award from the Ohio Economic Development Association (OEDA). OEDA's annual excellence awards program recognizes the achievements of individuals and organizations throughout Ohio in the areas of economic and workforce development.

Grow! Highland County is an enterprise facilitation program which was formed as a joint venture between Southern State Community College and the Highland County Chamber of Commerce.

The concept of enterprise facilitation involves matching clients with volunteers who provide free and confidential business guidance. A client of Grow! Highland County can be

anyone who needs guidance in starting a new business, expanding an existing business, or improving an existing business.

In the nearly three years since the program began, 174 clients have sought services and support from Grow! Highland County. Currently, some 58 clients in various stages of business development are being served; 32 business openings and 16 business expansions are directly attributed to this enterprise facilitation program.

More than 25 seasoned business, education, and service professionals make up resource board, which is committed to assisting small businesses by lending time and talents to strengthening the marketing, financial, and service/product components of the business.

The Grow! Highland County enterprise facilitation effort is led by a project management team made up of Katy Farber, Russ Brewer, John Joy, Melissa Elmore, Brad Elmore, John Hern, Tracy Evans, Betty Bishop and John Knechtly. Sharon Bedard has served as Enterprise Facilitator since October 2012.

The initiative began in 2010 when the U. S. Department of Agriculture awarded Southern State Community College a grant to provide assistance to small businesses. Southern State partnered with the Highland County Chamber of Commerce, and with the guidance of the project management team, the Sirolli Institute provided the initial training. Sid Raisch was selected as the Enterprise Facilitator and held that position until leaving to focus on his own small business.

Grow! Highland County would like to thank those who have supported this key economic development effort, and would welcome any questions regarding enterprise facilitation. To learn more, contact Bedard at 937-661-1437.