The Incubator Inc. and The BOSS (Business One Stop Service)

Ideally, every city would have a business incubator to drive economic development. This incubator would have a manager with extensive business knowledge and contacts in the city, county, and state who forges far beyond its own walls. Even better, the incubator would represent a vision for regional partnerships that could benefit small businesses throughout the region. This is, in fact, the model for The Incubator Inc. and The BOSS (Business One Stop Service) in Plainfield, New Jersey.

“An incubator is a crossroad for business activity, information, resources, and a think tank for economic development,” said Jeff Dunn, director of The Incubator and The BOSS. “An incubator should supplement City Hall. That’s what I do.”

The Incubator and The Boss is certainly a crossroads between small business and government resources. Dunn is president of the Plainfield Chamber of Commerce and is a New Jersey Department of Labor and Workforce Development One-Stop Career Center partner in Union County. Just recently, The Incubator was awarded a workforce development contract with the City of Plainfield, linking the residents of Plainfield with training and job placements assistance. In 2006, Dunn was awarded as a Small Business Administration (SBA) Champion for New Jersey, New York, Puerto Rico, and the Virgin Islands. All of these distinctions enable Dunn to have extensive contacts in the business community.

As a for-profit business, The Incubator is unique among New Jersey Business Incubation Network (NJBIN) incubators. It is not subsidized by government, but Dunn has used his business network to create a close relationship with the city of Plainfield, which in turn opens up relationships with the Small Business Development Centers (SBDC). That relationship enabled Dunn to persuade the Small Business Administration, SCORE, and the Plainfield Chamber of Commerce to locate their offices at the BOSS, which is housed in the same location as The Incubator. These various agencies are easily accessible to the entrepreneurs, home-based businesses, lawyers, accountants, contractors, and non-profit and faith-based organizations that are or have been located at The Incubator.

Three adjacent buildings house various businesses, with space ranging from a small office to a 6000 square foot warehouse with drive-up ramp. Some tenants use the space on an as-needed basis: there is a conference room for rent by the hour and a training room that is available by the day. Tenants of The Incubator do not have a set

Jeff Dunn, director of The Incubator and The BOSS
period of time for staying at the facility. When tenants leave, it is usually because they have outgrown the available space. Several spaces have nurtured generations of businesses: there have been three car washes and three day care centers that “grew their legs” before leaving The Incubator to move to larger spaces.

Dunn’s efforts to promote business go far beyond the walls of The Incubator and the BOSS. Through his association with NJBIN, he and Judith Sheft, associate vice president of Technology Development at NJIT and member of NJBIN, obtained the resources in 2007 to put together a regional conference for economic development. After holding the conference for two years in Plainfield, Dunn collaborated in 2009 and 2010 with the New Jersey Institute of Technology and Talia Young, a representative of Senator Lautenberg’s Office, to put together one business clinic per year. Each clinic drew more than 400 vendors and 300 attendees.

About The Incubator Inc. and The BOSS (Business One Stop Service)

The Incubator Inc./The BOSS (Business One Stop Service) offers centralized business resources including access to various private/public business development organizations to enable businesses to develop and grow. Learn more at their website at http://thebusinessonestopservice.com/incubator.html.

About the New Jersey Business Incubation Network

The New Jersey Business Incubation Network (NJBIN) is a collaborative statewide community of business experts and resource facilities dedicated to enhancing the commercial success of early stage and expansion stage entrepreneurial companies, growing higher paying jobs, and supporting the Economic Growth Strategy for the state. Early stage and expansion stage companies receive critical support services in a professional business environment. Companies occupy flexible space within the incubators or participate as affiliates from their own location.

To learn more about NJBIN, please go to www.NJBIN.org or contact the president of NJBIN, Gerald (Jerry) Creighton Sr., at jerry.creighton@njit-edc.org or 973-643-4063, Ext. 101.