

ASK SCORE

(458 words)

Got Business Questions? SCORE has answers

By Willy Campbell – Special to The Pilot

Today marks the first in a monthly column to appear in The Pilot on Friday. I'll be responding to readers' questions pertaining to any aspect they desire on the subject of operating or starting a small business in Moore County.

I am a counselor with your local SCORE chapter, Sandhills SCORE Chapter 364. We have 20 members and are part of SCORE (Counselors to America's Small Business), a national non-profit organization with nearly 400 chapters throughout the United States. SCORE is a resource partner of the Small Business Administration but is not a government agency. We are a group of retired and active business people who are dedicated to donating our time to counseling and mentoring business folks who need help. Our services are confidential and free. In addition to face-to-face counseling, other assistance is also available. Those businesses already operating can use our volunteer members in a "Tiger Team" capacity to address business problems that may be frustrating the owners.

Sandhills SCORE also works closely with the Small Business Center at Sandhills Community College in providing a series of free business seminars twice a year at Van Dusen Hall. This "Business Basics" series includes Great Beginnings, Accounting, Your Business Plan, Marketing and How To Get A Business Loan. Local professionals assist our SCORE volunteers in delivering the seminars in a forthright and easy to understand manner. Our objective is to give you tools that you can use when you walk out the door.

We maintain a local web site that has all the information on our counseling activities, seminars, links to important local and national websites and how to contact us for counseling and any other matters. You can reach us on the internet at www.sandhillsscore.org. or at our Moore County Chamber of Commerce office telephone 910-692-3926.

For your questions – please get those questions to me at info@sandhillsscore.org. We monitor our "mailbox" very carefully. I look forward to using our Sandhills SCORE talents to provide you with the advice to make you successful.

And just to share with you why we volunteer as we do. I had the pleasure last month to assist one of my clients complete her Business Plan and discuss it with a local business banker to obtain initial capital. We had spent a lot of time analyzing the market, justifying sales projections and scrubbing all the elements to generate a concise but thorough plan. It's hard to describe my joy when she received the OK and is now off doing the many chores to get her business up and running by late March.

That is why we are here – to help you.