

NEWS RELEASE

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Rural Ecosystem Builders launch series of rural small business resource conferences for all rural Oklahoma small business owners

OKLAHOMA CITY, OK – Rural small business support organizations – including state agencies, CareerTechs, colleges and universities, incubators, accelerators, funding partners, and more – have come together to form a consortium known as Rural Ecosystem Builders, with collaborative resources branded as Launch Rural OK, and plan to ignite a series of small business resource conferences in February and March 2025.

The one-day conferences are scheduled for:

- February 14, at Eastern Oklahoma State College, West Main Street, Wilburton, OK
- February 28, at Southwest Technology Center, West Tamarack Road, Altus, OK
- March 14, at Oklahoma State University Institute of Technology, East 4th Street, Okmulgee, OK
- March 31, at Northwest Technology Center, Vo-Tech Drive, Fairview, OK

“Oklahoma’s local economies thrive on entrepreneurship, and our communities are fortunate to have so many talented small business owners,” said Dana Huggle, Oklahoma SBDC assistant state director of performance and operations. “Oklahoma has a strong business support network, unfortunately many entrepreneurs never access those resources. These conferences serve as an introduction and opportunity to network to start and grow our business community.”

Launch Rural OK is bringing world-class entrepreneurship training to rural Oklahoma communities through the four regional one-day conferences designed to help anyone with a business receive actionable assistance to thrive in their communities. The conferences will have two tracks:

- Entrepreneurs leading already-existing businesses will gain practical marketing tools, direct connections to funding opportunities like grants, loans, and venture capital, and proven insights from successful entrepreneurs and business support resources.
- Ideators who have not yet taken action on their entrepreneurial idea will participate in a full day Idea Sprint workshop. This program, hosted by Builders + Backers, welcomes anyone with a business idea, whether it's a main street business, a side hustle, or a scalable startup. No prior experience required.

"Every day, we see incredible ideas sitting on the sidelines because people don't know how to get started or think they first need technical expertise or large amounts of capital," said Donna Harris, CEO of Builders + Backers. "Our proven methodology helps anyone, anywhere, regardless of their background or experience, take those first crucial steps toward building a successful venture."

Whether a founder is attending the conference general sessions featuring experienced entrepreneurs sharing their story and breakout sessions highlighting actionable tools – plus the announcement of a new business resource designed to make every entrepreneur’s life simpler

– or the Idea Sprint, Oklahoma small business teams are certain to walk away from the conferences with a team of individuals prepared to assist in their business endeavors.

Entrepreneurs, and potential entrepreneurs, are welcome to join at the conference nearest to their operation, but don't need to stop there. Registration is open for as many conferences as small business owners are able to attend. Conference registration is available at www.launchruralok.com/conferences.

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About Launch Rural OK

Launch Rural OK is a consortium of rural Oklahoma business support organizations — including state agencies, CareerTechs, colleges and universities, incubators, accelerators, funding partners, and more — who work in collaboration to bring business resource accessibility and continuity for rural Oklahoma entrepreneurs. Our group brings an interactive resource map, conferences, and more to rural Oklahomans' front door. More: www.launchruralok.com

About Builders + Backers

Builders + Backers helps entrepreneurial dreamers become Builders who create and grow promising new companies. Our innovative, research-backed workshops, events, and programs, combined with our full stack of philanthropic and investment funds, work together to create a “Universal Entrepreneurship Onramp,” making it possible for anyone to bring their ideas to life and make a real impact in the communities they call home. More: www.buildersandbackers.com