Northern Josephine County residents have a new ally to help them start or expand a business.

The Rogue Community College Small Business Development Center opened the Sunny Valley-Wolf Creek satellite office this fall to serve the rural area. Located at 147 Main St., Wolf Creek, the center is headed by Joe Andrews, business development coordinator, who says his goal is to help the area build a more robust economy.

“We’ll offer what the community wants and needs,” he said.

Andrews is surveying people to learn what courses would be most helpful and deliver the “biggest bang for the buck.” So far, requests center on Web page design and small business management. The office has been well received, according to Andrews.

“We’ve had a number of drop-in visitors, and people are gaining interest,” he explained.

Funded by a two-year grant from the U.S. Department of Agriculture, the Sunny Valley-Wolf Creek SBDC satellite’s role is to provide free-of-charge business counseling and classes on starting up businesses. Subsidized, lower cost courses such QuickBooks, accounting, budgeting and small business management also are available.

Andrews earned a Master’s in Business Administration from George Fox University and associate and bachelor’s degrees from Oregon Institute of Technology. His business experience includes 20-plus years in property management and serving as a program manager for a major technology firm. A licensed tax preparer, Andrews and his wife own four small businesses.

He’s keen on promoting use of the Internet as a marketing tool.
“This area has a number of talented artists and craftspeople, but they lack distribution networks,” he said. “I hope to help them explore how to sell online and other options.”

Wolf Creek business owner Nancy Johnston says having business-oriented computer classes taught in her community is convenient.

“We are enjoying the QuickBooks class and learning how to run our businesses with the program,” said Johnson, who owns Circle of Wolves Gift Shop, Wolf Creek Wine Sellers and with her husband runs Wolf Creek Electric. “There are six people in the class, representing many businesses, and some have multiple businesses,” Johnston added.

“We look forward to more classes being offered in Wolf Creek,” she explained. “I would be interested in a Web page startup and hosting class.”

The Sunny Valley-Wolf Creek SBDC satellite office hours are 1-3 p.m. Monday and Wednesday, 10 a.m. to noon Tuesday and Thursday, and by appointment. For more information call 541-866-2470 or e-mail jandrews@roguecc.edu.

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