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Youth Entrepreneurship: The Roadmap to Our Future

An entrepreneur is a person who organizes and operates a business, generally taking on more risk than average to do so. I believe that learning and practicing entrepreneurship at a young age is key to developing the workforce of tomorrow. Our partners at Network Kansas are committed to growing youth entrepreneurship throughout the state through staff support and cash prizes for participants of Youth Entrepreneurship Challenges.

Youth Entrepreneurship Challenges have been held in many Southeast Kansas counties this Spring. Winners from these events are preparing to compete in a statewide event on the Kansas State University campus in late April.

Today I'd like to share with you 5 reasons you should care about youth entrepreneurship, as shared by Network Kansas.

- 1) Entrepreneurship teaches valuable skills. From business basics to the importance of relationships, youth entrepreneurs learn a variety of valuable life-long skills.
- 2) Youth entrepreneurship is a safe place to experiment. Network Kansas states that youth entrepreneurship is similar to playing dress up. Students can try on a lot of different options for businesses with little risk.
- 3) Entrepreneurship is a career path. Many students will begin their entrepreneurship journey with a side business to help them through college only to realize they would like to own their own business even after earning a degree. Others may have the dedication and vision to own their own business directly out of high school.
- 4) Their business might just succeed. Look around your own community. Think about those major employers that started, at one time, because someone had an idea. Today's youth are innovative and continuously think outside the box. A successful business can begin today, no matter what age the founder may be.
- 5) Entrepreneurship is inspiring. It is a way for young people to take greater control of their lives and economic futures. It is a way for adults to look at the next generation with a great hope for our communities.

I encourage you to look around your communities and identify ways to support youth entrepreneurs. From the lemonade stand on the corner to the neighbor kid looking for lawns to mow, youth entrepreneurship is an important part of the business culture of America and of Southeast Kansas.

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