



FOR THE LIFE OF YOUR BUSINESS

## **SCORE column: Counselors optimistic about business growth**

BY TINA DETTMAN-BIELEFELDT-JANUARY 6, 2011

In talking with Green Bay SCORE counselors, there is a spirit of optimism for business growth this year. While most expect improvement to be slow, an upturn is expected.

"There seems to be a more positive feeling in the business world," said counselor Harvey Medress.

Gordon Russell, another counselor, agrees.

"I read the business news every day, and there are a lot of signs that are positive," he said. "There seems to be a movement going in the right direction." Russell thinks that preparation will be one of the keys this year. With all of the small business information available online at [www.greenbayscore.org](http://www.greenbayscore.org), he advises doing research before coming in for counseling.

"Entrepreneurs need to understand a business plan even if a lot doesn't pertain to their business concept," he said. "They will recognize many areas that they haven't even considered."

Counselor John McCully hopes the newly elected Congress will be business advocates and that there won't be two years of no-action deadlocks.

"Passing continuing tax reduction legislation made things look promising for at least some cooperation, although there will probably be ongoing battles between liberals and conservatives in Congress," he said.

Other issues that might hinder business growth include a continuing high unemployment rate, lack of improvement in the housing industry, and mounting federal and state debt. As in previous years, health care continues to be a concern.

"No one has the foggiest idea as to what will happen with national health care and the total cost of the package," McCully said. "There is a fear that opening coverage to the previously uninsured without some sort of utilization limitations will drive private insurance costs sky high, at least for the first few years."

While contending with these issues, Paul Carron, SCORE chapter chairman, thinks there are opportunities. In counseling sessions, he has noted a lack of manufacturing start-ups and would like to see more entrepreneurs consider this type of business. "Service businesses are good, but we are losing the proven economic model of first establishing manufacturing firms as the bedrock foundation of a community livelihood," he said. "I hope new entrepreneurs will step forward and realize there is a place for new manufacturing businesses. While high-volume mass-produced products will come from overseas, I believe a factory in Wisconsin can thrive if it focuses on custom, made-to-order, higher-quality products coupled with excellent customer service."

KaraLynne Moore, counselor, thinks that there will be a continuing stability and growth in the retail and service sector among food wholesalers, grocery stores, home and car repair, educational facilities, accountants, lawyers, recycling facilities, hospitals and used vehicle dealers. She thinks the economy will improve, but not quickly. "I think this year will be a very slow recovery and may resemble 2010," she said. "The worldwide financial troubles will keep the economic growth flat or with minimal growth. Many companies will consolidate to achieve efficiencies and/or grow market share without huge capital investments."

**Tina Dettman-Bielefeldt in co-owner of DB Commercial Real Estate in Green Bay and assistant district director for SCORE, Wisconsin.**