Butler county leadership continues to identify entrepreneurship and economic development as important areas for cooperative extension service programming. Greg Drake II, Butler County Agriculture and Natural Resources Extension Agent, and two volunteer leaders have been working together as Butler County’s Entrepreneurial Coaching team. Both Greg and the volunteer leaders are graduates of the Kentucky Entrepreneurial Coaches Institute. This year, retired medical doctor Richard Wan was named Economic Ambassador for Butler County, and he also joined the team.

To date, the Butler County Entrepreneurial Coaching team has coached 23 businesses. The coaches use materials developed by UK extension specialist Ron Hustedde and Kentucky CES agents to assist potential business owners. In addition to coaching new business owners, the Entrepreneurial Coaching team operates the Morgantown/Butler County small business incubator program. Ensuring the future of the incubator, the program’s finances are now a part of Butler County government. The incubator program supports individuals interested in starting small businesses. The incubator program offers entrepreneurial coaching, assistance with the costs associated with getting the business open, rent assistance, and additional support for the business owner. Businesses can be in the incubator program for one year.

Recent incubator successes include Whitetail Properties. Boyce Flener opened this real estate business in Morgantown. Whitetail Properties focuses on selling recreational and agricultural land. Mr. Flener put up an attractive sign for his business and now occupies a previously vacant property. Another success of the incubator program, a carbon fiber manufacturing facility, is also now open in Morgantown. This operation produces components for the aviation industry. The manufacturing facility is the fifth small business to open in Morgantown because of the incubator program. The incubator program is viewed as a success and enjoys great support in the community. The businesses are thriving and creating economic activity in Morgantown.

The entrepreneurship committee travelled to Washington D.C. in June to meet with a minister-counselor at the Chinese Embassy to discuss Chinese investment in Butler County. The committee was well received and we expect a delegation from the Chinese Embassy to visit Butler County during the fall of 2015. Additional funds were secured from the city and county this year to keep this unique economic development program operating.

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For more Butler County CED information:
http://butler.ca.uky.edu/CommunityEconomicDevelopment

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