

“Now is the most perfect time to think entrepreneurially and to start some sort of small business, because there are opportunities now,” said a University of Nebraska–Lincoln Extension Educator.

“We think doom and gloom because of the recession and negative media, but as we look back in history, some of the most powerful businesses have been created during recessions,” said Connie Hancock, extension educator for Cheyenne, Kimball and Banner Counties.

Hancock advised potential entrepreneurs who have ideas to build on them now. They should “take advantage of the times” and move forward with their endeavors.

Hancock said that entrepreneurship is a big program for UNL extension. Starting at the local level with people who have innovative concepts, Extension tries to help them take the next step. Extension helps them think about the feasibility of their ideas and what they would need to take those ideas into a commercial operation.

Extension programs help potential business owners to market their products and services, not only using traditional techniques, but also with online marketing. In today’s environment, particularly in rural areas, entrepreneurs need to think about an online presence.

“We’ve got access to university faculty and to researchers and specialists,” Hancock said. “We also have a variety of educational programming that we can bring to our communities.”

She listed the Cooperative Development Center, the Food Processing Center and EDGE, which is a business planning class as resources.

“We are glad to come and work with community leaders to help them identify needs and to assist their entrepreneurs and we have a cafeteria of programs to meet the needs of particular communities,” she said.

She also cited a youth education component to help young people think about staying in their communities or coming back to their communities and starting businesses where they currently live.

UNL Extension is gearing up to provide a wide range of assistance to Nebraskans who wish to start their own businesses or expand the ones they’ve already started.