

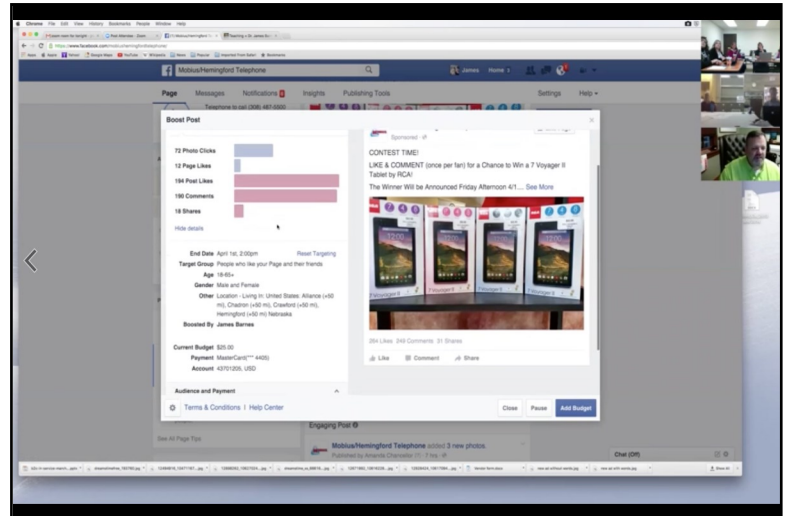


Rural Business Programs • Rural Business Development Grant

Grant Helps Rural Small Businesses Go Global

University of Nebraska-Lincoln Extension Community Vitality Educators knew small businesses needed access to global markets in order to grow their business in rural America. The Board of Regents of the University of Nebraska received a USDA Rural Business Development technical assistance grant through eTailing—Taking Charge of Your Online Presence. This training had a goal to connect with 20 businesses in two communities in the Panhandle of Nebraska. Chadron and Kimball are approximately 150 miles apart. Through the use of web video conferencing, both groups had one-on-one sessions with a trainer in Mississippi. The educational opportunity was so popular 35 businesses participated.

Technical assistance was provided by Lighthouse Consulting with Nebraska Community Vitality Educators providing one-on-one assistance and workshop trainings to the business owners. Through these educational opportunities small business owners were able to better understand how organic Facebook marketing, paid boost and like campaigns could expand their market. Plus, by learning how to appropriately create contests and analyze Facebook Insights, they could make wiser decisions about their online marketing strategy. As a result of the training, seven businesses launched brand new online social media business pages. Participating businesses averaged a 50 percent increase in their direct connections with new customers and participating businesses connected to more than one million new customers. One-third of the businesses saw immediate economic impact from their online marketing efforts.



The picture depicts the use of technology to tie two communities and a research consultant into the learning process.

Obligation Amount: \$21,039 grant

Date of Obligation: 8/7/15

Congressional District: Representative Smith District 03; Fischer, Sasse

Partners: Lighthouse Consulting Association, LLC

Demographics: Dawes and Kimball Counties specifically the communities of Chadron and Kimball (population

Impact: 32 businesses learned to build, market and grow their Facebook book business pages. The estimated average economic value (Online Business Brand) for each business on connection to new customers is \$14,912 with a total value of \$313,157.