

Business center offers training

BY SAMANTHA HORN

Staff Writer

The H. Simmons, Sr. Small Business Learning Center training division of the Greater North Louisiana Community Development Corporation will hold a seminar March 30 from 5:30-7 p.m. to kick off its entrepreneurship training classes.

The classes are targeted at helping entrepreneurs starting new businesses or expanding existing businesses.

Speakers from SCORE, a volunteer small business mentoring and training

under the United States Small Business Administration that was created in 1964, will be on hand to offer advice and answer questions from small business owners.

Veronica Johnson is one of those volunteers. Johnson worked in the small business development center at the University of Louisiana at Monroe and the Ouachita Enterprise Community. She has worked with government agencies, small loan programs and non-profit organizations. Johnson began her own business consulting company in 2004 and joined SCORE two years ago, where she now serves as co-chair of her chapter.

She said she is looking forward to encouraging entrepreneurs at the seminar.

"I want to encourage them to not give up," she said. "Starting a business is hard and it does not

take much to get discouraged. I want to encourage them and stress the importance of planning."

Johnson said she will also share information about how to get started and be successful in entrepreneurship.

Miles K. Luke will also be available to offer advice to entrepreneurs. Luke spent 25 years in active military service and, since his retirement, has worked for the Louisiana Department of Commerce and Industry, has served as director for the Industrial Development Boards of Central Louisiana and Northeast Louisiana, has operated his own economic development consulting business and organized the SCORE chapter in Northeast Louisiana.

The cost of admission to the kickoff is \$5 and advance reservations are required.

Jan Barnes, Associate Director of the H. Simmons, Sr. Small Business Learning Center, said the seminar and classes following will offer advice on all aspects of small business endeavors.

"As Walt Disney said, 'The way to get started is to quit talking and begin doing'", she said. "The Small Business Learning Center will follow this seminar with class offerings that will provide participants with the A to Z instruction on opening, running or expanding a small business."

Barnes said anyone who needs further information is encouraged to call 395-2126 and talk with her.