

For immediate release

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## **North Grand Mall to connect aspiring entrepreneurs with business start-up expertise**

AMES, IA...Seasoned professionals in small business development, banking, marketing and franchising and successful small business owners will share their expertise with aspiring entrepreneurs at the New Business Expo 2008 at North Grand Mall.

Sponsored by North Grand Mall and mall owner GK Development, Inc, the business-to-business event will be held from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. Saturday, April 19 next to CJ Banks in the mall's north wing.

The Expo is designed to provide potential business owners with information and tools to successfully launch a retail franchise or turnkey business through workshops featuring successful area business executives.

"The New Business Expo opens the door to new business opportunities with and for local entrepreneurs. We'll help potential business owners answer the question...do you want to be the boss? The Expo is an unmatched opportunity for potential business owners to learn what it takes to move from a great idea to open for business within the shopping center environment at North Grand Mall," said Kurt Carlson, general manager at North Grand Mall.

"The workshops will provide entrepreneurs with vital tools needed to start a new business and become a successful small business owner," he added.

The Expo workshop schedule, speakers and topics are:

11 a.m., Todd Graff, owner, Pretzelmaker, North Grand Mall, *"Why a franchise was right for me!"*

1 p.m., Joe Cooney, consultant, FranNet of the Heartland, Omaha, *"How do you find the right franchise for you?"*

2 p.m., Mike Upah, Director, I.S.U. Small Business Development Center, Ames, *"Smart Start Workshop: Helping your business idea grow into maturity."* The two-hour Smart Start Workshop is typically \$25, but is being offered at no charge during the New Business Expo. Attendees will learn how to create a business plan, do market research,

evaluate demand and business strength, consider different types of business ownership and how to register a business. Workshop pre-registration is encouraged. Call 515-232-3679 or e-mail [info.ngr@gkdevelopment.com](mailto:info.ngr@gkdevelopment.com) and include name and phone number.

Leading national franchises, including Rocky Mountain Chocolate Factory, Deck the Walls, Magic Wok and UPS Store will provide information about their organizations.

The North Grand Mall New Business Expo 2008 is sponsored by KASI 1430AM, Channel Q 105.1FM, Valley Bank and Coca-Cola.

For more information, send a request to [newbusiness@gkdevelopment.com](mailto:newbusiness@gkdevelopment.com) or call North Grand Mall at 515-232-3679.

Small businesses are a key component of economic growth. According to the Small Business Administration, America's 25.5 million small businesses generate more than half of the nation's gross domestic product, create 80 percent of all the net new jobs in the United States, and employ 52 percent of the private sector work force.

**About GK Development, Inc.**

The Barrington, Illinois based real estate company owns 5 million square feet of space, including nine regional malls, in nine states.

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