

**Upcoming TIA Meeting for SATURDAY, April 19, 2008
At 10 AM in the 2020 building in the Oak Ridge Industrial Park.
Visitors are always welcome.**

**Upcoming TIA Meeting on April 19, 2008
By Tom Kulaga, TIA Recording Secretary**

Sam Weaver is our scheduled speaker for April. Sam is "serial entrepreneur." As a successful businessman who has started many companies, Sam will speak about his experiences as an innovator and a businessman. One of Sam's current projects is Sizzle, a business incubator for small companies.

Meeting Notes from March 15, 2008 Meeting

Bruce Hayes of the Tennessee Small Business Development Centers (TSBDC) was the featured speaker. Bruce teaches, trains, and speaks for the TSBDC throughout Tennessee.

Bruce started his presentation by offering a history lesson. The following are the high points of that lesson:

- 1953 the Small Business Administration (SBA) was formed.
- 1967 the Service Core of Retired Executives (SCORE) was formed.
- 1971 the American Society of Executives (ASE) was formed.
- 1979 the Small Business Development Centers (SBDC) were created.
- 1989 the Tennessee Small Business Development Centers (TSBDC) were created.

Bruce then discussed various aspects of starting and growing a business. **Planning!** Bruce pointed out that many people spend more time planning their vacations than they do planning their business.

In planning a business, he pointed out two things that everyone needs to remember: First, you cannot compete with Walmart. They sell low because they buy low. Second, identify who the customer is.

Bruce then identified various programs available to small businesses. The first was the Tennessee Small and Minority-Owned Business Assistance Program at <http://www.tnsmob.org>. Anyone with less than \$4 million of revenue per year qualifies.

Another is the Small Business Administration (SBA) Community Express Program. This SBA program offers loans up to \$50,000 with a 10 year payback. The SBA has other financial assistance programs including the 7(m), which are loans around \$35,000 and the 504 and 7(a) programs that offer loans in the range of \$1,500,000 to \$4,000,000.

Bruce also told of the Tennessee Technology Development Corporation (TTDC), which is a new Tennessee organization that is mandated to build and support technology businesses in Tennessee. The TTDC has \$4000 grants available. See www.TnTechnology.org for more information.

Bruce described the counselors in the Knoxville TSBDC office. The counselors are drawn from people with practical business experience. That is, the TSBDC counselors

went to the school of hard knocks before joining TSBDC. The Knoxville director, Larry Rossini, has a manufacturing background. Joe Andrews has an HVAC background, and Bruce has a construction background.

Bruce closed his presentation with an introduction of SWOT: a strategic planning tool used to evaluate the Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats involved in a business venture. Wikipedia has a good discussion of SWOT analysis.

Joe Martin presented a plaque to Terry Brewster for being an Outstanding President of the TIA. He also announced that a plaque was being given to Laurel Bowen for her efforts in creating and maintaining the TIA website.

A **panel discussion** with **AJ Beal, Martin Skinner, Joe Martin,** and **Igor Alexeff** closed the meeting. The panel discussed the upcoming Seminar and solicited support from the members. Terry Brewster suggested a theme for the Seminar and it was approved by consensus: **Opportunities for Innovation in East Tennessee**. The Seminar is scheduled for August 16, the date of the regularly scheduled TIA meeting in August.

Topics for the Seminar were discussed. The topics included the patent process, marketing, manufacturing, and business planning. Bruce Hayes volunteered to present his TSBDC 3-hour program, either at the Seminar or at some other time.

Extra Notes

Igor Alexeff delivered an **industrial prototype of his plasma antenna** to the Picatinny Arsenal in New Jersey on Tuesday, March 25, 2008.

He also delivered a **plasma sterilizer** to St. Jude's Research Hospital in Memphis, TN to see if it would destroy bacteria that have become immune to conventional antibiotics. Preliminary reports indicate that it works well.

Concerning the **antique atmospheric plasma generator** that **Igor** brought in to the TIA meeting in February, the same device was discussed in The Knoxville News Sentinel on page E2, Friday, March 21, 2008. Joe L. Rosson has a column showing a photo of the device. The column was titled, "Violet ray generator 'cures' many ills."