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## EDC announces 2011 website initiative

The Alexander County Economic Development Corporation has announced that applications are now being accepted for the 2011-12 Business and Industry Website Creation Grant Program.

The grant program is a competitive grant program which will provide funds for Alexander County based businesses that currently do not have websites. The grants will provide a minimum of a one-page website for businesses that are selected to participate in the program. The program will target businesses which have the best opportunity to export their product outside of Alexander County, are most likely to increase visitor traffic to the county, and are most likely to create or maintain local employment.

This year's grant program is being administered by Jonathan Williams who is completing a summer internship with the Economic Development Corporation. Williams is a student at Wake Forest University majoring in mathematics but also focusing on entrepreneurship. He is also president of Delightfully Daisy, LLC which offers healthy, preservative-free gourmet dog treats. His work with this year's program has included revising the program guidelines and application to make them more business-friendly and to give grantees more flexibility in how grant funds are applied to their website projects.

"Local businesses operating without a website are missing valuable exposure to both local and international customers," said Williams. "Every type of business can benefit from having a web presence. Whether a business's website is strictly informational or capable of conducting online transactions, the exchange of information that a website creates is invaluable. Local businesses and entrepreneurs should fully explore their online options."

Funding for the program is provided by Alexander County Commissioners. Companies awarded grants in the first year included: Royale Komfort Bedding, Brigitte's Staffing, R.E. Foy & Son Builders, Seaworthy Seating, Alexander Co Habitat for Humanity, Beasley Power Equipment, Harrington's Machine Shop, Little Egypt Automotive, Warren's Complete Auto Care Center, and Harrington Construction.

Grant applications will be accepted until 5 p.m. on Monday, July 11. Guidelines about the program, including the application form, are available on the EDC website at [www.AlexanderEDC.org](http://www.AlexanderEDC.org). Applications may also be picked up at the EDC office located at 119 NC Hwy 16 North, Suite A or by calling the office at 632-1161. Grant applications will be judged on a variety of factors including type of service provided by the business, legal structure, location of business, financial need, and other factors.