

NASE Awards

\$95,243 In Business Development Grants

20 NASE Members Get Funding For Their Micro-Businesses

Last year, the NASE awarded Business Development Grants to 20 members who put the money to work buying equipment, upgrading their offices with technology, launching new Web sites and more.

"With small-business loans drying up, the money provided by the NASE Business Development Grants has become even more important for our members," says Robert Hughes, president of the NASE.

"We continue to push for legislation and funding that would increase small-business lending. But until that money starts flowing again, these grants provide immediate working capital for our members."

The NASE has awarded more than \$400,000 to member businesses since the grant program began in 2006.

Here's a look at how a few NASE Members benefited from their grants in 2009.



Twist Of Fate

Theresa Cassidy

NASE Member since 2008

Business name: Catena Creations LLC

Location: Bellevue, Neb.

Web site: www.catenacreations.com

Number of years in business: 2

After Cassidy was laid off for the second time in seven months, she says she decided to "take my fate into my own hands instead of leaving it up to other people. I wanted to provide my own stability and I liked working at home so I can be available for my 14-year-old son."

Her solution was to start Catena Creations, an integrated marketing firm that provides Web and print design, photography, written proposals and other services.

Like many business owners in an uncertain economic climate, Cassidy says her biggest challenge is

"managing cash flow; knowing when to invest and when to hold back."

The NASE grant helped her meet that challenge. Cassidy used the grant money to invest in a laptop computer, video camera and wireless equipment.

"People expect me to have this kind of technology," Cassidy says. "When you show up with it, it really gives you credibility and makes you look professional. And having this video camera gives me another way to earn money and expand my business."

But it isn't just the equipment that will help Cassidy grow her business. The fact that she applied for and received the NASE grant will give her a marketing edge, too.

"Part of my work is grant writing and proposal writing. When people see that I did this for myself, they're going to know I'm successful and can do it for them."