



PRESS RELEASE

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Free support for local retailers

Local retailers are being offered free support and advice to help boost their businesses through tailor made workshops and one to one business development.

Action with Communities in Cumbria (ACT) is offering the chance for retailers from Appleby and Kirkby Stephen to take part in the 'Revitalising Retail Programme'.

The 'Revitalising Retail Programme' will support independent retailers facing the challenge of reduced customer numbers, supermarket competition and rising operating expenses. The programme aims to encourage the revitalisation of small retail businesses within our key service centres by supporting them to enhance their shop fronts and window displays, improve merchandising, layout and customer service.

Bill Smith, Chief Executive of South Lakes Development Trust said "The difficulties faced by many small retail businesses can often be compounded by the lack of opportunity for them to access advice and information about how their individual opportunities can be extended.

"Our experience of delivering consultancy to over 300 independent retailers across the northwest has enabled us to develop a programme that builds retailer confidence and develops a sense of direction and motivation"

The programme will be delivered in four phases, beginning in early January 2009. Starting with an initial snapshot assessment of each participating business, to identify issues from a customer's perspective, interactive workshops will look at opportunities for enhancing the internal and external aspects of high street business and good retailing.

Participating businesses will then benefit from one to one business development followed by the opportunity to receive accredited training with the one day 'Welcome Host for Retail Course' focusing on good customer service.

Carl Glynn of ACT said: "The free training and support will be an excellent opportunity for local retailers to maximise their selling potential, which is very much needed in these trying times."

The programme, funded by Eden District Council through the Local Authority Business Growth Incentive scheme will run from early January 2009. The first two workshops on Tuesday 27th January and Tuesday 3rd February from 7pm to 9.30pm at Soulby Village Hall. One to one business development will continue through early February followed by the Customer Service Training on Tuesday 24th February from 10am to 3pm at Soulby Village Hall, including a free lunch.

Booking for the free training and support is essential, to find out more contact Carl Glynn at ACT on Tel: 01768 869525 or Email: carlglynn@cumbriaaction.org.uk

Business Link North West staff will be encouraging retailers to engage with this support and to contact ACT to book a place before the New Year.

- Ends -

Further press information available from:

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Notes to Editors:

Action with Communities in Cumbria

(Previously known as Voluntary Action Cumbria)

- ACT is Cumbria's Rural Community Council and a registered charity.
- ACT is working with people and communities to improve the quality of life in rural Cumbria.
- ACT is an independent organisation able to work with a wide range of partners on an open and equitable basis.
- Established in 1948, for 60 years ACT has been supporting communities that are socially, economically and environmentally vibrant where the needs of all are considered.
- To find out more information, please visit ACT's website: www.cumbriaaction.org.uk
- **Please note, this website is currently being formed, information can be found at our old website www.ruralcumbria.org.uk**