

Southwest Colorado's Inaugural 'Native Entrepreneurship' Workshop



[Southern Ute Indian Reservation, Colorado, September 25, 2021] An exciting five-year collaboration to support small business growth and development began in the Southern Ute Indian Reservation. [The Southern Ute Tribe](#), [Fort Lewis College Center for Innovation](#), and The Leeds School of Business [Deming](#)

[Center for Entrepreneurship](#) at The University of Colorado Boulder hosted the inaugural business workshop called “*Native Entrepreneurship*” on September 24th and 25th.

Native Entrepreneurship was taught by Erick Mueller and Eric Burno, entrepreneurs and award-winning professors at the [Leeds School of Business](#). This was a valuable program for both aspiring entrepreneurs and current small business owners. This course gave existing businesses a new perspective to stir creativity and explore new growth opportunities while providing the perfect primer for entrepreneurs navigating their way through the business start up process.

“The Southern Ute Indian Tribe was honored to host the Demystifying Entrepreneurship Conference and proud of the collaboration with the various entities who came together to support tribal entrepreneurs,” stated Chairman Melvin J. Baker. “The conference helped bridge the gap between a dream of small business development for members of our tribal community.”

Local entrepreneurs and innovators from the Ignacio area joined together at the [Sky Ute Casino](#) to turn their business ideas into reality or take their business concepts to the next level. The varied group included a sustainable plant pot for use in the rejuvenation of riverbeds, an electric vehicle charging experience, and a healing studio.

“I am grateful that these resources are available for our tribal community and the surrounding area. And that we can learn from experts in entrepreneurship,” says, a 2021 attendee.

Dedra White Eagle is excited to develop a few different ideas. One that she worked on during the workshop was an electric vehicle charging experience. Transforming this typically dull experience into one that shares Native American history and stories, is engaging and overall

memorable. She shared, “The entire workshop was very valuable. I am a beginner in this entrepreneurship world and am thankful that I participated and learned these practical tools”

“What a special cohort of change-makers! I was inspired by the innovative ideas from all the attendees and especially impressed from the concepts developed by the Southern Ute Tribal members. It’s so exciting to launch this workshop series to contribute in elevating the local entrepreneurial ecosystem. I’m certain this cohort will help amplify the Native and surrounding community’s overall economic vitality. We can’t wait to return in 2022!”, shared Mueller.

This workshop will return to Ignacio, Colorado in the Spring of 2022. [Receive updates about next year's workshop.](#)

This series of workshops is put on in partnership with CU’s Leeds School of Business and is available in every major rural region in Colorado. The next Demystifying Workshop, Shore Up, is being offered in Vail, Colorado on October 8th and 9th. To register for this event, please visit <https://www.vailvalleypartnership.com/event/shore-up-your-small-business/>.

And to learn about all locations, visit : <https://outreach.colorado.edu/program/demystifying-entrepreneurship-rural-colorado-workshop-series/>.

Many thanks to those who made this event possible.