

American Biosystems President Not Afraid to Ask for Assistance

Edward Goyette has a motto which has served him well in the business world – don't be afraid to ask for help. "I'm not afraid to ask for help and it's amazing the amount of help you can get if you ask for it," he says.

Goyette, president of American Biosystems, recently put the help he received from the Roanoke Regional Small Business Development Center (RRSBDC) to good use and won a prestigious Carilion Biomedical Institute's business plan competition. The business plan competition carries a \$10,000 prize which will be used to develop and market the company's newest product line – an enzyme cleaner for surgical instruments.

Goyette credits part of his success of winning the business plan competition to his involvement with the RRSBDC. Goyette has been a small business center client for three years and successfully completed the NxLevel course through the RRSBDC. The NxLevel course is a 15-week business study which allows students to complete a detailed business plan for their operation. The course is taught by Will Andrews, a RRSBDC business counselor.

"I think one of the reasons I won the business plan award was I was able to put together a concise, to-the-point business plan and the NxLevel class was one of the major reasons for that," Goyette explains. "If you don't have a business plan it's like trying to travel without a compass. If you don't know where you're going you can't tell where you've been."

American Biosystems may be a small company, Goyette works with two part-time employees and an intern who is a graduate of Roanoke College, but the company's business is 60 percent



*Edward Goyette, President
American Biosystems*

exports. American Biosystems develops and sells throughout the world products derived from microorganisms and the enzymes they produce. Some of their most popular lines are animal feed additives, enzymes used in aquaculture, and products developed for waste water treatment facilities.

The new product line is used to help clean the gunk off of used surgical instruments. American Biosystems will use the \$10,000 business plan prize money to further develop the product so that it may be marketed and used throughout the world. "We expect that the surgical instrument cleaner product will be our second biggest seller this year," Goyette predicts.

The Roanoke native also foresees record sells for his four-person company this year. "We hope to do a million dollars at least this year, but I'll be happy to take \$600,000 to \$700,000," Goyette adds.

Goyette quickly offers his praise and thanks to other small business services which have helped him build the 25-year-old company his father, Lewis, started. The Virginia Economic Development Partnership has helped American Biosystems export their products throughout the world with emphasis on markets in China.

"I think a lot of people don't realize that the products they are selling right here in Roanoke out of their shops could be very successful overseas," he explains. "If you overlook that opportunity I think you're making a big mistake and missing out on a big opportunity."

Other agencies that have helped include the New Century Venture Center, where the business is located, the NewVA Corridor Technology Center, Virginia Center for Innovative Technology, and Virginia Assets Financing.

"You guys (the RRSBDC) are so important because you can help people do this planning ahead when you have the time. If you do it properly and your business takes off and you can't buy enough raw materials or can't get credit – you have to be able to manage your growth. You need to get help where you can get it and the price is right. The RRSBDC is a resource people can use to start a business or grow their business."

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For more information on the RRSBDC and how the center can help start-up businesses get off the ground or help existing businesses continue to grow, please call (540) 983-0717, email sbdc@roanokechamber.org or visit the web site at www.rrsbdc.org