

## EDGE Course growing in popularity

**By Merri Johnson**

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*Lori Wagner, owner of Nemaha Hill Arts near Brock, NE, creates original stained glass art. Grape clusters are a natural subject for Lori, who also owns and operates Nemaha Hill Vineyard with husband, Jed Wagner. Lori will be demonstrating her craft during Apple Jack Festival this September at Kimmel Orchard, Nebraska City. She can be contacted regarding custom work at 402-274-3486 or [nemahahill1@alltel.net](mailto:nemahahill1@alltel.net).*

The EDGE class gave me a “realistic picture of drawbacks and opportunities out there” in stained glass, says Lori Wagner, one of thirteen entrepreneurs who took the EDGE business planning course co-sponsored by Five Rivers RC&D in 2003.

During the 13-week course last winter, Wagner and the other students developed complete business plans, including financial statements and marketing plans. Wagner, who has a B.A. in illustration, already possessed the imagination necessary for her stained glass art. She learned the technical skills from Sue Choate of Auburn, but she recognized that she needed help focusing her marketing efforts.

Today she is keeping busy 40 hours per week supplying a cabinet maker with door panels and keeping decorative pieces stocked at Kimmel Orchard, James Arthur Vineyard and Whiskey Run Creek Vineyard and Winery. Unlike her beautiful stained glass, Lori’s business plan doesn’t just “look pretty”: it serves as a reference to reassess her business activities and keep her on track so that her work is not only personally fulfilling but financially rewarding as well.

Other students in this year’s class were:

- Windmill Wool Works, Unadilla, (woolens and training in rug hooking)
- Arbor Trails Winery Gift Shop (proposed business)
- Billups Farms, Nebraska City, (beef genetics)
- Pet Corral, Elk Creek (proposed business);
- Berry & Associates, Lincoln, (healthcare leadership recruitment)
- Tree City Tees, Nebraska City, (custom embroidery and iron-on logos & art)
- Sagebrush Video Productions, Nebraska City, (audio visual communication solutions)
- Pawnee Veterinary Services (proposed business)
- Kids’ Depot, Pawnee City, (child care)
- Clarke Oak Acres, Brock, and Clarke Haven Farms, Auburn, (Angus bulls, heifers and processed beef)
- Jane Andrew (proposed business);
- Rosene Machine, Firth, (machine repair)

Sue Schlictemeier-Nutzman, Ph.D., and Wade Nutzman of Nehawka, and Bob Hanrath of Lincoln taught the 2003 class.

Local fundraising and guidance is provided by the Southeast Nebraska EDGE Coalition. Five Rivers RC&D is a member of the Coalition and administers funds for the class.

Please contact the RC&D office at 402-335-3347 or [Mindi Clarke](#), Coalition Coordinator, at 402-873-6615 to register for the next class.