

TIMES COLUMNIST

# Growing a garden is similar to GCDC

As we roll into spring, we are seeing growth all around us. Gardens are being planted, flowers are blooming, plants are sprouting, and the weather (ideally) will be getting warmer.

Growing a garden is similar to the work we do at Green County Development Corporation. Our mission at GCDC is to promote economic growth throughout the county. In order to best serve our community, we are continuously looking for ways in which we can do that. One of the best practices out there is something



**Olivia  
Otte**

called economic gardening.

Economic gardening is an economic development model that embraces the fundamental idea that entrepreneurs drive economies. The model seeks to create jobs by supporting existing companies in a community.

Economic gardening recognizes that the most stable and prosperous businesses are those that are homegrown. Generally, those enterprises start with solving a local problem with local resources. They are embedded in the community, relying on local services (accountants, lawyers, marketers, etc.) and local talent.

Here in Green County, we have many different great examples of strong homegrown businesses. These businesses are invested in our community. They put a float in the local parade. They sponsor a

youth sports team. They have loyalty to the community and are inclined to stay.

In order to help promote economic gardening, GCDC is partnering with the Small Business Development Center, and the Bank of New Glarus to host a Small Business Series. By hosting the Small Business Series, we hope to promote the next generation of successful homegrown businesses in our area. This series is five weeks long and is designed to nurture future business leaders in a diverse and ever-changing environment.

Like a garden filled with flowers, a small business needs nurturing to grow and survive.

This program will help potential business owners determine if there is a market for their product or service, define their customer base, and develop a business plan that

will appeal to lenders. Most importantly, it teaches participants how to use their time, money, and resources wisely.

Through this series, and in everything we do, GCDC's goal is to be an efficient support system with resources to build business and enterprise. That in turn contributes to a vibrant economic community. Reach out to GCDC to learn more about how we can help you grow and promote your business!

Please visit [greencountydevelopment.com](http://greencountydevelopment.com) or give us a call at 608-328-9452.

— Olivia Otte is the Executive Director of the Green County Development Corporation (GCDC). She can be reached at [olivia.gcdc@tds.net](mailto:olivia.gcdc@tds.net), or by calling 608-328-9452.