

NEWS

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FIVE INNOVATE ND WINNERS AWARDED \$10,000

BISMARCK, ND – Gov. John Hoeven announced five winners for the third statewide Innovate ND program today. A panel of 12 private sector judges made the final selections out of a field of 23 finalists. Winners received \$10,000 in cash and a valuable package of in-kind professional services to help them launch and grow their business.

The winner of the first ever People's Choice Award was also named. The \$500 cash award is sponsored by the North Dakota Chamber of Commerce.

“This program shows that innovators and entrepreneurs are alive and well and hard at work in North Dakota,” Hoeven said. “These entrepreneurs are helping to build our future. They are innovative people who have a promising business idea and the desire to build that venture right here in our state.”

The five winning entries, unranked, are:

- **FormulaNow, Nikki Lamb, West Fargo:** A formula dispensing machine which provides a convenient, consistent, sanitary and efficient process for warming and dispensing infant formula.
- **CiNCity Designs LLC, Nic Cruz, Mandan:** Providing custom built headlights and tail lights to achieve a one-of-a-kind look not found anywhere else.
- **Light Check, Paul Wolf, Mandan:** A portable testing device connected to a trailer wiring that allows to easily test trailer lights to eliminate the unnecessary time and expense of towing a vehicle or second person.

- **Micro Systems Technologies, Joseph Williams, Fairborn, Ohio:** A single device or multitude of sensors to monitor for chemical vapors while performing day-to-day activities to provide a higher standard of safety and security.

- **Site Saver, Robert Heitkamp Wahpeton:** Improves the efficiency and ease of the application of IVs for the practitioner and increases patient comfort and reduces the failure rate of IVs.

The winner of the first People's Choice Award went to Forks Area Health and Wellness Center, Brandy Chaffee of Grand Forks. This idea aims to build optimum community wellbeing for all citizens through a one-stop facility integrating fitness, medical and behavioral health, arts and recreation, and research. More than 4,200 total votes were cast in the first People's Choice Award.

Bruce Gjovig, entrepreneur coach and director of the Center for Innovation said it was a difficult decision for judges. "We are very excited about the future of all of these businesses. They have strong potential for creating jobs and economic development in our state," Gjovig said. "The angel investors who were judges want to encourage all participants to continue developing their venture."

The Center for Innovation provided operational leadership to the Governor's Innovate ND program. Bismarck native Rich Karlgaard provided the keynote address. In addition to serving as publisher of *Forbes* magazine, Karlgaard is a best-selling author and accomplished entrepreneur. He has co-founded two companies, Garage Technology Ventures in 1997 and Upside Magazine in 1988. He was a co-winner of the Ernst & Young Northern California "Entrepreneur of the Year" award for organizing the Churchill Club, a civic organization with 5,500 members.

The awards were presented at the Governors Innovate ND Awards Banquet today in Bismarck.

The final competitors were narrowed from 95 teams that began the competition in January. Two finalists advanced from the Marketplace Boss Competition and the DSU Business Plan competition for a total of 23 final competitors.

All finalists completed an extensive written summary and made an oral presentation in front of the panel of judges. In selecting winners, judges looked at five criteria: **Innovation, commercial viability, investment opportunity, entrepreneur team, and quality of presentation. The People's Choice Award was determined by online voting.**

Innovate ND was launched in November 2006 by the governor and was coordinated by the Governor's Office, the North Dakota Department of Commerce, the UND Center of Innovation, and the UND Entrepreneur Department. Forum Communications was the lead sponsor for Innovate ND. Participants paid \$100 to enroll in the program. To date, nearly 300 people with 155 ideas have participated in the program and 40 new businesses are operational or in the development stage as a result.

The program was made possible by more than \$200,000 in private-sector contributions and in-kind professional services donations as well as appropriated funds from through the Department of Commerce. For more information, see www.innovatend.com.

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