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Entrepreneurship Club Draws Students From Across Campus to Entrepreneurship Week Events

By Allie Jeppson and Steve Eaton



Every year children across the country mix up their best brew, hand-letter signs, and test their parents' support levels by opening makeshift lemonade stands. During Entrepreneurship Week, USU students, armed with a grownup understanding of marketing, were given a chance to show off how they would make such a basic sales venture successful.

They only had three hours to see how much cash they could earn selling lemonade concoctions of their own creation and at their own prices. Blue lemonade, lemonade mixed with energy drinks, lemonade floats, and even Chik-fil-A's signature lemonade were all featured at stands around campus.

The winning team called "Aggieaide" decided that in addition to creating a focused marketing campaign, it would tap into what makes successful lemonade stands thrive everywhere - cute kids. The team drafted children to work their booth, and it was the little entrepreneurs who were asking people if they wanted to buy a lemonade at \$1 a pop. They also offered to have someone on rollerblades deliver the lemonade to those wanting the service, and rumor had it that rolling beverage servers would sing for a tip as part of the delivery package. With the combination of the tried and true, and the new and innovative, they made \$244.75.

Brittney Garbrick, a member of the winning team, and an MBA-MSHR student, said that running a lemonade stand is really no different than running any sort of business.

"It's very simplified," she said, "but you have to advertise, and you have to have good product, and you have to get people to come, and basically pay for something they don't need."

The lemonade event was one of several activities the Entrepreneurship Club included in Entrepreneurship Week, all aimed at encouraging students to look for innovative solutions and develop new business ideas.



Kyle Ivins, president of the Entrepreneurship Club, said that this year they wanted to promote the type of entrepreneurial spirit that the E-club wants to encourage on campus. Kyle said a recent census revealed that within the Huntsman School alone there are some 80 students who own their own businesses.

"We also had a big push this year to include more students from outside the School of Business," Kyle said. "We find that there are a lot of entrepreneurs outside the Huntsman School."

Spike Cheever, director of competitions, said that there were 22 people who entered the elevator pitch competition this year, up from 12 last year. They presented their plans to a panel of judges, all drafted from the Founders Board for the Center for Entrepreneurial Excellence. The Founders Board is a group of Huntsman alumni and friends who volunteer time and support to USU efforts that help students with their entrepreneurial ideas.

"They all said that this year's ideas were the strongest they have seen yet," Kyle said of the elevator pitch competition. "Usually, in years past, there have been three or four really strong ideas, and this year there were more than 10 strong ideas."

The judging of the elevator pitch contest ended in a tie, so the prize money was evenly split between the two winners. Bryan LaBar came up with the idea of a foot sleeve that could be extended from sweat pants to cover toes and keep them warm. Matt Seely and Bryce Smalley pitched an idea for a product that is the foundation of their start-up company. It is a device that connects two fluid-transferring hoses called a quick-connect coupler. They claim their new patented design outperforms existing couplers in functionality and performance and can be manufactured at 1/10 the cost of their competitors' products. Matt and Bryce won \$2,500, and so did Bryan.

Justin Graham with Delta Designs created a gas camping stove that is 90 percent smaller than a Coleman 2 burner but can perform just as efficiently. He took third place and won \$1,000.

Some 30 teams entered the 72-hour competition, up by 10 from 2012, in a contest that challenged students to identify something that "bugged them" and propose a solution to it on video.

The first-place team in the 72-hour competition, led by Chris Chamberlain, came up with an idea to create an app that will allow movie theaters to open their seats for a bidding style approach (similar to Priceline.com) so each seat could be filled if the theater is not completely full. They earned \$1,000 for their idea and video.

The second-place team, led by Spencer Finch, was awarded \$600 in prize money. Their idea was to create an application that would allow a consumer to view all of the daily or weekly deals for shopping around town and locate the nearest store

that price matches and contains all of the items the consumer wants. This way a shopper would only have to go to one place to get the best prices.