5-17-1996

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MONTANA STUDENTS WIN BUSINESS PLAN AWARDS

MISSOULA --

University students' bright ideas and workable plans for new and existing Montana businesses were spotlighted Wednesday, May 15, at The University of Montana—Missoula's seventh annual Business Plan Competition Awards Ceremony.

Six finalists presented their plans to about 200 Montana business leaders, who selected first, second and third place winners in two categories. Eight other plans were awarded honorable mentions. All winners received scholarship checks -- $500 for first place, $300 for second, $200 for third and $50 for honorable mention.

All full-time Montana higher education students are eligible to participate in the annual competition, which is designed to hone students' skills in marketing, research and management and help them launch successful businesses.

The top three winners in the category of plans written for the author's own use are first place -- UM—Missoula student Janie Diettert's plan for J & J Mills, a mail-order catalog filled with home decorating crafts; second place -- Scott Sabol of UM—Missoula for Northern Lights Lodge, a fly-fishing lodge to be located in southwest Alaska; and third place -- Montana State University—Bozeman student Keith W. Leonard for Professional Network Communication, Inc., a planned Internet service provider that would tailor access plans to customers' specific needs.

Students who won top honors for plans written for clients are first place -- UM—Missoula

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student Joel A. Block for EduSoft, Inc., a proposed special education software company; second place -- Linda Davenport and Terry Long of Montana State University—Billings for Bighorn Fly Trading Co., a specialist in low-cost manufacturing of superior quality fish flies; and UM—Missoula student Raymond Montoya for Pikuni Lodge, a planned resort hotel on the Blackfeet Indian Reservation in Browning.

Honorable mentions went to Jason Tomsic of UM—Missoula for Bear Grass Brewing Co.; Kim Holdorf of MSU—Bozeman for Mother On Board; Lynette McRae of UM’s Billings master’s of business administration program for Pawn World; Douglas G. Smith of UM—Missoula for Ramada Limited; UM Billings MBA students Sue Bogunovich and Shelley Phelps for Sew Pieceful; Wesley C. Secord and Brooks Dailey of MSU College of Technology in Great Falls for Sports Equipment Network; Dan P. Olsen of UM’s Butte MBA program for 21st Century Business Solutions; and Jerry Boyd of UM—Missoula for Wicks ’N’ Sticks of Missoula.

The competition and ceremony were coordinated by UM students Nancy Fleshman, Steve Gendenning, Michelle Mann, Kerri Michels and Heather Tweet-Johnstone under the direction of management Professor Paul Larson. The ceremony, sponsored by 14 Montana businesses, was held at Missoula’s Village Red Lion Inn with Ken Thuerbach, chief executive officer of Alpine Log Homes, as master of ceremonies.

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