

Thirteen Finalists Vie for Top Prizes in Business Plan Competition

The Business Plan Competition was narrowed down from 43 entrants to 13 finalists on January 17. After carefully reviewing each submission and weighing its merit on such criteria as likelihood of success, potential for job creation, impact on the local economy, leadership quality, and financial clarity, the judges made the following selections:

Finalists for the "Existing Business" category

- **Cold Rain Technologies**, owned by Robert Breun of Whitingham, to produce, develop, and market the spam filter KnujOn.
- **Fulcrum Arts**, owned by Natalie Blake and Randi Solin of Brattleboro, to integrate and extend their two successful crafts businesses with a shared building, public demonstration area, gallery, and teaching facility.
- **High Meadows Farm**, owned by Howard and Lisa Prussack of Putney, for the development of high-tunnel raspberry capacity.
- **Moscode, Inc.**, owned by George Kaye and Gage Rommel of Brattleboro, for product development for their high-end audio manufacturing company.
- **Purple Chef**, owned by Sharon Myers of Brattleboro, for production of specialty food products such as chutneys and marmalades.
- **Putney Mountain Winery**, owned by Kate and Charles Dodge of Putney, for the development of an Internet sales channel for their products.
- **SRI World Group**, owned by Jay Falk of Brattleboro, for the development of a Web-based tool for reporting environmental, social, and corporate governance information to stakeholders.



Fulcrum Arts



Purple Chef

Finalists for the "Start-Up Business" category

- **Advanced Support Systems**, owned by James B. Hickok

of Brattleboro, to manufacture and sell proprietary design equipment for hunters and fishermen

- **Engineered Stone Designs**, owned by Matthew Murano of Wilmington, to produce, sell, and install manufactured stone.
- **Mobile Meat Makers**, owned by Eliot G. Morse of Putney, for a mobile poultry slaughter and processing facility.
- **Putney Design**, owned by Colin Butler of Putney, to design and manufacture custom entrance gates.
- **SnapCabin**, owned by Joseph Checco of South Londonderry, to manufacture and sell a unique system of housing composed of pre-fab rooms and connectors, delivered by flat bed.
- **Vermont Distillers**, owned by Ed Metcalf of Whitingham, to manufacture and sell Vermont-based liquors and liqueurs.



Putney Design

The next step in their quest for the top prize in each category is to complete and submit a full business plan by the deadline of 4 p.m. February 22. The judges will then review the plans in anticipation of each contestant's final presentation on March 12 at the Marlboro College Technology Center. The winners will be announced at 3 p.m. that day. The top prize will be \$20,000 for the winner of the "Existing

Continued on page 2

INSIDE THIS EDITION...

- Page 2:** From the BDCC Executive Director
- Page 2:** Member Meeting Reminder
- Page 3:** Spotlight on Legislative Events
- Page 3:** Profile: Where Are They Now?
- Page 4:** New BDCC Board Member
- Page 4:** Award-Winning Cotton Mill Artisan

BDCC Trustees

Debbie Boyle, President
Chittenden Bank, 258-4019
dboyle@chittenden.com

Peter Van Oot, Vice President
Downs Rachlin Martin PLLC,
258-3070, pvanoot@drm.com

John Meyer, Treasurer
Pieciak & Co., PC, 257-1307
jmeyer@sover.net

Hugh Barber
SVE Associates, 257-0561
hbarber@sveassoc.com

Cheryl Bedard
Vermont Circuits, 257-4571
cheryl.bedard@vtcircuits.com

Dart Everett
Everett Real Estate, 254-9258
deverett@sover.net

Bruce Gardner
P.O. Box 561
Brattleboro, VT 05302
254-2032 • gardner@sover.net

Carl Lynde
TD BankNorth, Vermont, 257-6519
carl.lynde@tdbanknorth.com

Kevin Meyer
Mary Meyer Corp., 365-7793
kevin_meyer@marymeyer.com

William Palumbo
Kenyon Realty, 464-7171
bpalumbo@century21kenyon.com

Mark Richards
The Richards Group, 254-6016
Mark.Richards@therichardsgrp.com

Phil Steckler
Country Business, Inc., 254-4504
phschi@sover.net

The BDCC Newsletter

Jeffrey Lewis, Executive Director,
bdccjl@sover.net

Sandy Otero, Office Manager
bdccso@sover.net

Donna McElligott, Newsletter Editor
dmcelligott@verizon.net

Company News

Do you have news of interest to the Brattleboro business community? Has your company expanded, introduced a new product, won an award? Send your information to:

Newsletter Editor
Brattleboro Development
Credit Corpotaion
76 Cotton Mill Hill
Brattleboro, VT 05301

Tel 802-257-7731 • Fax 257-0294
E-mail BDCC@sover.net
www.brattleborodevelopment.com

From the Executive Director



Jeffrey Lewis

As this newsletter is going to press, 13 contenders are in the final stretch of this year's Business Plan Competition (see front page article). The 43 candidates who originally entered the competition represented a wide range of businesses, including farming, mobile meat processing, food production, custom quilting, art, restaurants, music publishing, dance, education, high-end audio equipment, new products, and more. The industries and industriousness found in southeastern Vermont continually amaze me. They bode well for us as a community as we chart our path for continued success.

Currently, I am in the midst of working with Susan McMahon of the Windham Regional Commission to arrange a set of four discussion meetings around the county – in Brattleboro, Londonderry, Wilmington, and Saxtons River – to discuss the area's economic future. Called "Cross Town Talks," the meetings will raise questions for consideration, such as: What do we want the economy of Vermont to look like in 20 years? Where will the workers for existing and new industries come from? What new industries do we expect and which ones do we want to encourage? One and all are invited and encouraged to attend the evening meetings. We plan to look at the trends we inherit, the future we imagine, and how to encourage success.

Continuing the strategic discussions the Trustees and I started at the Annual Board Work Day in October, we participated in two more work sessions on November 21st and December 12th. At

the October meeting, we discussed and collected a vast amount of information about the components of strategy (e.g., successes, failures, strengths, weaknesses, threats, opportunities, mission, stakeholders, resources, constraints). We moved the discussion to a more specific set of actions at the November meeting by focusing on and better defining our stakeholders – all interested parties, including those who invest, those who benefit, those who supply, and those who compete. Each of those parties has an interest in BDCC's success, although in very different ways. By the time the December meeting came around, we were able to narrow our focus to prioritizing a handful of specific programs and responsibilities that will best help BDCC be clear, consistent, and effective. We will provide you with details at our upcoming members meetings, but in general, our established priorities will build upon our current connections and resources, foster new and improved relationships, uncover new opportunities, and build awareness, loyalty, and confidence among our various constituents.

I am looking forward to seeing you at the next Members Meeting on February 27th at the Marlboro College Tech Center, and again on June 26th!

REMINDER!

BDCC Members Meeting

Tuesday, February 27, 2007

4 to 6 p.m.

Brattleboro Museum & Art Center

Continued from front page...

Business" category, and \$10,000 for the "Start-Up Business" category. Runner-up prizes of \$2,000 each and finalist prizes of \$1,000 each will also be awarded for each category.

The premise behind the Business Plan Competition is to help raise awareness in the community about small business and entrepreneurship, and to encourage new business development by helping interested community members develop viable business plans, gain public attention, and earn financial rewards.

For more information about the Business Plan Competition, visit the website at: www.bdccbussinesplancompetition.com/.

Spotlight on BDCC's Legislative Events



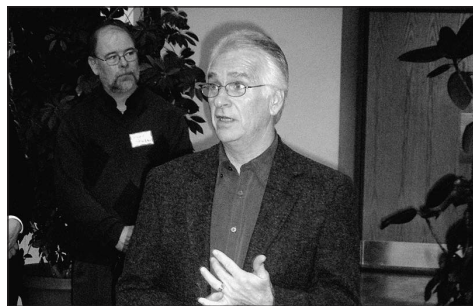
"Legislative Day" attendees included Melinda Walsh Hale of New Chapter (foreground) and (background, L to R) Bruce Gardner, Carl Lynde, Ed Kunttu, and Burl Penton, all BACC or BDCC board members.

The event illustrates a concerted effort on the part of the three organizations to sustain an ongoing dialogue with Windham County legislators. Every-other-Monday lunches with one to two legislators are being organized, in addition to a March 7th breakfast meeting with legislators and a lunch meeting in Montpelier in April.

A list of legislative priorities for the Windham County delegation to focus on, as developed by BDCC, BACC and BaBB, includes the following:

- Fiscal Integrity – Balance the budget by reducing the rate of spending growth.
- Protection for Vermont's Low Electric Costs and Reliable Supply.
- Encouragement of Economic Development Activity in Line with the New Economy – Look to energy as an economic driver; promote manufacturing and other high-paying jobs related to energy (e.g., production, conservation, renewable energy, green).
- Property Taxes – The problem is spending, not inadequate taxation; reduce and stabilize the historical rate of increase; taxes and spending are out of control; school spending must be controlled.
- Health Care – Health care costs underlie a lot of other costs; create an environment that moderates health care cost increases will mitigating cost pressures in other areas; focus efforts on reducing the cost of health care versus lowering the cost of insurance; everyone should have access to affordable health insurance.
- "Any ten persons" in Act 117 – Eliminate the impact that frivolous and dilatory actions can add to the cost and time of a project at very little risk to the petitioners.

You are encouraged to get involved and contact your legislators. Collectively, our comments can make a difference in building a healthy, constructive business environment in Windham County. For more information, please contact BDCC at 802-257-7731 or bdcc@sover.net.



The October "Legislative Day" featured a tour of New Chapter and a conversation with New Chapter Chief Operating Officer Steve Jacobson.

Last October, BDCC co-hosted a "Legislative Day" with the Brattleboro Area Chamber of Commerce (BACC) and Building a Better Brattleboro (BaBB). The Boards of Directors from all three organizations were invited to meet with local legislative candidates to discuss current issues, and to tour two local businesses – Bradford Machine Company and New Chapter – that are examples of creative enterprise and innovation right here in our own community.

Profile: Where Are They Now?

We managed to catch up with two more of last year's Business Plan Competition finalists to ask what their experience was like and how it may have impacted their business.

"It is one of the most creative ways to encourage new business development that I have heard of," says Nancy Cain, co-owner with her husband Tom of **Against The Grain Gourmet**. "We were a start-up business at the time of last year's competition. Since then, we have built a 5,000-square-foot, dedicated gluten-free baking facility [in the old Book Press building in Brattleboro]. We began shipping to our distributor in late December 2006. Our gluten-free bread products have been received extremely well, and it appears that we are on target to double our first-year expectations for number of units sold." (Their website can be found at www.againstthegraingourmet.com.)

According to Peggy Farabaugh of **Vermont Woods Studios**, a year-old cooperative of local woodworkers, "Our new business wouldn't even have materialized beyond ideas in my head if not for the Business Plan Competition. It motivated me."



Peggy and Ken Farabaugh of Vermont Woods Studios

It not only motivated Farabaugh, it encouraged her to raise the bar and think more broadly. Farabaugh's husband Ken is a woodworker and they thought it would be nice to create a business to sell some of his work. "BDCC challenged us to look beyond ourselves and our own needs," she said. "They encouraged us to craft the business for the community of woodworkers around us. I would never have thought of structuring the business for this wider scope. It has meant all the difference in the world."

Vermont Woods Studios has grown over its first year to include nearly 20 local woodworkers as members. The collaborative recently launched what they call, "the nation's first online furniture gallery for fine exclusive, elegant, handcrafted, museum quality, luxury eco furniture." The website can be found at www.vermontwoods.com.

BDCC Welcomes New Board Member

At the BDCC Annual Meeting in October, **Cheryl Bedard** was elected as the 12th member of the BDCC Executive Board of Trustees. A native of Fitchburg (MA) who has lived in Vermont for 18 years, Bedard is the executive vice president and co-owner of **Vermont Circuits, Inc.**, a Brattleboro company that manufactures high-technology printed circuit boards (PCBs) for electronic components for commercial, military, and aerospace clients.

Bedard has the distinction of being only the second woman to serve on the BDCC Executive Board of Trustees. (Current President Debbie Boyle is the first.) An even greater distinction is that Bedard is among only a handful of female owners of a PCB manufacturing company in the USA. "It tends to be a male-dominated industry," says Bedard, although Vermont Circuits itself has about a 50/50 male-to-female employee ratio. Bedard has co-owned the

company with her business partner Jim Lin since 1989, when they left their management positions at Hadco, a huge PCB company. They have grown Vermont Circuits from 45 to 95 employees.



Cheryl Bedard

Bedard's path into the PCB industry was happenstance. She studied to become a French teacher but couldn't find a job. One thing led to another, and she found herself trained as a G.E. machinist, learning "a lot about blueprint reading, working in a factory, and how parts are made." The G.E. job led to a material planner position at Wang Labs, which led to Hadco. So, what happened to being a French teacher? "The thought of going back into a school to teach would terrify me now. I'm where I belong."

Cotton Mill Artisan Wins "Best in Show" Award



Daniel Omondi Woodworks

Brattleboro resident and internationally acclaimed woodworking artist **Daniel Omondi** won the "Best in Show" award for a traditional furniture piece in the Eleventh Annual Fine Furnishings Providence Show in Rhode Island on October 27. Each year, the show features custom furniture designed to fit a broad range of styles, plus a variety of handcrafted accessories and original art. This year's show included 250 artisans from across North America.

Omondi's finely handcrafted wood furniture is distinguished by a unique and complex style of carving that is heavily influenced by the rich cultural traditions of Kenya, Oman, and India. He began learning his craft at the age of 13 in his father's workshop in Mombasa, Kenya — a workshop that earned national awards for its products. Following in the footsteps of his father and grandfather, Omondi inherited the business and proceeded to establish himself as an accomplished woodworker, receiving national recognition by the UNCDF Micro-Enterprises Support Programme in 2001. Omondi relocated to the United States in 2001 and set up shop shortly thereafter. His successful transition between the two vastly different cultures is evident in his work, where native Kenyan woods — bambakofe and mvole — complement cherry, maple and walnut to create genuinely unique pieces. For more information about Omondi, visit www.omondiwood.com or call 802-254-5248.

Brattleboro Development
Credit Corporation
76 Cotton Mill Hill
Brattleboro, VT 05301
Phone: 802-257-7731
Fax: 802-257-0294
bdcc@sover.net
www.brattleborodevelopment.com

Presorted
Standard
U.S. Postage
PAID
Brattleboro, VT
Permit #39