



Both Business Plan Competition Categories End in a Tie

For the first time in its four-year history, the Business Plan Competition ended in a tie – in both the Existing Business and New Business categories.

For the Existing Business category, there was a three-way tie between **Concrete Detail** owned by Richard Holschuh, **Vermont Slate Art** owned by Noela and Michael Sullivan, and **Vermont Stone Composite** owned by Tyler Maas and Peter Welch. They shared a combined grand prize of \$20,000.



Rich Holschuh with his son Jesse and wife Marianne

For the New Business category, **Wahoo's Eatery** owned by Adam and Karen Grinold, and **Envelope** owned by Bryan Loisel, shared a combined grand prize of \$9,000.

Concrete Detail designs, manufactures, and installs custom artisan floors and kitchen counters from concrete. Vermont Slate Art manufactures and sells switchplates from recycled slate. And Vermont Stone Composite manufactures insulated stone-faced panels for building exteriors.



The Sullivan family with Governor Douglas and Peter Van Oot

Envelope designs and fabricates architectural panels for total space design. Wahoo's Eatery is franchising its successful, casual, food service business with fully equipped, carefully designed production facilities in trailers.



Governor Douglas and Peter Van Oot with Kate McCarthy and Bryan Loisel

The four Existing Business finalist prizes of \$2,000 each were presented to: **Cedar Satyr Enterprises**, DBA Bingo Granola, owned by Lisa Kuneman and Chris Zappala to

manufacture and distribute locally sourced granola and other fruit-based snack foods; **Everyone's Drumming** owned by Nathaniel Hall to manufacture drums and percussion instruments; **Moscode, Inc.**, owned by George Kaye (a 2008 finalist) to produce high-end audio amplifiers; and **The Timberframe Shop**, owned by Monica MacNeille, to design and build timberframe constructions including garden pieces like gazebos and pergolas.



Governor Douglas and Peter Van Oot with Peter Welch and Tyler Maas

The four New Business finalist prizes of \$1,500 each were presented to:

Guitar for Adult Beginners owned by Lisa McCormick to provide private guitar lessons for adult beginners, delivered online; **Thyme to Cook** owned by Lisa Dufresne and Leslie Marston to offer a new kitchen store located next to Leslie's Restaurant; **DC Design** owned by Dede Cummings to provide design and project management for self-publishing books; and **English CPO** owned by Eric Strickland to provide online English teaching for Koreans.



Karen and Adam Grinold

The culmination of BDCC's fourth annual competition occurred on April 30 at the Marlboro College Graduate Center, where Governor Jim Douglas gave a repeat performance bestowing the awards. The winners and finalists were culled from an original pool of 36 candidates – 16 in the New Business category and 20 in the Existing

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Company News

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

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Multiple Community Members Make BDCC's 55th Annual Meeting Memorable

This past October at BDCC's 55th Annual Meeting, it was a little more than business as usual. Two significant highlights were the presentation of the Founders Award to not just one but three community members, and the presentation of BDCC's first-ever Lifetime Achievement award. (Please see related articles on page 4.)

Some notable attendees included Peter Shumlin, the Vermont Senate President; Ken Horseman, an economic development specialist with the Vermont Department of Economic Development; Marie Dussault, a commercial loan officer with the Vermont Economic Development Authority; Barbara Sondag, Brattleboro town manager; and Dick DeGray, then-chair of the Brattleboro Selectboard. Sondag and DeGray were each recognized by BDCC with a special Certificate of Appreciation for their strong, clear, and proactive support for the Brattleboro area's economic development.



Barbara Sondag and Dick DeGray



Rich Carroll and Peter Van Oot

Another community member applauded by BDCC was Rich Carroll, formerly a lawyer with the firm of Christensen, Cummings, Phillips and Carroll, and a long-time clerk for the BDCC Executive Board. Now a clerk for the Windham Superior Court, Carroll was praised for the extraordinary counsel and service he provided to BDCC over the years. He has turned over his duties to BDCC's newly elected clerk David M. Dunn of Potter Stewart Jr. Law Offices.

The guest speaker for the Annual Meeting was Dan Normandeau, vice president of the Windham Foundation and a local son from Dummerston. He gave the audience an overview of the Foundation, which was originally established in 1963 to preserve the history of Grafton. Today, the Foundation comprises four operating businesses: The Old Tavern, The Grafton Village Cheese Company, the Retreat Farm, and the Grafton Village Nursery. It also provides grants, scholarships, and conferences that directly benefit Vermonters.



Dan Normandeau and Jeffrey Lewis

Prior to Normandeau's presentation, several orders of business were conducted including elections as well as reports given by Treasurer John Meyer, President Peter Van Oot, and Executive Director Jeffrey Lewis. Barry Beeman, the CEO of Brattleboro Memorial Hospital was elected as the newest Trustee and the following officers were re-elected: Clerk David M. Dunn, Assistant Clerk Stephen R. Phillips, and Assistant Clerk Sandy Otero.

Several new BDCC members were elected including: Bill Daley (Vermont Country Deli), Mark Gavin (New Chapter), Kate Guerrina (Chroma), Tommy Harmon (Sonnax), Rich Kalich (Vermed), Craig Miskovich (Downs Rachlin Martin), Stephen Morse (retired from the Windham Foundation), Bruce Mullen (financial planning), Dan Normandeau (Windham Foundation), Kelly Pawlak (Mount Snow), Wilbur Rice (Equipe Sports), Rob Simpson (Brattleboro Retreat), and Alex Wilson (Building Green).

News & Notables

Semiannual Members Meeting

Nearly 40 members attended BDCC's Semiannual Members Meeting on April 28, 2009, at the Brattleboro Retreat Education Center. Reports were provided by Treasurer John V.P. Meyer, President Peter Van Oot, and Executive Director Jeffrey



Betsy Bishop

Lewis, who spoke to the ongoing financial challenges due to the economic downturn and how BDCC is responding. Guest speakers at the meeting included Brattleboro Town Manager Barbara Sondag and Selectboard Chair Jesse Corum, who gave an overview of the history and anticipated upgrade of the Brattleboro Waste Water Treatment Facility. Two additional guests at the meeting spoke to the members about their experience as BDCC tenants — Stephen Proctor who creates monumental and functional ceramics in the Cotton Mill and John Sayles of the Vermont Food Bank at the former Book Press building. (See news item below.) The keynote speaker at the meeting was Betsy Bishop, the new commissioner of the Vermont Department of Economic Development. Bishop spoke about the federal stimulus dollars coming to Vermont and about the Governor's discretionary fund for economic development.

New Brattleboro Business Park Tenants

The most recent new tenants in the Brattleboro Business Park (former Book Press building) are **Window Quilt** and the **Vermont Food Bank**. This is a return to Brattleboro for the Window Quilt, which was originally established in Brattleboro 30 years ago but sold to a Seattle-based company in 2007. The new owner of Window Quilt is Larry Digney of New Jersey, who moved it back to Brattleboro with a little influence from BDCC and previous Window Quilt managers still in the area. The Vermont Food Bank signed a lease with BDCC in October 2008 for 21,000 square feet of warehouse space in the business park. According to BDCC Executive Director Jeffrey Lewis, the Food Bank will be using the space as a storage and distribution center for southern Vermont. Its proximity to Interstate 91 will help reduce transportation costs for the Food Bank and make it easier for local agencies to pick up food supplies.



Ed Fox and Jeffrey Lewis

Special Forum with Congressman Peter Welch

BDCC hosted a special presentation with Vermont Congressman Peter Welch at the Lachis Theatre on Main Street in Brattleboro on February 28, 2009. Welch discussed the federal economic stimulus bills, the economic conditions as seen from Washington, and the impact of the stimulus bills on Vermont. A question-and-answer session followed. Among the many community members who attended the discussion were selectboard and school board members. Marlboro College and WTSA co-hosted the free event with BDCC.

Business Plan Competition

Continued from front page

Business category. Each submission was reviewed and judged based on such criteria as: likelihood of success, potential for job creation, impact on the local economy, leadership quality, and financial clarity. The judging panel consisted of these community members: Cheryl Bedard (Vermont Circuits), Debbie Boyle (Chittenden Bank), Dart Everett (Everett Real Estate Services), Steve Jones (CPA), Ed Kunttu (Brattleboro Savings & Loan), Ralph Meima (Marlboro College Grad Center), Tammy Richards (Piecak & Co., P.C.), Phil Steckler (Country Business, Inc.), Dwight Williams (Key Bank), and Jill Zachery (ROV Technologies).

What They Have to Say

Earlier this year, we touched base with several Business Plan Competition finalists from the first three years to solicit their thoughts about the value of participating in the competition. Here is what they had to say . . .

“I would definitely encourage everyone who is serious about starting or expanding a business to apply to the competition. I found having to talk to the judges and answer pointed questions to be the most valuable aspect. Winning has also given us validity with the town of Brattleboro.”

— **Randi Solin, Fulcrum**

Arts (www.fulcrumarts.net) of Brattleboro, a 2007 Grand Prize winner.

“I think [the Business Plan Competition] is one of the most creative ways to encourage new business development that I have heard of.”

— **Nancy Cain, Against the Grain**

(www.againstthegraingourmet.com) of Brattleboro, a 2006 finalist.

“We found [the Business Plan Competition] to be most helpful in bringing clarity to our operations, allowing us to see our business through different lenses. It brought issues to light we did not realize existed and highlighted strengths we were not truly aware we possessed.”

-- **Tom and Linda Diak, Grafton**

Fibers (www.graftonfibers.com), of Saxtons River, a 2008 Grand Prize winner.

“Armed with the knowledge and vision derived from my participation in this competition, I have been able to operate more efficiently and plan more effectively for the many challenges faced by a small business, especially in these times.

— **Richard Holschuh of Concrete**

Detail (www.concretedetail.com) of Brattleboro, a 2008 finalist and a 2009 Grand Prize winner.

Three Local Men Honored with Annual BDCC Founders Award

At the 55th Annual Meeting of the Brattleboro Development Credit Corporation (BDCC) in October 2008, BDCC President Peter Van Oot presented the annual Founders Award not to one person, but to three – Bob Gannett, Mark Richards, and Barry Beeman. The joint recipients were recognized for their work as co-chairs on the “Building for Excellence” Capital Campaign for the construction of the new Brattleboro Memorial Hospital (BMH) outpatient wing.

According to Van Oot, “They represent just what the doctor ordered for the economic health of our community.” Gannett is a Brattleboro lawyer and former Vermont State Senator; Richards is the owner and president of The Richards Group insurance and financial services company; and Beeman is the president and CEO of BMH.



Nicole A. Zinn

Mark Richards, Peter Van Oot, Barry Beeman, Bob Gannett

Winners of the annual BDCC Founders Award are selected for their efforts and actions that have helped to make a difference to our area and to the business climate; they are known for creating value-added jobs and for promoting a climate that enhances the economic vitality of the region.

Everett Receives BDCC's First-Ever Lifetime Achievement Award



Joy and Dart Everett

BDCC's first-ever “Lifetime Achievement Award” was presented to long-time Brattleboro resident Dart Everett at BDCC's 55th Annual Meeting in October 2008.

A member of BDCC's Executive Board since 1981, Everett had announced he would retire from the board as of October 2008, prompting BDCC to nominate him as the first Emeritus Trustee and to launch this new award.

“BDCC's success is due in no small part to this man,” said BDCC President Peter Van Oot, who lauded Everett for his dedication, loyalty, and good work. “He was at the BDCC table every Tuesday for 27 years, telling us exactly in no uncertain terms what we should and shouldn't be doing,” said Van Oot.

Everett became affiliated with BDCC first as a member in 1980, before joining the Board in 1981. He served as president of the corporation for the 1989-1992 term. Currently, Everett is the owner and president of Everett Real Estate Services, providing appraisal and consulting services in Southern Vermont and New Hampshire.

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