

PRESS RELEASE

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Clermont Chamber of Commerce

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For Immediate Release

Second Annual Clermont County Business Plan Competition Winners Chosen

The Second Annual Clermont Business Plan Competition resulted in numerous high quality business plans for the judges to consider. The decision for the top prizes required a referral to a tie-breaker judge because the top five plans were almost too close to call. In the final results, we ended with a business almost ready to open its doors, a business at the one-year mark needing to expand its capabilities to better meet the needs of its target markets and an entrepreneur looking forward about 8 months to a startup.

Winners were announced and prizes awarded on November 15 at a special meeting at the Clermont Chamber of Commerce.

The first prize of \$5000 went to The Yogurt Bar. This is a startup business to be based in Cherry Grove, offering an upscale, contemporary, self-serve frozen yogurt experience. Owner Chris Ginn has set the mission for his new business: "To provide a healthy, fun, indulgent treat to people of all ages and backgrounds in a safe, friendly and exciting atmosphere. We raise the bar on what frozen yogurt should be." The company will be offering a selection of twelve flavors to combine with yogurt of the highest quality with the produce sourced organically and locally whenever possible. Chris is currently finalizing his financing and his lease agreements.

Second prize of \$2500 went to Fiscus Transport, LLC. This is a new business established in early 2011 as a local transport hauler of raw aggregate goods (crushed stone, gravel and limestone) to service the construction industry. Fiscus Transport, LLC is one of two approved transport haulers for Arch Materials, LLC. In addition to expanding in the private market, Fiscus Transport, LLC also will be seeking public sector contracts. Owner Natalie Fiscus has long been involved with the construction industry and the family business, Fiscus Trucking & Excavating Inc., which was founded in 1969. Both businesses are based in Batavia. Natalie prepared for the business plan competition by attending the business planning classes at UC Clermont College.

Third prize (\$1000) went to Erika Bryant. Erika's plans are slightly more long range than the other two competition winners. Erika wants to start For The LOVE of Dogs Dog Daycare, LLC in the Milford area. Erika has prepared for this endeavor by working in the dog daycare industry and by attending the business planning classes at UC Clermont College. She wants to create a relationship-oriented business, dedicated to convenience and superior customer service. She expects to grow the business by adding other services such as grooming, training, etc. so that dog lovers have one location that meets all their pet's needs. Erika is considering a startup in mid-2012.

The Second Annual Clermont Business Plan Competition was the result of collaboration between UC Clermont College and the Ohio Small Business Development Center at the Clermont Chamber of Commerce. Designed to stimulate entrepreneurial activity and increase awareness of resources available to grow entrepreneurs in Clermont County, this competition focuses on good research and planning as critical foundation elements for any business. The competition included a series of five free business-planning classes at UC Clermont College. Over 25 entrepreneurs participated in these classes.

The First Annual Business Plan Competition was made possible because of the generous support of many sponsors. Returning sponsors included Park National Bank, the Ohio Small Business Development Center, RiverHills Bank, Kinker Eveleigh Insurance, UC Clermont College, Center Bank, Kamphaus, Henning & Hood CPA, and Ohio 2nd Congressional District Representative Jean Schmidt. New sponsors to the program were National Bank & Trust, WesBanco and Fifth Third Bank. Most of the sponsors were represented at the awards ceremony on November 15 as was last year's first prize winner, Simply Fresh Cleaners.

Tina Hare from Simply Fresh Cleaners commented, "This award was a big boost for our new business. We have had a first year that exceeded our expectations. We wish the same results for each of this year's winners."

Founded in 1969, the Clermont Chamber of Commerce is an association of approximately 850 businesses working together to make the Clermont County area the best place to locate, operate and grow your business. The Chamber's key initiatives are advocacy, economic growth and member/investor benefits. Find us at www.clermontchamber.com. The President of the Clermont Chamber of Commerce is Matthew D. Van Sant, and the Chairman of the Board is David McNutt of American Modern Insurance Group.

Pictured left to right: Ed Wood, National Bank and Trust; Sam DeBonis, Park National Bank; David Gooch, Park National Bank; Molly Edwards, Fifth Third Bank; Chris Ginn, Competition Winner; Vicki Rankin, Kamphaus Henning and Hood CPAs; Dean Greg Sojka, University of Cincinnati Clermont College; Brian Dunlap, RiverHills Bank; John Melvin, SBDC at the Clermont Chamber and Gertrud Whitaker, Congresswoman Jean Schmidt