

Newsask's eighth annual Youth Business Excellence Awards event was a terrific success. There were 132 people in attendance. 33 applications were received involving a total of 55 youth from nine different communities. Since inception, over 296 youth from grade 6 – 12 and youth out of school under the age of 30 within the Northeast region have participated. Our awards banquet was at the Porcupine Plain Community Centre on May 9, 2009.

Comments from the judges include,

“I am constantly impressed and amazed by the imagination and passion that come from the plans and ventures. Each year I learn new things from the submissions.”

One judge said he always comes away with business ideas that he, “would like to steal”.

As well, they noted, there were a number of students that they would “hire in a minute”.

They were so impressed with one business plan, that they commented, if they were “dragons” on the Television Show Dragons’ Den, they would invest in that plan.

An exciting addition to our program this year was the performance of Codie Prevost. Codie is the spokesperson for, “The Road Ahead” – a new Community Futures loan program to help rural business.

“Codie Prevost’s music career is beginning to take off! Sure, he owes his newfound success to talent, hard work and the star quality that is fast making him the darling of country music. But he also got a big break from his local Community Futures, in the form of a business loan that allowed him to get to Nashville and record his first CD: “The Road Ahead”. And that’s why he’s throwing his Stetson into the ring this year to support Community Futures and tell his story.”

Codie’s genuine interest and recognition of the importance of a business plan added to the evening with a casual image, informal banter, and at the same time, a professional performance. Codie relates personally to the need for a business plan and does not hesitate to share his experience. While he was busy supporting the youth and their achievements, the crowd was enthusiastic about supporting Codie and his country music venture.

It is with pride and pleasure that Newsask has been able to follow Codie's success as he has gone from SCMA Rising Star in 2006 to being the recipient of 10 awards between himself and his band at the SCMA awards in 2009.

To market the YBEX program we utilized the internet and e-mail as well as mailing promotional materials. The Superintendants of each school division in our region co-operated by forwarding our information package to each school and the schools co-operated by forwarding the guidelines and information to each teacher of grade 6 – 12 students along with a letter attached asking each teacher to email each student the guidelines and information. We also emailed post-secondary institutions with guidelines and information. Last year we had 28 applications and this year we had 33. Last year we had 45 youth involved and this year we had 55 youth. All communities including R.M.'s, First Nations communities (six in total) and Métis Associations and all financial institutions and all past sponsors received mailings which included Guidelines and information. Our Guidelines and reports are also available on our website.

Workshops were again used to demonstrate entrepreneurship to youth as an alternative employment option. The pros and cons of owning your own business were outlined. In addition, the importance of completing a business plan and the steps involved were also demonstrated to the students.

Sponsors continue to provide the motivation, recognition and support by providing the funding for awards and the banquet. Our Gold Sponsors (\$1,000 or more cash or "in kind") include: CJVR FM & CK 750, CTV, SGI, North East Credit Unions which include: Diamond North, Cornerstone, Advantage, Kelvington, Porcupine, And Hudson Bay.

Silver Sponsors (\$500.00 - \$999.00) are: North East Regional Economic Development Authority, SIGA, Sask Energy, Sask Tel, Enterprise Saskatchewan.

Bronze Sponsors (\$200 - \$ 499.00) are: Bunge Canada, Capital "I" Industries Inc, City of Melfort, Cumberland Regional College, Etomami Valley Regional Economic Development Authority, Royal Bank of Canada Tisdale, Melfort & Nipawin Branches, Saskatchewan Ministry of Agriculture, Canadian Youth Business Foundation, Pearson's Department Store, Town of Hudson Bay, Town of Naicam, Town of Nipawin & the Nipawin Region Economic Development Committee, Town of Porcupine Plain and The Town of Tisdale and Economic Development Committee

Other Contributors Include: Info Source/Canada Saskatchewan Business Service Centre, R.M. of Porcupine Plain No. 395, Service Canada, Century 21 The Insurancentre, Tisdale and the Village of Spalding.

YBEX Awards recognize and encourage the outstanding achievements of young people in Northeast Saskatchewan and encourage Entrepreneurship as a Career Option. The vision

is that YBEX is a project that engages youth with the community in ways that increase their own self-esteem and level of competency. It showcases what the young have to offer to their communities. Even though some students will not start a business in rural Saskatchewan immediately, some may consider the option after attending post secondary education and return to the northeast. A hypothetical, academic perspective, combined with local grass-roots insight is a powerful mechanism for creating new businesses and knowledge!

Business Plan Award

To compete in this category, applicants created and developed an imaginary business that they would like to own and operate. The business may:

- Sell a product or provide a service that already exists
- Change an existing product or service
- Invent a new product or service

Applicants described their imaginary business, what motivated them to choose their product or service, why their product or service was needed in the community, and described the customers that will support their business. All business plans must include monthly and yearly sales and expense estimates, a marketing plan to sell the product or service, and plan to address any problems that may occur in operating the business.

The applicants of the Business Plan Category were judged on the description of their business and customers, their operation/advertising strategy, creativity, business viability, organization, and problem solving skills.

Awards were provided for the creation of a business idea and development of a **BUSINESS PLAN**. Submissions clearly described and developed a business idea and demonstrated ingenuity and effort. Cash prizes for first place (\$300.00), second place (\$200.00) and third place (\$100.00) were awarded to both individual and group categories in the three age groups of grades 6 – 9; grades 10 – 12 and Out of School youth from our region under the age of 30. Cash prizes were also awarded to the school or association (half of the prize value) linked to the winner.

Business Venture Award

To compete in this category, applicants described a revenue-generating activity such as a student run business, or an out-of-school activity that produced income for the individual(s).

Some examples of After School Businesses are: Yard Care/Snow Removal Business; Internet Web-site Design or Computer Help for Beginners; Operating a School Concession; or Raising Chickens and selling eggs.

Participants created their own company, raised capital, produced and marketed their product or service. They created a Business Plan that described their business, their product or service, and their customers. Start-up costs, along with monthly/yearly sales and expenses were also included with their plan. Additionally, contestants described their goals for their business and stated whether or not those goals were reached and the experience gained by running the business.

The applicants in “Operating A Business Venture” Category were judged upon their ability to operate an actual business, organization, problem-solving skills, creativity, and clear recognition of the learning experience gained from this process.

Awards provided for the **BUSINESS VENTURE** category clearly evaluated the operations of their business including problem solving, target setting and goal accomplishment. Cash prizes for first place (\$300.00) were awarded to both individual and group categories for each of the three age groups. Cash prizes were also awarded to the school or association (half of the prize value) linked to the winner. .

THE INFOSOURCE AWARD. An award in the amount of \$100.00 was provided to the YBEX entrant that demonstrated an exceptional use of secondary research using online resources. This award was provided by Info Source/Canada Saskatchewan Business Service Centre.

SPECIAL ACHIEVEMENT awards were presented to submissions, which demonstrated exceptional effort and outstanding achievement in one or more areas. Students qualifying for **four** special achievement awards received a \$50.00 cash award.

The **MIKE BUTLER MEMORIAL** award in the amount of \$100.00 is sponsored by Community Futures Newsask. The criteria for this award is: Commitment to community; Passion for a chosen field; and Quality of work.

The winners of the **AGRICULTURAL BUSINESS** awards demonstrate effort and outstanding achievement in producing a Business Plan or Business Venture in an Agricultural business or a business with Agricultural Value Added potential. A Prize in the amount of \$100 for the Best Business Plan and a prize in the amount of \$100 for the Best Business Venture were sponsored by the Saskatchewan Ministry of Agriculture.

CATEGORIES AND WINNERS:

• **Business Plan Individual Category Winners**

Grades 6 – 9

- 1st place winner – Joland Schmidt, “Merry Cherries U-Pick Orchard”, Melfort
- 2nd place winner – Travis Gray, “No Slip Curling Grip”, Aylsham
- 3rd place winner – Evan Mollberg, “Cubitz”, Nipawin

Grades 10-12

- 1st place winner – Leejay Schmidt, “DigiTech Media Solutions Corporations”, Melfort
- 2nd place winner – Taylor Hagenes, “Sew Mending’s”, Archerwill
- 3rd place winner – Justin Ens, “Golden Gliders Gliding Centre”, Nipawin

Out of School Youth

- 1st place winner – Jennifer Bushby, “Earthnut Solutions”, LacVert
- 2nd place winner – Karissa Little, “Kool Travel”, Tisdale
- 3rd place winner – Christine Leppington, “Nail Care Xpress”, Tisdale

• **Business Plan Group Category Winners**

Grades 6-9

- 1st place winners – Jay Wiebe & Sydnee Neumann, “Sugar Babies”, Nipawin
- 2nd place winners – Kaitlin Wesnoski & Abigail Anderson, “Wear and Tear”, Nipawin
- 3rd place winners – Moregan Chornawka, Sabrina Karle, Haley Cronje & Bianca Funes, “Kanect 4 Kids”, Nipawin

Out of School Youth

- 1st place winner – Erica Desrosiers & Kendra O’Brien , “A Kiss of Sun”, Melfort & Pleasantdale

• **Business Venture Individual Category Winners**

Grades 6 – 9

- 1st place winner – Diana Hoppe, “Farm Fresh Turkeys”, Nipawin
- 2nd place winner – Keaton Schmidt, “Dishin’ it Out”, Melfort

Grades 10-12

- 1st place winner – Charissa Irvine, “Charissa’s Eggs”, Archerwill

• **Business Venture Group Category Winners**

Grades 6 – 9

1st place winners – Matthew Ens and Andrea Ens, “Matt’s Marine”, Nipawin

Grades 10-12

1st place winners – Kelsey Bender, Kristine Pederson, Brianne Braaten, Jesse MacDonald and Riley Braaten, “Home Ec. Confectionary”, Archerwill

SPECIAL ACHEIVEMENT AWARDS

Special achievement awards were presented to those submissions that demonstrated exceptional effort and outstanding achievement in one or more areas. Students qualifying for the five special achievement awards received a \$50.00 cash award.

1st Special Achievement – Brie Thompson & Jesalyn Youzwa, “A Passion 2 Dance”, Nipawin

2nd Special Achievement – Ji soo Lee & Rebecca Wiens, “J&R Pets Plus”, Nipawin & Aylsham

3rd Special Achievement – Kyler Palidwar, “Project X”, Nipawin

4th Special Achievement – Keely Tallon & Kailli Noble, “Shiner”, Nipawin

Agricultural Business Award –

1st Business Venture winner – Diana Hoppe, “Farm Fresh Turkeys”, Nipawin

2nd Business Plan winner – Joland Schmidt, “Merry Cherries U-Pick Orchard”, Melfort

Infosource Award – Karissa Little, “Kool Travel”, Tisdale

Mike Butler Memorial Award – Matthew Ens & Andrea Ens, “Matt’s Marine”, Nipawin

Sincere thanks to all the youth, supporting teachers, parents, sponsors and Newsask Staff.