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Business Innovation Group (BIG) News

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BIG Pitch Finalists Announced

October 1, 2015

Ocean Exchange and the Business Innovation Group (BIG) at Georgia Southern University have revealed the eight finalists who will compete in the BIG Pitch collegiate competition for the \$10,000 cash prize on Sunday, October 11, 2015. The BIG Pitch drew a total of 28 collegiate team applicants.

The inaugural class of collegiate innovators to present their solutions in Savannah at the BIG Pitch are:

- Opus 12 from Stanford University, [Renewable Fuel Production from Carbon Dioxide](#)
- Resource Recovery from Waste Water from Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, [A Sustainable Water Treatment/Recovery Process](#)
- Green Technology Artificial Reefs from Valdosta State University, [Artificial Reefs from Cement and Nutrient Mixtures](#)
- Surya Conversions from University of Colorado-Boulder, [Hybrid Electric Conversion Kits for Auto Rickshaws in Developing Countries](#)
- Prosumer Grid from Georgia Institute of Technology, [Simulate & Optimize the Operation of Distributed Energy Resources/Grid](#)
- NTi Technology from Cornell University, [Functional Coating for Self-Distribution](#)
- Cooking with Stored Solar Heat from University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign, [Maintain Traditional Cooking Methods in the Developing World without Use of Fuel, Flame, & Emissions](#)
- Loop from Savannah College of Art & Design, [Biometric System to Upcycle Waste from Meat, Fish, and Bone](#)

“We received some really good applications from students all over the world,” said Dominique Halaby, director of BIG. “I’m very excited about the eight we selected to compete in our inaugural BIG Pitch competition. They represent some really innovative solutions.”

BIG Pitch facilitates the adoption of undergraduate and graduate innovations that improve economies, health and the environment. BIG Pitch is part of the Business Innovation Group (BIG) at the Georgia Southern College of Business and partners with Ocean Exchange.

For more information on the BIG Pitch Competition, the Ocean Exchange, or Georgia Southern University entrepreneurship programs, please contact Millicent Pitts, CEO of Ocean Exchange at 912-257-0209 or email at millicent.pitts@oceanexchange.org; or Dominique Halaby, DPA, director of the Georgia Southern University Business Innovation Group at 912-478-2733 or email at dhalaby@georgiasouthern.edu.

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Eagle FastPitch making comeback

October 1, 2015



BIG is happy to announce that it will bring the Eagle FastPitch competition back to Georgia Southern University this fall. Finalists in Eagle FastPitch will compete to see who can deliver the best elevator pitch to judges in just three minutes. The competition provides a unique opportunity for enterprising students to hone their selling skills.

Eagle FastPitch originally launched in November 2009 and expanded over the years with the addition of new sponsors and collaborators to become a regional FastPitch competition held in Savannah each spring. BIG is re-launching the local event to showcase the entrepreneurial talent of students across Georgia Southern's campus. Students who participate and are interested in launching a new business or gaining venture capital will have a leg up on the regional competition.

Eagle FastPitch is FREE and open to all Georgia Southern students. Twelve finalists will be chosen and will work with mentors and coaches who will help them prepare in the two weeks leading up to the competition. Eagle FastPitch will take place on November 17 at 3 p.m. in the Whitaker Black Box Theater on West Main St. in Downtown Statesboro. Finalists will deliver a three-minute pitch of their innovative enterprise to a panel of local community leaders, investors, and academic professionals. Pitches will be judged based on the idea, impact, implementation, presentation, structure and delivery of the pitch. Prize packages are still being determined.

[APPLY TODAY!](#)

BIG Cafe Launch is a great success!

October 1, 2015

On September 9, 2015, at 9:00 a.m., nearly 40 local entrepreneurs, students and faculty gathered at City Campus to launch BIG Café. This monthly networking event is designed to help local entrepreneurs solve business problems using the input from attendees while enjoying a complimentary cup of coffee.

Presenting were David Hoyle, coffee sponsor and owner of Cool Beanz Espresso Bar and Jeff Leggett, owner of CT Recycling. David, looking to open a second location, posed the question, “How do I build an infrastructure? I know I can’t be in two places at once.”

Stacey Ventura, a dog trainer by trade and new to the area, suggested training a shadow to learn what he does and how he does it. Marco George, Covenant Home Security expanded on this suggesting incentivizing employees and giving them some kind of ownership in the company. Other suggestions included finding a software to help streamline billing, inventory and payroll as well as having a standard operating procedures manual so that he can feel better about giving up some control.

Jeff Leggett was next to present about his newest venture, CT Recycling. Jeff, current owner of Pestmasters, is hoping to fill a void left by the recent dissolvent of the county’s Keep Bulloch Beautiful curbside recycling program. The problem he sees himself facing is customer acquisition. “How do I get these commercial properties to want to recycle? How do I get those customers to understand that there’s a value in what I do?”

Brian Reiss, owner of Party Harbor, reminisced about growing up in New York and getting paid five cents per can to recycle. “So I’ve been recycling since I was a little kid, it was ingrained in us, plus we wanted that nickel.” Since it was something he learned early in life, he and his family are still passionate about recycling. He suggested getting more literature out to educate the community on the importance of recycling to get their buy-in. Joseph Akins, 84 Lumber, suggested building on the synergy of his Pestmaster business to incentivize current customers to also use his recycling services by offering some kind of discount.

The first BIG Café was a tremendous success. Thanks to everyone who attended and gave such invaluable feedback. Special thanks to the presenters as well. If you would like to present your business obstacle(s) at BIG Café please contact Jill Johns at jjohns@georgiasouthern.edu or 912-478-0872. The forum is not only a wonderful networking opportunity, but also a chance to learn from other entrepreneurs.

The next BIG Café will be Wednesday, October 14 at 9 a.m. [RSVP here](#).

Commerce Center Economic Impact Analysis

October 1, 2015

The Bureau of Business Research and Economic Development (BBRED) recently completed an economic impact analysis for the Greater Atlanta Industrial Economic Development Alliance (GAIEDA) to analyze the potential impact of a proposed commerce center building in the Metro Atlanta region. A commerce center is also referred to as a spec building, and is often used for an industrial purpose. Communities have found that these buildings are major assets to include in the overall economic development arsenal. When a company needs to begin operating quickly, communities with new buildings, ready to be occupied, are better positioned to attract that firm.

The study included multiple sizes and future uses for the building to allow planners the ability to attract a variety of corporate customers. The economic impact was based upon the logistics industry as the most likely occupant. With access to two of the largest ports on the East Coast, the logistics industry represents a great opportunity for economic growth in Georgia.

Based upon the assessment, constructing the proposed 500,000 square foot facility would generate more than \$39.90 million in total output and add, or support, more than 250 jobs in Metro Atlanta. When the building is fully occupied, the annual economic impact will grow to \$236.3 million and support 1,265 jobs after ten years of operating as a distribution center.

If the facility were increased to 1,000,000 square feet, the construction impact would be \$79.80 million in total output and support 500 jobs in Atlanta. When the building is fully occupied in this case, the annual economic impact will grow to \$325.45 million in total output and support 1,265 jobs after ten years of operating as a distribution center.

Using this study, GAIEDA aims to build at least one commerce center in the Metro Atlanta area. This development would have a positive economic impact on the host community.

Alumpreneur to speak at City Campus

October 1, 2015

BIG is excited to be hosting Alumpreneur Cedric Henry on Thursday, October 15. Cedric, class of '84, is the co-founder and chief operating officer of Millennium Corporation, a government contractor headquartered in Washington, DC.

After receiving his BBA, Cedric joined the US Navy where he served for 20 years. While in the Navy, he developed expertise with various programs throughout the Department of Defense. His final rank was Lieutenant Commander.

Cedric and business partner, Kevin Jennings, co-founded Millennium Corporation in 2004 with the vision of providing unrivaled customer service and support to government clients. The company was recognized by the Virginia Chamber of Commerce as the number one fastest-growing government professional services firm in the state in 2014.

Cedric will speak with students in the E-Zone at City Campus on October 15 at 5 p.m. This event is FREE and open to any who wish to attend.