



PRESS RELEASE

Canada's Brightest Young Entrepreneurs Square Off in National Competition

Ottawa, Ontario (April 23, 2008) – Months of hard work and determination are about to come to a head as some of Canada's brightest young entrepreneurs prepare to gather in Ottawa for a battle-of-the-bands-style competition to decide the winner of the national Wes Nicol Entrepreneurial Award.

Squaring off in this year's Nicol Award championship round are teams from Acadia University, Carleton University, the University of Guelph, the University of Ottawa, Wilfrid Laurier University, and the University of Waterloo.

Launched in 1997, the Nicol Award celebrates entrepreneurial spirit, drive and enthusiasm. The competition kicked off last fall with entries from 14 of Canada's leading universities. The top six teams now advance to the finals and a chance to pitch their business ideas to a panel of business experts at the Fairmont Chateau Laurier Hotel in Canada's capital on May 6, 2008.

The Nicol Award differs from other business plan contests because it is open to students from any academic program, not just business. Few other business award programs offer participants an experience that is so true-to-life, mirroring the real-world pressures and conditions that an entrepreneur faces in attracting financial backing and support.

"The Nicol Award competition gives you the experience and confidence you need to launch a business," says Jasmin Hofer, last year's national winner. While pursuing a degree in German Applied Studies at the University of Waterloo, Ms. Hofer captured the 2007 Nicol Award for her business idea: a small-scale vegetable oil production system that enables farmers to supply their own feed meal and renewable biofuel. Her company, Energrow, plans to launch the product officially in mid-May. "Without the Nicol Awards, I probably wouldn't have come as far I have," Ms. Hofer says.

The six teams of students vying for this year's award are pitching an array of innovative and exciting business ideas:

- **Fall Line Lodge (Acadia University):** *The Fall Line Lodge* is a proposed upscale ski lodge to be built in Revelstoke, B.C., featuring the longest vertical and best

snow conditions in North America. Offering 15 luxury suites with gourmet organic cuisine, it will target young, professional snow-sports enthusiasts.

- **Draugh.com (University of Ottawa):** Draugh.com is a one-stop shop for businesses that need to create custom designs for promotional items such as signs and T-shirts. The site allows clients to collaborate with an artist in real-time, viewing the design on screen as it takes shape. The design can then be printed on the media of the clients' choosing and shipped to their door.
- **VSM Technologies (Carleton University):** VSM has developed a wearable vital signs monitoring patch that signals an external receiver whenever a given parameter -- blood pressure, heart rate, body temperature, etc. -- exceeds a specified level. It provides significant advantages over current products, which are bulky and expensive.
- **Green World Solutions (University of Guelph):** Green World Solutions is finalizing contracts with a manufacturer to develop its own brand of environmentally friendly products, including cutlery, bags and packaging. Made from a unique new generation of plastics, these products will fully biodegrade within nine months to five years.
- **Campus Ink (Wilfrid Laurier University):** Campus Ink offers a low-cost printing solution based on remanufactured cartridges that provide up to 300 per cent more capacity than original cartridges using a unique, smudge-resistant ink.
- **SparkMedia (University of Waterloo):** SparkMedia provides a hardware/software solution that enables telecommunications providers to deliver television, telephone and Internet service to an unlimited number of users through a unified wireless network.

The Keynote speaker at the 2008 Award Gala will be John McLennan, former CEO of Cantel, BCE Mobility, Bell Canada and AT&T Canada. Mr. McLennan will be following in the footsteps of other illustrious entrepreneurs who supported the awards in past years, including Sir Terrence Matthews, Leonard Lee, Founder of Lee Valley Tools, and Eric Sprott, Chairman and CEO of Toronto-based Sprott Asset Management Inc.

The organizers of the 2008 Wes Nicol Entrepreneurial Award gratefully acknowledge the support of our sponsors, TD Commercial Banking and Tartan Homes.

A press kit, including profiles of the 2008 Wes Nicol Entrepreneurial Award finalists and bios of the judges, is available at <http://www.nicol-award.com/media/overview.html>

To arrange coverage of the competition and interviews with the finalists, please contact Pelly Heighton at 613-798-9894, or email pelly.heighton@nicol-award.com.