

# e nexUS

## Business Plan Competition honored with two awards

Student competition earns first and second runner-up awards

The Great Valley Technology Alliance's Regional Business Plan Competition was recently honored with two awards from the Northeastern Pennsylvania Alliance.

The Business Plan Competition – which provided the winning student with \$20,000 in start-up capital and \$20,000 in in-kind services to launch a new business – won First Place in the Economic Development category at the 25th annual Pocono Northeast (PONE) Community Awards in October.

Great Valley's competition also earned a second runner-up award in the First Annual John J. Luciani Regionalism Award, which was created in memory of the former EDCNP president (EDCNP was the precursor organization to the NEPA Alliance).

Competition co-chair Don Webster said, "We are delighted that others have recognized this program which rewards the entrepreneurial spirit that exists in our community."

Co-chair Jaco Smit expressed his gratitude for the recognition. "We appreciate their vote of confidence in the program. It surely lets us know we are heading in the right direction."

For more on next year's Business Plan Competition, see page 2



GVTA CEO Chris Haran, left, and Business Plan Competition Co-chair Don Webster accept the PONE award during the NEPA Alliance annual dinner.

## A trip to Seattle shows that 'we are not alone'



Christopher Haran, GVTA CEO

"We are not alone!"

No, it wasn't a close encounter; it was a realization that came to me while attending the State Systems and Technology Institute's conference on Technology Based Economic Development (TBED) last week in Seattle.

With more than 300 people from 40 states in attendance, I "encountered" numerous statewide, regional, and local initiatives throughout the U.S. focused on leveraging technology to enhance their respective economies. Surprisingly, there exists a very wide range of maturity across these efforts, ranging from those initiatives that are

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### CALENDAR

#### DECEMBER 2

The Innovation Center @ Wilkes-Barre is hosting a Regional Entrepreneur Workshop at The Woodlands.

#### JANUARY 16

GVTA Board meeting. Noon.

2003

NOVEMBER

The Great Valley Technology Alliance and Institute

15 Public Square • 5th floor • Wilkes-Barre, PA 18701  
Scranton Enterprise Center • 201 Lackawanna Avenue • Scranton, PA 18503  
charan@greatvalleyalliance.com



## GVTA welcomes new executive assistant/POWER coordinator



**GVTA's new Executive Assistant and POWER Coordinator Laurie A. Gress.**

The next time you call the Great Valley Technology Alliance, you'll probably hear a new voice.

Laurie A. Gress was recently welcomed to the Great Valley staff as POWER Coordinator and Executive Assistant to Christopher J. Haran, CEO of the Great Valley Technology Institute. Laurie fills the position created by the departure of Amy George earlier this year.

As coordinator of POWER (Professionals Organized and Working to Enrich the Region), Laurie will be re-energizing the group to best accomplish its goals. POWER's mission is to make the region a better place to live, work, and play. It is a mechanism through which young professionals can meet, socialize, and become involved in shaping their community.

Laurie earned a B.S. in Management Information Systems from College Misericordia, where she graduated Magna Cum Laude in 2001. She received the Sherri Galloway award for "Academic achievement while balancing commitments to family, school and community". Prior to accepting the position at the Great Valley Technology Institute, she was a programmer at Pennsoftware and Technology. She has also been active in the region's restaurant/entertainment industry for many years.

Ms. Gress lives in Plains with her daughter Cassie, who began attending Luzerne County Community College this fall.

## Business Plan Competition gets underway for 2004

The Leadership Wilkes-Barre class has accepted the BPC as their project for the year

After the great success of last year's GVTA Business Plan Competition, the college-level competition is gearing up for a new batch of entrants in 2004. Students compete for the grand prize of \$20,000 in start-up capital and \$20,000 in in-kind services.

Last year's event had several sponsors, including Aventis Pasteur, Pennsylvania's Stay Invent the Future program, Ben Franklin Technology Partners, PPL, Procter and Gamble, PNC Foundation, the Willary Foundation, Technology Council of Northeastern Pennsylvania, and Software Engineering Associates.

Anyone wishing to become involved with or sponsor this year's competition may contact the Great Valley Technology Alliance at 570-200-0875.

Competition co-chair Don Webster, who helped organize last year's event as well, said, "This competition brings out the best in our local students, and thereby helps improve the Great Valley by encouraging entrepreneurs to begin start-up business right here."

The students are assisted and mentored during the competition to help them best develop their plans.

# Business Plan Competition

Co-chair Jaco Smit said the Leadership Wilkes-Barre class accepted the Business Plan Competition as their project and will assist with planning and help sessions.

Students wishing to compete need to register by February 20.

Business plans are evaluated by a panel of five judges based on the following criteria:

- Focus
- Uniqueness and economic feasibility of the idea
- Ability to Protect intellectual property, technology
- Evidence of customer acceptance
- Proposed Use of Financial resources

### Important competition deadlines

- February 20, 2004. . . . Registrations are due
- February & March, 2004. . . . Help sessions are available
- March 19, 2004. . . . Business plans are due
- April 16, 2004. . . . Judges select finalists
- April 21-23, 2004. . . . Finalists are presented to the judges
- April 26, 2004. . . . Winner selected
- April 30, 2004. . . . Award ceremony



The winner of the 2003 Business Plan Competition was 19-year-old Alex Brunelle (left), seen here with his partner, and brother, Theodore.

## Regional Entrepreneur Workshop set for Dec. 2

Opportunity for entrepreneurs to gain valuable business start-up tips

**Have a great idea?**

**Want to start a business?**

**Need money to get started?**

Then you won't want to miss the Regional Entrepreneur Workshop being held starting at 8 a.m. Tuesday, December 2, at the Woodlands Inn & Resort, Wilkes-Barre.

Sponsors for this special event include the Great Valley Technology Alliance, Verizon, Ben Franklin Technology Partners, the Innovation Center @ Wilkes-Barre, the Scranton Enterprise Center, the Greater Wilkes-Barre Chamber of Business and Industry, the Greater Scranton Chamber of Commerce, the Department of Community and Economic Development, the Northeastern Pennsylvania Alliance and Greater Hazleton CAN DO.

Join a panel of experts to discuss business plans, legal issues and funding sources. You ask the questions – they'll give the answers!

The 8 a.m. breakfast keynote speaker will be Dr. Richard Florida – the H. John Heinz Professor of Economic Development at Carnegie Mellon University and author of the critically-acclaimed book "Rise of the Creative Class."

Florida has been a visiting professor at MIT, Harvard University's Kennedy School of Government, and the Brookings Institution in Washington, D.C.



Keynote speaker  
Dr. Richard Florida

He is co-author of five other books and more than 100 articles in academic journals.

Florida is founder and principal of two companies, the Creativity Group, an innovative communications and strategies team, and Catalytix, a strategy-consulting firm that works with regions, governments and corporations around the world. He earned his Bachelor's degree from Rutgers College and his Ph.D. from Columbia University.

Starting at 9:15 a.m., a series of Entrepreneurial Panels will be held, covering the business start-up process, regional incubators, financing and legal issues.

Panel speakers include Jeffrey Babin, CEO of Corporate Technology Ventures and judge of the annual business plan competition at Wharton.

The lunch forum will be presented at 12:30 p.m. by Kostas Malios, Senior Director, Office of the CTO and Rich Media, Microsoft Corporation.

Venture Capitalists will be there!

The SBA will be there!

Legal Experts will be there!

Tax and Accounting Experts will be there!

**YOU SHOULD BE THERE!**

Sign up or learn more at <http://www.icwb.biz>

## Letter *(continued from page 1)*

just getting underway, to those that measure their annual success by the number of patents issued to their university professors, or by the number of companies spun off as a result of collaborative research initiatives.

One significant take-away from the conference was that we in Northeastern Pennsylvania are well on our way towards TBED. For example, we have our business leaders, economic development folks, and our Institutions of Higher Education (IHE) presidents all with their oars in the water and pulling in the same direction. We have established numerous efforts at encouraging a higher level of entrepreneurship in our region, and are taking great strides at getting start-up companies access to much needed capital. To a large

degree, many other regions of the country still only aspire to achieve these key components, and are just beginning to put plans in place for such.

However, we still have a steep hill to climb. Our colleges and universities, while very supportive of building a technology based economy, are not of the same stature as some of their nationally recognized counterparts who actively drive TBED in their region or state. Our capacity to transfer knowledge (technology) from the academic community to the business community in a cooperative fashion is in fact the key underpinning of a technology based economy, and is one that you will be hearing more about in the coming months.

## Great Valley Technology Alliance: Who we are, and what we do...

The Great Valley Technology Alliance is a regional partnership of colleges and universities, businesses, economic development groups and governmental agencies working together to improve the educational, technological, and entrepreneurial future of Northeastern Pennsylvania through innovative programs, strategic direction setting, and creative thinking.

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