

# NORTH IOWA SBDC *sweeps* STATE AWARDS

The Iowa SBDC has three annual statewide awards. There are fifteen regional SBDC's in Iowa. For the first time ever, a single regional office swept all of the awards. We did that. The NIACC Pappajohn Center's North Iowa Area SBDC 2015 statewide winners are:



Pictured Left to Right: SBDC Regional Director, Brook Boehmler; Senator Amanda Ragan; Admin. Assistant, Mary Spitz; Legacy Logistics and Freight, Sarah Novacek; Hoover's Hatchery LLC, Tony Halsted; Representative Sharon Steckman; State SBDC Director, Lisa Shimkat; JPEC Accelerator Director, Dan Winegarden

**The Deb Dalziel Woman Entrepreneur Achievement Award** is awarded annually to a woman who significantly improved or changed her personal situation, thus having an impact on others around them. This year, a North Iowa SBDC client won again. The 2015 Deb Dalziel winner is Sarah Novacek, Legacy Logistics Freight, Inc. of Mason City, IA. Sarah is a tenant in our NIACC Business Incubator. Last year's winner was another North Iowa SBDC client, Shelly Zimmerman, the new owner of Harrison Thornburgh Insurance Inc. in Dumont, IA.

**The Neal Smith Entrepreneur of the Year Award** is presented annually to a successful Iowa entrepreneur to encourage business owners; the driving force behind Iowa's economic growth. Winning entrepreneurs must have been in business a minimum of three years and have to have been significantly assisted by an Iowa SBDC center. This year's winner is Tony Halsted, principal owner and CEO of Hoover's Hatchery, LLC of Rudd, IA.

Lisa Shimkat, State Director of America's SBDC Iowa, agrees that Novacek and Halsted deserve these awards saying, "Dedicated

and passionate entrepreneurs like Sarah and Tony make our job seem almost easy. We are honored to have clients diligently working to move their businesses forward. They daily show a strong commitment to their communities and customers. We are delighted to be able to recognize their hard work and success with these awards."

The two SBDC statewide entrepreneur awards will be feted in a special ceremony in spring 2016 at the State Capitol in Des Moines. Both Legislative chambers and the Governor will recognize and meet our North Iowa winners and celebrate their success. It's a great reminder of the role small business success plays in state economic development, importing dollars to Iowa and creating jobs.



Sarah Novacek, Legacy Logistics Freight, Inc.

Mary Spitz is the inaugural 2015 **Iowa SBDC Support Person of the Year**. Mary is NIACC's North Iowa SBDC Administrative Assistant and keeps the office running and business coaches coordinated. Efficiently managing clients and maintaining records is no longer a thankless job. This is a big and public, "Thank you!" and well-earned as many of our internal processes for which Mary is responsible are being adopted as best-practices statewide. The North Iowa SBDC continues to lead the state in performance metrics, year-after-year. Mary's support is a huge part of our SBDC and Pappajohn Center team's success.

Brook Boehmler, North Iowa Area SBDC Regional Director, nominated Spitz for the award. Brook says, "Mary is the anchor for our office. She makes sure that every performance audit goes smoothly. Our state and federal funding is dependent upon good record keeping and procedural compliance. Mary is thorough and friendly. Clients know they are important. State office staff know the records are accurate. Mary does it all while only working half-time for the SBDC."

Winning the trifecta of Iowa SBDC awards for North Iowa and NIACC is a significant accomplishment, unmatched by any other center.



Pictured left to Right: NIACC President, Dr. Steven Schulz; Admin. Assistant, Mary Spitz; State SBDC Director, Lisa Shimkat

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# TOGETHER. SHAPING THE FUTURE

The NIACC John Pappajohn Entrepreneurial Center and America's Small Business Development Center (SBDC) of North Iowa have a lot to celebrate this year with the recent announcements of three statewide award winners.

Hats off to Tony Halsted, winner of the Neil Smith Entrepreneur of the Year Award; Sarah Novacek, winner of the Deb Dalziel Woman Entrepreneur Achievement Award; and our own Mary Spitz, who was named the inaugural America's Small Business Development Center Support Person of the Year. Needless to say, we are proud and excited on behalf of Tony, Sarah and Mary for their excellence in entrepreneurship in North Iowa. I hope you'll take a few minutes to read their stories in this issue, and join me in congratulating them.

I'd also like to share my appreciation for the relationship between the John Pappajohn Entrepreneurial Center and America's Small Business Development Center in North Iowa. Across the country, there are many SBDC's who share work space with entrepreneurial centers but do not necessarily share clients and resources to the degree we are committed to sharing here. It is a true collaboration that benefits not only our respective organizations, but our clients and communities as well.



**Tim Putnam, Director**  
John Pappajohn  
Entrepreneurial Center

## NEIL SMITH ENTREPRENEUR OF THE YEAR AWARD



Mary Halsted, Tony Halsted-Hoover's Hatchery, LLC.

### TONY HALSTED, HOOVER'S HATCHERY, LLC. RUDD, IA

Tony Halsted never intended to come back to the family business. He'd grown up working the incubators and packing chicks. Thanks to the family business, Tony had a college education and a perfectly great career in business development and information technology for a national financial services company. However, plans change. Tony's father was killed in an automobile accident, leaving his aging mother to run the hatchery. A couple of potential succession plans outside the family never quite materialized. Tony realized if his Mom, Mary Halsted, was ever going to retire, he'd have to step-up.



NIACC President, Dr. Steven Schulz; Tony Halsted, Hoover's Hatchery, LLC.; State SBDC Director, Lisa Shimkat; SBDC Regional Director, Brook Boehmler

In 2011, Tony came back to a 70-year old family company with a traditional hatchery business model. At the time, Hoover's sold day-old chicks to their customers primarily through paper mail order catalog, phone orders, and sales representatives who were also their local delivery truck drivers. The company had a reputation for great service and strong connections with their dealers as well as reliable employees. The company had real talent, real revenues, and a base of productive assets, but they also had their challenges.

This is a case study in succession planning. How do you finance a buyout to both fund the prior owner's retirement and support the new owner going forward? Growth is required. Tony delivered with strategic vision informed by both his big corporate experience and his rural business legacy. He delivered over 30% year-over-year sales growth and a vision able to attract growth equity financing partners sufficient to buy the company and finance the growth plan. Accordingly, Rudd, Iowa has 40 new jobs in a town of 300 and a growth business with a national customer base.

Tony is now lead owner and CEO (up from COO). Mary continues to consult to assure a smooth transfer of her traditional relationships. Hoover's is a standout example of rural business growth, serving new and distant customers both through an online B2C (business-to-consumer) model and through new strategic B2B (business-to-business) relationships. Look for Hoover's Hatchery in Ace Hardware stores nationwide. All this was accomplished without destroying the foundation of traditional dealers.

Tony Halsted and Hoover's continue to work with the North Iowa SBDC Director Brook Boehmler and Accelerator Director Dan Winegarden. The story isn't over. Tony says, "I am beyond privileged to work with the North Iowa SBDC & JPEC team and I let everyone know."

# First Annual Social Media Summit

The first annual Midwest Social Media Summit drew 150 participants and speakers on Saturday, October 24 to the NIACC Muse-Norris Conference Center. Speakers and panelists from five different states attracted attendees interested in growing their business by coordinating digital marketing and social media with traditional efforts.

An over-arching story emerged. You can reach a regional or national customer base from anywhere, including rural North Iowa. The power of digital marketing and social media is the ability to narrow cast to your best or most likely customers and to cultivate and expand an ongoing relationship based upon affinity and trust.

## HIGHLIGHTS INCLUDED:

- **Shannon Latham**, sharing her experience in marketing rural businesses through social media. Latham Hi-Tech Seeds speaks to a sophisticated multi-state market of dealers and grain farmers via *TheFieldPosition.com* blog and related social media channels. *Enchanted Acres* in Sheffield, IA offers an agri-tourism experience primarily for area residents and their guests through seasonal offerings like the pumpkin patch. Shannon described her tools and success and advised authenticity to make the relationship connection. Social marketing is not about selling in every post, but creating the connection and awareness that creates the opportunity to sell.
- Atlanta author and ABC Shark Tank business owner, **Lori Lite** of *Stress Free Kids*, described building a national brand and service helping families with contentious teen relationships. She demonstrated the power of Twitter and Facebook to tell a story to raise brand awareness and illustrate success stories. She successfully uses social media to show that other families can change their teen relationships from distress and conflict to respect and success. Ideas can travel far over the internet, removing geographic barriers to service and growth.
- Chicago-based, **Betsy Armstrong** from *Constant Contact* (a national e-mail marketing service) armed attendees for e-mail marketing success from initial list building through relationship maintenance and expansion. This "how-to" workshop was especially popular with first timers as it offered concrete steps to get started and metrics to measure progress.
- **The North Iowa Bloggers** conducted a workshop assisting business owners in setting up Facebook business pages, learning the rules and tools of effective posting. Bloggers know the value of boosting and promotion to get noticed and continue the relationship both on-line and in-person.
- **Tony Halsted** of *Hoover's Hatchery, LLC* in Rudd, Iowa described how a traditional rural business grew 30% a year by using social media to support on-line sales. In the process, Hoover's added 40 jobs to a town of 300 and more than quadrupled capacity. Hoover's Hatchery moved from obscurity in a Google search, buried on page ten, to front page prominence.
- **Scott Meyer** of *9Clouds* a digital marketing firm from Sioux Falls, South Dakota painted a vision of creative class growth driving rural economic development. This "why it matters" view was the perfect closing motivator to return home on Monday and put the tools into action.

## OTHER PRESENTERS AND PANELISTS INCLUDED:

- Hampton's **Pat The Computer Guy Palmer**
- **Michael Libbey** from *Digitly's DiscoverNorthIowa.com*
- **Darcy Maulsby**, *Journalist and Photographer*
- Professor **Kelli Bloomquist** of *Iowa Central Community College*
- **Mandy Winegarden**, President of *Young Professionals Minneapolis* and social media consulting firm *Neolndio*
- **Noah and Brooke Kupcho** of *WolfTree Magazine*



The event was developed and presented by the four lead sponsors: Clear Lake Area Chamber of Commerce (Tim Coffey); Webster City Area Chamber of Commerce (Deb Brown); Social Connections, LLC (Sara Broers); and the NIACC John Pappajohn Entrepreneurship Center. The lead sponsors are all active participants in the North Iowa Social Media Breakfast Club organized by Social Connections. The North Iowa Bloggers, Neolndio and the Pappajohn Center provided staff support during the day.

Strong first year attendance lays the foundation for repeating the effort in 2016. Marketing assistance and coaching remains one of the areas of strongest interest by both new and existing business clients of the NIACC Pappajohn Center and its North Iowa SBDC.



# COLLEGE ENTREPRENEURS' ORGANIZATION

NIACC Collegiate Entrepreneurs' Organization (CEO) members attended the National CEO Conference in Kansas City, Missouri, November 5 – 7. Participants experienced stories from nationally renowned entrepreneurs such as Craig Culver of Culvers, Henry Bloch; founder of H & R Block, and the President and CEO of Sprint, Marcelo Claure. Students were exposed to over 50 entrepreneurs and 1,200 college students nationwide.

Keynotes presented their challenges and successes to students and breakout sessions provided valuable information from experts. Some of the topics included: crowd funding, social media, pitch competitions, idea creation workshops, and building blocks for a successful startup.

The NIACC CEO students fundraised for their trip and received sponsorship assistance from the following businesses: **Cresswell Repair, Rex Liekweg Excavating, Mid-Com, Quality Auto Service, The Insurance Office, Moorman Clothiers, Mason City and Clear Lake H & R Block, Thornton Financial Services, First Security Bank, Star Auto Body, and Mayor Jim Erb.** NIACC students who attended the conference were Jenna Borcharding, Briana Carroll, Dylan Firsching, Adam Kloberdanz, Cheyenne Liekweg, Skylar Marshall, Michael Meacham, Melissa Peterson, Miranda Schrader, and Hannah Wold.



**CEO** COLLEGIATE ENTREPRENEURS' ORGANIZATION™



Global Entrepreneurship Week included some fantastic events for the Pappajohn Center including our annual Market Place on Nov. 20th

## MARKET PLACE

“Global Entrepreneurship Week is a wonderful opportunity to recognize those entrepreneurs who have taken the steps and accepted the risks that go along with starting a new business,” said Tim Putnam, Pappajohn Center director. “It’s also a nice opportunity to encourage people to look into what being an entrepreneur is all about. They can even give it a try with our NIACC Marketplace event where students, faculty and staff are provided a venue to sell their art, jewelry and other creations.”



### START SMART **FREE** WORKSHOP

*Start Smart is a two-hour free workshop designed for anyone who is considering starting a business or expanding your business.*

#### START SMART SCHEDULE:

**DECEMBER 16** — 6:00-8:00pm; **Wednesday**, Mason City, NIACC Pappajohn Center #117, 500 College Dr.

**JANUARY 6** — 6:00-8:00pm; **Wednesday**, Hampton, Center 1, 5 1st St. SW Hampton, IA

**JANUARY 20** — 6:00-8:00pm; **Wednesday**, Mason City, NIACC Pappajohn Center #117, 500 College Dr.

**FEBRUARY 3** — 6:00-8:00pm; **Wednesday**, NIACC Charles City 200 Harwood Drive Charles City, IA

**FEBRUARY 10** — 6:00-8:00pm; **Wednesday**, Mason City, NIACC Pappajohn Center #117, 500 College D



# DREAM BIG

**WIN UP TO \$10,000 FOR YOUR BUSINESS!**

[www.dreambiggrowhere.com](http://www.dreambiggrowhere.com)

Capital is a necessary component to starting and growing your business. Thousands of dollars in cash have been awarded to business owners like you, through Dream Big Grow Here.

Dream Big Grow Here runs from December through May. It starts with an online application and voting, followed by an in-person industry specific pitch-off for a chance to earn \$5,000. Industry winners then become eligible to further compete for a chance to win a \$5,000 grand prize to be announced at EntreFEST 2016. Participating in Dream Big Grow Here will give your business wide-spread publicity and enhance valuable skills including social media, promotion, and business planning.

## How the Contest Works

### Step 1: APPLY

From December 1-January 30, we will accept online applications for the Dream Big Grow Here contest. Participants can submit an application to one of the following six industries: Ag Innovation, Hospitality/ Restaurants, Manufacturing/BioScience, Information Technology, Pre-Revenue, and Retail/Professional Services. Applications consist of a few short answer questions and a required 1-2 minute video.

North Iowa Tech Brew  
Meets the 3<sup>rd</sup> Tuesday of the month  
5-7 PM



TechBrews are informal networking events designed to bring together entrepreneurs, technology and business people. North Iowa TechBrews are sponsored by the Technology Association of Iowa, the NIACC John Pappajohn Entrepreneurial Center and the North Iowa Corridor EDC with a local or area business as a principal sponsor each month.

### Step 2: ONLINE VOTING

For two weeks, from February 8-February 22 voting will be open and you, your friends, and family members can vote for your business dream. We use a Facebook login requirement to reduce fraudulent voting. More information can be found in our private policy agreement.

### Step 3: APPLICATIONS JUDGED AND INDUSTRY FINALISTS ANNOUNCED

Five finalists from each industry will advance to the Industry Pitch Offs. The entry with the most online votes in each industry will automatically advance. The remaining four finalists will be decided on based upon the quality of their applications through a judging team at UNI. An announcement will be made on who the industry finalists are, one week after voting has ended.

### Step 4: PITCH COACHING

Industry finalists will have two months to prepare a 6 minute pitch about their business. In April, each finalist will attend a practice pitch session and get critiques and feedback from Venture Net Iowa.

### Step 5: INDUSTRY PITCH-OFFS

Industry finalists will pitch off at EntreFEST, for a chance at winning a \$5,000 or \$2,000 grant for their business. This event will be open to the public.

### Step 6: WINNERS SELECTED AND AWARDS CEREMONY

First and Second place winners from each industry will be announced at EntreFEST during an Awards Ceremony. This event will be open to the public.

#### TIMELINE

- DBGH Overview & Tips To Apply Webinar: Nov 12
- Application Period: Dec 1 - Jan 31
- Voting Period: Feb 8 - Feb 22
- Pitch-Off Coaching: April
- Industry/Statewide Pitch-Offs & Winners Selected: May 18 - 20

## FOR DATES & LOCATIONS:

**Check Our Website**

[www.niacc.edu/pappajohn/resources/tech-brew](http://www.niacc.edu/pappajohn/resources/tech-brew)

# SPRING LAUNCH & GROW YOUR BUSINESS

Not sure where to start?



**START HERE** with a 1 evening per week for 10 weeks course through the **NIACC JPEC Launch & Grow Your Business**. This program is designed to teach participants how to research, develop and write detailed business plans. It covers all aspects of launching a business, including licensing, bookkeeping, marketing & how to set up shop. Participants work on their own business ideas throughout the course moving their venture to reality or new levels of growth. It is recommended that participants have a specific business concept they would like to pursue.

**THURSDAY EVENINGS, 6-9:30 PM February 15 to April 21, 2016**

**NIACC CAMPUS** Pappajohn Business Center - Room #117

**Tuition \$199 | Course #101690**

Call 641.422.4358 to Register

If you plan to attend with a friend or spouse and will be sharing materials, it is only an additional \$100 for the second person



**JOHN PAPPAJOHN ENTREPRENEURIAL CENTER**

North Iowa Area Community College  
500 College Drive, Ste 120  
Mason City, IA 50401

Visit us online @ [www.niacc.edu/pappajohn](http://www.niacc.edu/pappajohn)

500 College Drive, Mason City, IA 50401

**1-888-GO-NIACC or 641-422-4111**

Visit us online @ [www.niacc.edu/pappajohn](http://www.niacc.edu/pappajohn)



**"How do we find you on the NIACC website?"**

**ANSWER:** Scroll to the bottom of the page & click on the PAPPAJOHNN CENTER logo



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