



## Mitchell County Students Attend Entrepreneurship Camp



*Front row, L to R: Dylan Orth, Garrett Maakestad, Destini Blake, Matthew Klaes, Ryan Gruman, Brett Bobinet, Julia Ringhofer Back row, L to R: Emily Hemann, Cole Holmen, Ben Swancutt, Brock Jennings, Jake Jensen*

Twelve students from Mitchell County recently attended an Entrepreneurship (E-Ship) Camp for middle school students in Mitchell County. The camp was funded through a grant awarded to the Mitchell County Economic Development Commission (MCEDC) through the Foundation for the Enhancement of Mitchell County. The MCEDC worked with the NIACC John Pappajohn Entrepreneurial Center (JPEC) to create a program that provided students the experience of putting ideas into a “real-world” business setting.

The students worked with facilitators from the NIACC JPEC for five sessions in October to develop their businesses, business plans and marketing strategies.

The sessions were held after school at the Mitchell County Conservation Center. “The purpose of the program was to teach middle school students the fundamental principles of entrepreneurship and build awareness about job creation and self-employment,” said Kelley Crane, School Partnership Entrepreneurial Coordinator for the NIACC JPEC. This was the first year this camp has been held in Mitchell County.

The campers also enjoyed guest speakers who shared their stories of owning your own business. The guest speakers were local entrepreneurs and included Nathan Hale of Nate’s Outdoor Recreation, Riceville; Eric Sparrow, Milkhouse Candle Company, Osage; and Stan Walk, Mitchell County Supervisor. “The biggest thing in having a successful business is good customer service,” said Hale. “If you treat people right, they will come back. They will also tell their friends.”

Students attending from Osage were sixth graders - Brett Bobinet and Ryan Gruman; seventh grader - Emily Hemann; and eighth graders - Julia Ringhofer, Destini Blake, Brock Jennings, Matthew Klaes and Garrett Maakestad and from Riceville was sixth grader - Dylan Orth and eighth graders - Ben Swancutt, Jake Jensen and Cole Holmen.

According to MCEDC Executive Director, Brenda Dryer “Working with the facilitators from the NIACC JPEC, these kids had the opportunity to develop a business concept, write business plans, and discuss marketing strategies. The E-Ship Camp participants worked hard to take creative concepts to the next level. I was very impressed with their work!”

Ben Swancutt, Riceville, said he was attending the camp, because “I think it’s a good skill to have. I’d like to start my own sports store mainly for outdoor sports.” Swancutt added he had enjoyed attending Entrepreneur for a Day (E4D), a program the NIACC JPEC has been delivering to 5th grade students in the region for the past eight years. “It has been so exciting to see how these students have taken the tools learned in E4D and expanded creative ideas into ‘real-world’ concepts,” said Crane.

Ryan Gruman said he thought attending the camp would help him when he was older. “I would like to own a service business,” he said, “a business that would help people, maybe those with special needs.”

“By the end of the camp, students are more aware of the entrepreneurs in their communities and the value small businesses bring to a rural economy,” added Crane.

On Thursday, October 18, the students ‘pitched’ their businesses at the annual FEMC awards night presentation. The student presentations were judged on creativity, business plan, eye contact and other areas by those attending the awards.



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## **JPEC Launch & Grow Your Business**

Thursdays

**Feb. 21 – April 25, 2013  
6:00 – 9:30 p.m.**

NIACC campus  
Pappajohn Center, Room 117

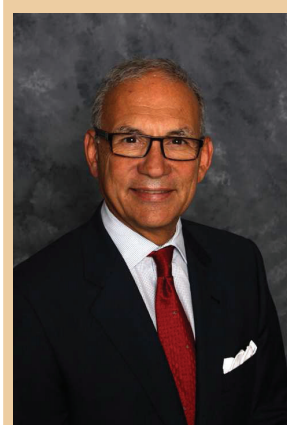
JPEC Launch and Grow Your Business assists the start-up and current entrepreneur in developing a business concept and evaluating it through each step of the business planning process. This course is designed to teach participants how to research, develop, and write detailed business plans. It covers all aspects of launching a business from licenses to bookkeeping to marketing to setting up shop. Participants work on their own business ideas or ventures throughout the course moving their ventures to reality or new levels of growth.

Course # - 86369  
Tuition - \$199

**Call 641-422-4358  
to Register.**

## **Director's Notes**

Business in North Iowa is strong, new businesses are launching, funding is still an issue but the ideas and willingness to engage and take the risk of starting a business has returned to prior high levels. However, we are told by our existing businesses that finding qualified employees is a challenge. NIACC is working with employers and potential employees to get them the training necessary to fill some of the hundreds of unfilled jobs in North Iowa. The NIACC JPEC has seen an influx of activity both in start-up businesses and in expanding and owner transfer businesses looking for assistance and consulting. It is gratifying to see this return to a more robust entrepreneurial environment.



*Jamie T. Zanios  
NIACC Vice President  
& JPEC Director*

We have had a very successful partnership with Mitchell County and Osage to bring a series of focused seminars/entrepreneur exchanges to their communities allowing businesses and entrepreneurs to learn from professionals and gain access to a strong network of support. This has been such a success that we are looking at replicating this series in other communities that have an interest and at NIACC's JPEC in the future. Programs presented in Mitchell County included Branding Your Business, Maximizing Your Business on the Internet, Five Ways to Super Profits and Outstanding Customer Service.

You know by now that Mark Olchefske, our Director of Incubation and Acceleration Services has left our employ and accepted a position in Aberdeen, South Dakota as Director, Center for Excellence in International Business & Entrepreneurship. We are currently seeking his replacement and hope to have a candidate selected by December and will of course make that announcement at the appropriate time. NIACC and the NIACC JPEC are committed to continuing to support business and industry and entrepreneurs in North Iowa through our many programs, and look forward to naming a new associate to assist in this important work. We do have space in our business incubator available for immediate occupancy. Those interested should contact our office.

The North Iowa Venture Capital Fund II continues to operate and has invested in a couple more companies, in North Iowa and in Ames. The opportunity that this fund provides for funding start up organizations has been terrific, especially in the recent past when funding from more traditional sources has been more difficult to get. Most often, we try to leverage those funds with other local, state and federal monies and often times work with companies on their plans and help guide their development. Sometimes the NIVCF II just invests and takes no significant role in the company, just seeking a return and economic development as a result. Besides the NIVCF II, NIACC JPEC has access to revolving loan funds, Nano loan funds, USDA loans, 504 loans and much more. If you have an existing or growing business and need business consulting support or possibly funding, stop in and visit with one of our professional staff and let us help you on your way to success.

The NIACC JPEC provides support in many different ways to our communities in North Iowa. I think you will be interested in reading more about some of the recent successes and activities in our newsletter. Remember, the NIACC JPEC does not charge for its services, but rather depends upon the generosity of donors to help support the program. Often times we get support from businesses that we have helped start and grow, along the way. We would welcome your interest in supporting this program and supporting entrepreneurship and business growth in North Iowa. If you do have an interest, give me a call and we can discuss how you also might be able to support this effort.

Wishing you a very Happy Holiday Season!!!

Visit us! [www.niacc.cc.edu/pappajohn](http://www.niacc.cc.edu/pappajohn)

## Watching Out For The Cliff

Even though the election is now over, we are still faced with the so-called “fiscal cliff” — Federal Reserve Chairman Ben Bernanke’s clever term for what happens on January 1, when a bunch of current tax rules expire and some new rules take effect. Here’s a quick rundown of what to expect:

- The Bush tax cuts expire. That means the top rate on ordinary income goes from 35% to 39.6%; the top rate on capital gains goes from 15% to 20%; and the top rate on qualified dividends jumps from 15% to 39.6%. Much of the debate over tax rates focuses on income at the top. But the expiration of the Bush tax cuts affects all of us. The lowest 10% rate will disappear entirely, and everyone who actually pays income tax will pay more.
- The 2011-2012 payroll tax cuts expire. That means Social Security and self-employment taxes go up by 2% on all earned income up to \$113,700. Two percent may not sound like a lot — but it means higher taxes for about 163 million working Americans.
- New taxes imposed by the 2010 healthcare legislation take effect. The Medicare portion of Social Security and self-employment taxes goes up from 2.9% to 3.8% on earned income topping \$200,000 (\$250,000 for joint filers). And there’s a new 3.8% “Unearned Income Medicare Contribution” (which sounds so much better than “tax”) on “net investment income” (interest, dividends, capital gains, rents, royalties, and annuities) over those same amounts.
- The Alternative Minimum Tax exemptions revert back to where they stood in 2000. Under current law, those exemptions aren’t adjusted for inflation. So, every couple of years, Congress “patches” the system by temporarily raising the exemptions to where they would be if they were indexed for inflation. The AMT currently hits about 4½ million Americans — but without the “patch,” that number explodes to 33 million.
- Oh, and don’t think dying solves your tax problem. That’s because estate taxes, which currently start at 45% on estates over \$5 million, will jump to 55% on estates over just \$1 million.

So, January 1 is our fiscal cliff, and we’re hurtling towards it fast. What can we do? Well, plenty of legislators have proposed extending part or all of the Bush tax cuts, extending the payroll tax cuts, patching the AMT, and raising the estate tax exemption. But actually passing anything will be a challenge — Congress has passed just 132 bills this year, and 20% of those were to name post offices!

The partisan gridlock has many observers convinced that we’ll actually go over that fiscal cliff. If that winds up being the case, we may see Washington pass something noncontroversial like the AMT patch before the end of the year. Then in 2013 they’ll pass legislation extending at least part of the Bush tax cuts and make it retroactive to January 1.

I’ll admit this is a pretty brief outline of the upcoming tax threats. While this information is useful, it is only going to help if you take the correct actions in the next month or so. If the threats I’ve discussed in this article have you worried about your financial future, you owe it to yourself to have a qualified tax planner take a more comprehensive look at your taxes and finances so we can determine exactly which concepts and strategies will work best for your unique situation.

*Eric Levenhagen is a Certified Tax Coach, best-selling author, and managing member of ProWise Tax & Accounting. Eric specializes in helping business owners keep more of what they make by using proactive tax strategies and concepts to minimize their taxes to the legal minimum. He can be contacted by phone at 641-424-3990 or by his website, [www.IowaTaxPlanner.com](http://www.IowaTaxPlanner.com).*

## JPEC Launch & Grow Fall Graduates

The Fall 2012 JPEC Launch & Grow class concluded on November 15th with the participants receiving a certificate of completion by presenting their completed business plans. JPEC Launch & Grow is designed to help the start-up and current entrepreneur in developing a business concept and evaluating it throughout the business planning process.



*1<sup>st</sup> row from the left: Shelly Hittle, Lacey Elphic, Rory Prazek, Deanna Arnold, Spencer Potter, Laura Anguiano-Vego, Stacey Wood, Andy Beyer 2<sup>nd</sup> row from the left: Bob Rolling, Donniss Borcharding, Amy Olson, Mike Owen, Don Perry (partially hidden), Glenda Klimesh-Ross, Jennifer Gruelke 3<sup>rd</sup> row from the left: Jesse Marzen, Chad Olson, Tyler Anderson, Butch Gruelke*



The 2012 Dream Big Grow Here Grant Contest for the North Central Iowa region was recently held with a total of 43 “dreams” submitted. Dreams were submitted online from September 19 - October 17 and voting took place from October 17 – 31 with a total of 12,129 votes placed.

The top 5 vote-getters participated in a “pitch-off” on November 12th with the winner receiving \$5,000.

River City Moto, Tugs Daycare & Preschool, Ean’s Playhouse, RNR Baked Goods and Green Thumb Casting were the top five vote-getters. The winner of the pitch-off was John & Nikole Benson, owners of Tugs Daycare, who now advance to the statewide pitch-off for a chance to win \$10,000.

Ten regional contests were held across Iowa as part of the 2012 Dream Big Grow Here contest. Tim Putnam, associate director of the NIACC John Pappajohn Entrepreneurial Center, said “the five finalists in the competition were all amazing and deserving of the final prize. The common theme from each of the presentations was how rewarding it was to have participated in the Dream Big Grow Here Competition.” The participants said they gained a lot of awareness, customers and fans of their business and all the hard work was well worth the effort.



Photo from the left: Kelley Crane, Julie Steinberg, Nikole & Jon Benson, Tim Putnam, Beth Bilyeu

## Pappajohn Business Plan Competition Winners Announced

The 2012 John Pappajohn Iowa Business Plan Competition came to a close on September 27 with the announcement of the winners at a special recognition luncheon at Drake University in Des Moines.

Of the 44 business plans submitted and reviewed, seven businesses were selected to present to the judging panel comprised of representatives from the five John Pappajohn Entrepreneurial Centers and the Iowa Small Business Development Center. Three finalists were then selected with the winning order to be announced at the luncheon.

Iowa Powder Atomization Technologies (IPAT), Nevada, received first place and \$25,000. IPAT is a development-stage company with an atomization process for manufacturing fine titanium and other metal powders, leading to better part quality because of the material’s ability to act much like a fluid.

Data2Bio from Ames came in second and received \$15,000. FxRedux Solutions LLC, Iowa City, received third place and \$10,000.

Details about next year’s John Pappajohn Iowa Business Plan Competition will be announced in February. For additional information about the competition, visit [www.iowabusinessplancompetition.com](http://www.iowabusinessplancompetition.com) or contact the North Iowa Area Community College John Pappajohn Entrepreneurial Center.

## Fall Entrepreneur Exchanges Held In Mitchell County

As part of its commitment to the region, the NIACC Pappajohn Center and Small Business Development Center assisted the Mitchell County Economic Development Commission to receive grant funds by hosting four Entrepreneurs Exchanges this fall in Mitchell County. These business training sessions were free and open to the public.



Topics and presenters included:

- Branding Your Business – Mike Wagner, White Rabbit Group
- Maximizing Your Business on the Internet – Adam Frederick, WebWise Websites
- Five Ways to Super Profits – Andy O’Brien, Action Coach
- Outstanding Customer Service – Kim Pang, Diamond Jo Casino

Feedback from the participants was very positive with many saying how they found very useful information and takeaways at each session. The sessions in this series were held in Riceville, Saint Ansgar and Osage.

Names of those attending each session were entered into a drawing which took place at the last session. Prizes for the drawing included a Kindle Fire, a signed copy of *Buying Customers* by Bradley J. Sugars and two \$50 gift certificates to the Woodfire Grille at Diamond Jo Casino.

Be sure to check out our Spring Entrepreneur Exchanges!



# 10<sup>th</sup> Annual NACCE Conference

Tim Putnam, Associate Director of the John Pappajohn Entrepreneurial Center, and Mark Olchefske, Director of Business Incubation and Acceleration, at North Iowa Area Community College attended the 10th Annual Conference of the National Association for Community College Entrepreneurship (NACCE) that was recently held in Chicago. The three-day conference drew approximately 500 community college administrators and faculty from across the nation and around the world. Over 50 learning sessions and workshops were held to share information on the work being done at community colleges across the country to support entrepreneurship.

Putnam served on the planning committee for the conference and presented in three sessions: *Everything You Need to Know About Crowdfunding*; *Creating a Pathway to the Future: Offering College Credit to High School Students Participating in Entrepreneurship Education*; and *Can Entrepreneurship Education Keep Up With Entrepreneurship?*

“Having been involved with NACCE for the past ten years, it has been a very rewarding experience and has helped the NIACC JPEC to constantly measure itself against some of the most innovative and progressive programs in the country,” said Putnam. “Whenever you are part of the conversation, it is always a rewarding experience to share best practices with your peers from across the county.”

Olchefske presented a session entitled, *Creating Local Public Policy - The Mason City Micro-enterprise Initiative*. It explored the “how to” of the creation of a regional micro-finance product.

“If Entrepreneurship is a goal or a reality for your institution, attendance at the NACCE conference is going to make your program better,” said Olchefske. “The breakout presentations are based upon real life experiences, not theory; demonstrating ideas and concepts you can implement immediately upon returning home.”

Putnam & Olchefske agree that attending the NACCE conference also provides the NIACC JPEC an opportunity to see and hear about other advancements and innovations taking place at other colleges. This networking and exchange of information strengthens the programs that serve the communities and businesspeople of North Central Iowa.

## CEO Club Fall Trip To Chicago



Back: Brady Christianson, Tim Putnam, Club Advisor, Jordon Rutherford, Sonny Diesburg  
Front: Jessica Graham and Jamie Schulte



**John Pappajohn Entrepreneurial Center**  
500 College Drive, Mason City, IA 50401  
888-GO NIACC 641-422-4111  
[www.niacc.edu/pappajohn](http://www.niacc.edu/pappajohn)

### NIACC JPEC Staff

Jamie T. Zanios	NIACC Vice President & JPEC Director
Tim Putnam	Associate Director
Ted Bair	Small Business Development Center Director
Kelley Crane	School Partnership Entrepreneurial Coordinator
Linda Rourick	Business Incubator
Mary Spitz	Administrative Assistant - NIACC JPEC & SBDC

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## Global Entrepreneurship Week Held At NIACC

North Iowa Area Community College's John Pappajohn Entrepreneurial Center (NIACC JPEC) celebrated thinking globally and acting locally with Global Entrepreneurship Week events during the week of November 12th.

"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," Tim Putnam, NIACC's JPEC associate director, said. "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."

The NIACC JPEC activities held during the week included: Dream Big Grow Here North Central Region Contest Pitch-off; Entrepreneurs Exchange on Outstanding Customer Service; Student, Staff and Faculty Marketplace; and the Fall JPEC Launch & Grow class graduation.



### Need a better place to work?

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