

*Together, Shaping the Future*

# CABIN COFFEE CO.

## Brewing Hometown Success

The Cabin Coffee Company was founded by Brad and Angie Barber in 2002 when they realized that their small town of Clear Lake was missing something. Clear Lake is a vibrant tourist destination, home to a bustling Main Street district, year-round outdoors activities, and the Surf Ballroom, a nationally recognized historic music venue. One thing Clear Lake didn't have? A cozy Main Street gathering place – in short, a coffee shop. Brad and Angie Barber launched Cabin Coffee, and when it came time to expand through franchising, the Barbers worked with the NIACC John Pappajohn Entrepreneurial Center and America's SBDC Iowa.

Brad and Angie are passionate about growing their business in North Iowa and remaining true to their community. Over the last fifteen years, the Cabin Coffee Company has expanded to 15 franchises (5 retail locations in Iowa, 10 additional locations from Minnesota to Colorado to Georgia). Brad and Angie have expressed their resolution of keeping their headquarters in North Iowa, no matter how big the business may grow. "We started here and we have a commitment to staying in this area," Brad says. To Brad and Angie, reinvesting their business success back

into their small Iowa community is one of the most important aspects of running a business.

Not only do Brad and Angie Barber support their fellow local North Iowa businesses, they also support local youth entrepreneurial programs and education. The Barbers have been key contributors to the Youth Entrepreneurial Academy (YEA). YEA affords local students the chance to come to the NIACC campus for a week-long entrepreneurship camp. Brad and Angie act as mentors and facilitators, and help guide the students through developing their business plans for competition. The students not only listen to entrepreneurs talk about their experiences firsthand, but also work closely with those entrepreneurs to create their own business ideas and business plans, benefitting from their real world experience.

To Brad and Angie, a running a successful business isn't just about making money. They see reinvesting their time, energy, and money back into the community as both a perk and a responsibility. "We're all interdependent," Brad says, "and we all need each other."



*First Cabin Coffee Store – Clear Lake, IA*



*Standing left to right: Lisa Shimkat, State SBDC Director; Brook Boehmler, North Iowa SBDC Director; Dr. Steven Schulz, NIACC President; Linda Upmeyer, Speaker of the Iowa House; Brad Barber. Seated: Angie Barber*



*Senator Amanda Ragan, Angie & Brad Barber*

Brad and Angie Barber recently won the 2018 Neal Smith Entrepreneur of the Year award, presented by America's SBDC Iowa and selected from a state-wide pool of applicants. The award honors a successful Iowa entrepreneur in order to encourage the Iowa culture of entrepreneurship, the driving force behind Iowa's economic growth. The Neal Smith award recognizes excellence in Iowa entrepreneurship, particularly in entrepreneurs who are dedicated to enriching their community. Brad Barber said, "We are thankful for our team members for all their support – we could not have accomplished our success without them; the faith our franchise owners and their team have in us; and furthermore, for the expertise and support the NIACC Pappajohn Center and Iowa SBDC have provided for Cabin Coffee to be successful. We have truly enjoyed the adventure and look forward experiencing many more years growing Cabin Coffee working with businesses in North Iowa and world-wide finding more ways to add value to each and every community."

Brad and Angie Barber were presented with the SBDC Neal Smith Entrepreneur of the Year Award in a special ceremony on March 8th at the State Capitol in Des Moines.

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# Director's Notes

This spring will see plenty of new or improved resources and opportunities available to North Iowa entrepreneurs, thanks in large part to our community partners. The North Iowa TechBrew is now run by its members with support from the NIACC Pappajohn Center and the North Iowa Corridor EDC. TechBrew is adding value by developing a series of TechTalks. Also coming up this spring are several venture competitions, offering the chance for startups and early stage businesses to win funding, access to investors, and other prizes.



Tim Putnam, Director  
John Pappajohn  
Entrepreneurial Center

## TechBrew + TechTalk: Connecting the Community

Helping to connect the many aspects of an entrepreneurial ecosystem is an important endeavor to create a supportive environment for entrepreneurs. One of the goals of TechBrew + TechTalk is to convene a diverse group where entrepreneurs are at the center of the conversation, and to lead and craft the conversations of what their needs are in terms of a supportive infrastructure and environment. When this is accomplished, you have an entrepreneurial ecosystem which is run and controlled by no single person, group, or entity.

North Iowa partnered with the Technology Association of Iowa for nearly five years in delivering TechBrew as a means to network creatives who are involved in Technology, Entrepreneurship and Investing. The TechBrews have been very successful networking events that have led to companies hiring individuals they've meet at the events, developing partnerships to access overseas markets, and numerous other business dealings. We must also say that some of the finest North Iowa craft beers have been sampled from our two hosting breweries: Mason City Brewery and Lake Time Brewery.

For the February TechBrew, we launched the first ever TechTalk featuring two tech based entrepreneurs discussing their startups. The talk's topics ranged from how do you decide to quit your day job, luck vs effort, securing funding to launch a business, and how do you determine what are the products and services that will truly impact your customers. Our first TechTalk speakers were Trace Steffens of HowFactory and Riley Dirksen of Goin' Yumbo Games.

**Trace Steffens** talked about Customer Impact Canvas, a simple platform designed to help users better understand what their customers and stakeholders want, need, and will pay for. HowFactory is the past winner of Silicon Prairie News' New Startup of the Year, winner of the 2015 Dream Big Grow Here awards, and the first Iowa company to take the stage at TechCrunch Disrupt Startup Battlefield.

**Riley Dirksen** talked about his path to starting a creative business, the things he's learned, challenges, surprises, and the philosophy he followed while starting up Goin' Yumbo Games. After almost 10 years of hobbyist game development, Riley is now a full-time solo

game developer. His first game, Graveball, is a fast-paced combat sports game with a graveyard theme.

It was a great start to the new speaker series with the purpose to *encourage, engage, and elevate technology in North Iowa.*

If you have a technology opportunity or issue you'd like addressed, know of a great technology speaker, or would like to sponsor a TechBrew, please contact me and we'll get you on the schedule.

## New Venture Competitions: Finding the Next Big Thing

This year's statewide John Pappajohn Entrepreneurial Venture Competition will be awarding \$100,000 in cash prizes - double the amount that the competition has awarded in the past thanks to a new partnership with the Iowa Economic Development Authority (IEDA). This competition was founded by a contribution from John and Mary Pappajohn in an effort to support Iowa's entrepreneurial ecosystem.

Iowa businesses are eligible to apply if they have been in operation for four years or less, or are not yet cash flow positive. This competition is open to businesses including (but not limited to) technology, bio-technology, green technologies, medical, advanced manufacturing, agriculture, engineering, and education industries.

Two other statewide competitions are being promoted by the John Pappajohn Entrepreneurial Centers this spring: the Pappajohn Student Entrepreneurial Venture Competition (PSEVC) and the EntreFEST Pitch Competition. The Pappajohn student competition is now underway, with the regional competitions happening at the end of March. The competition has over \$25,000 to be awarded to the best new ventures. For more information on the PSEVC, or to learn how to set up and conduct your own "Shark Tank" event or pitch competition, contact Kelley O'Rourke in the NIACC Pappajohn Center.

EntreFEST is a two day conference and is one of the largest celebrations of the Midwest's entrepreneurial and innovation community. EntreFEST takes place in unique venues and settings and benefiting a variety of minds. The EntreFEST Conference will be held in Cedar Rapids, April 17-18, 2018. The EntreFEST Pitch Competition is open to startup and early stage businesses.



Left to right: John Pappajohn, President, Equity Dynamics Inc.; TJ Hauser – NIACC Student; Dan Storck, CFO; and Matt Kinley, Sr. Vice President

# NIACC PAPPAJOHN CENTER ACCELERATOR REPORT

## Director Winegarden Leads Lean Startup Offering in North Iowa

Pappajohn Accelerator helps bring Startup Factory's Lean Startup program to North Iowa.

### Startup Factory

Pappajohn SBDC is a sponsor and contributor bringing Startup Factory to entrepreneurs in rural Iowa. Pappajohn Accelerator Director Daniel Winegarden is a leader in the Startup Factory program. We help participants from across Northwest Iowa, from four different rural Iowa SBDC offices, apply the Lean Startup methodology.



Lean Startup focuses on getting the business model right before writing the business plan or launching. It focuses on nondestructive testing of basic assumptions or guesses about an entrepreneurial opportunity. By asking customers about their pain points and current solutions before launch, entrepreneurs avoid startup killing mistakes.

Startup Factory competitively selects participants. Half of the participating startups in our rural cohort are from our North Iowa region. We have the largest number of applications of any participating SBDC office by a factor of five.

The Startup Factory partnership uses collaboration to bring a best practices Lean Startup program to North Iowa. Taking a leadership role extends our influence beyond our territory. Innovation is the essential core of a unique value proposition to prove out pain points worth solving.

### Startup Factory's Growing Footprint

Startup Factory started with on-campus Iowa State University technology transfer opportunities three years ago and is accumulating an impressive track record. More than 60% of participants to date are launched. Participating startups raised more than \$6M in equity, so far. Startup Factory is building out a network delivery model to service clients beyond just the Iowa State University research pipeline or the Ames/Central Iowa community.

Startup Factory President Bill Adamowski points out that Startup Factory is now the largest accelerator in the Midwest.

Startup Factory includes network centers beyond Iowa. The current cohort includes participants from rural Northern Iowa and Austin, Minnesota. More are planned in Iowa and beyond. ISU's involvement delivers essential networking connections and implementation resources such as the Capstone Engineering Program and other minimum viable product (MVP) prototyping tools.

### Pappajohn Accelerator's Track Record

The Pappajohn Accelerator is a significant contributor. We bring experience both doing and advising startup creation and enterprise value creation. We help make sure participants ask the right questions. It's as important to know what not to do as what to do.

Pappajohn Accelerator coached a succession of clients to wins in statewide competitions. The Accelerator's Director directly raised or helped raise more than \$250M in grants, debt, or equity for entrepreneurial ventures.

### Lean Startup Toolkit

For more on Lean Startup: [Business Model Generation: A Handbook for Visionaries, Game Changers, and Challengers](#), by Alexander Osterwalder and Yves Pigneur. This graphics-heavy paperback is filled with practical tools and examples. It's a quick read but requires practice to apply. The matching Bible is, [The Startup Owner's Manual: The Step-By-Step Guide for Building a Great Company](#), by Steve Blank and Bob Dorf.

Steve Blank offers a great introductory article in *Harvard Business Review* if you need more persuasion. [Why the Lean Start-Up Changes Everything](#). Talking to the customer first, not last, just works.

Another resource-rich source is [www.SteveBlank.com](#), especially the Startup Tools tab.

The Lean Startup approach tests our best guesses or hypotheses about why customers do what they do before we burn money, time, and relationships. We do it by getting out of our heads, out of the building, and

talking to real customers. Only from customers will you understand their reality. You'll learn to explain the benefits of your idea in the voice of your customer.

The Lean Startup is now the standard approach for leading accelerators and incubators that help startups take ideas to market. This includes Iowa Venture School and Startup Factory. It's now expected by major public and private investors. Iowa's public entrepreneurial assistance programs, through VentureNet, Iowa Innovation Corporation, and the Iowa Economic Development Authority, all require the use of the Lean Startup methodology and presentation format. As do the Pappajohn Venture Competitions.

### National Lean LaunchPad Instructor

Pappajohn Accelerator Director Winegarden, is an I-Corps VentureWell certified Lean LaunchPad instructor.

The Pappajohn Accelerator focuses on entrepreneurs pursuing national and international markets, especially tech and data-driven ventures. Get the right customer and partners and the money will follow.

Winegarden explains his own unique value proposition as an entrepreneurial coach, "I help entrepreneurs tell their best story in language meaningful to the listener. That requires both persuasive and internally consistent words and numbers. It requires translating the language and worldview of the entrepreneur into that of the listener, especially the customer."

Test your best guesses with customers before launch with the lean startup tools. This fail fast approach helps find and cure startup killing mistakes. Before it's too late.

With Startup Factory, we now deliver this proven Lean Startup methodology locally, in rural Iowa.



Dan Winegarden,  
Accelerator Director

# TechBrew: Engage, encourage, and elevate technology in North Iowa

There are new and exciting developments happening with TechBrew in North Iowa. The Technology Association of Iowa has handed off control of all TechBrews across the state. The North Iowa TechBrew is now under the control of its members, with support from the NIACC Pappajohn Center, the North Iowa Corridor EDC, the Clear Lake Chamber of Commerce, and Vision North Iowa.

TechBrew has moved to the 4th Tuesday of every month. TechBrew is a networking event designed to bring together entrepreneurs, technologists, business people and investors. TechBrew North Iowa is growing from its original focus on networking. Members are interested in adding more value to each month's event while also supporting and growing North Iowa's creative class (including tech employees and employers). TechBrew is open to anyone in North Iowa who works in the tech industry or is interested in tech culture.

Adding speaker events to TechBrew was one of the most requested additions by members. The first speakers invited were Trace Steffen, CEO of HowFactory, and Riley Dirksen, Founder of Goin' Yumbo Games. Trace discussed how his company developed the technology to better discover what customers

want and drive towards real solutions. Riley spoke about his path to starting a creative business, things he's learned, challenges, surprises, and the philosophy he followed while starting up. We hope to see you join us as TechBrew and the new TechTalks continue to grow and evolve.

Future speaker event days and times are still to be determined.

February 27th TechTalk:  
3:30pm, North Iowa Regional Commerce Center

TechBrew: 5-7pm, Mason City Brewing

March 27th TechBrew: 5-7pm, Mason City Brewing

April 24th TechBrew: 5-7pm, Mason City Brewing

May 22nd TechBrew: 5-7pm, Mason City Brewing



## Opportunities for Young Entrepreneurs

Attention High School Students and Parents:

You have the chance to take advantage of an adventurous and potentially profitable opportunity this summer! The **Youth Entrepreneurial Academy** – July 9-13 is an opportunity for teenagers to learn entrepreneurship, apply skills and creativity to given challenges, develop critical thinking skills, and discover the career option of "job creator" instead of just a job-taker!

Participants are eligible for an automatic \$500 NIACC Scholarship to be used for any classes taken at NIACC whether you choose to attend NIACC for a regular term, online or for summer classes! You can attend this Academy two years increasing the total scholarship to \$1000. There is up to \$3,000 additional scholarships available to students enrolling in the Entrepreneurship and Small Business Management Associates in Applied Science (AAS) Degree program at NIACC!



The Academy will run July 9th through the 13th on the NIACC campus and is **free** for participating students. A gas card will be provided to cover travel to the academy, or attendees can stay in the Student Housing on campus.

We hope you will take advantage of this exciting offer! Please see our website to fill out an application and return by **May 16th or until the camp is full**. Mail to:

NIACC John Pappajohn Entrepreneurial Center  
Attn: Kelley O'Rourke  
500 College Drive, Ste 120B  
Mason City, IA 50401

If you have any questions, please feel free to call us at 641-422-4111.

<https://www.niacc.edu/pappajohn/entrepreneurial-education/youth-entrepreneurial-academy/>

# John Pappajohn Iowa Entrepreneurial Venture Competition to Award \$100,000 in Cash Prizes

Applications for the John Pappajohn Entrepreneurial Venture Competition will be accepted starting March 14. This year's statewide competition will be awarding **\$100,000** in cash prizes. This is double the amount that the competition has awarded in the past thanks to a new partnership with the Iowa Economic Development Authority (IEDA).

The thirteenth annual competition has historically awarded \$50,000 in prizes, funded by a contribution from John and Mary Pappajohn in an effort to support Iowa's entrepreneurial ecosystem. This year's competition will include an additional \$50,000 in prizes matched by the IEDA.

Iowa businesses that have been in operation for four years or less or a business that is not yet cash flow positive are eligible to apply. This competition is open to businesses including, but not limited to, technology, bio-technology, green technologies, medical, advanced manufacturing, agriculture, engineering, and education industries.

Participants will present their business plan containing

components to represent and execute on a viable end business model. Participants will be judged on written submissions, and, if they advance to the final round of the competition, their presentations to the judges. First place will be awarded \$40,000, second place \$25,000, and third place \$15,000. Awards for other categories will total \$20,000.

Applications for the John Pappajohn Entrepreneurial Venture Competition are due Monday, May 21.

For more information or to apply, visit [www.pappajohnentrepreneurialventurecompetition.com](http://www.pappajohnentrepreneurialventurecompetition.com)

The 2018 John Pappajohn Iowa Entrepreneurial Venture Competition is co-hosted by the John Pappajohn Entrepreneurial Centers and the Iowa Economic Development Authority.

JOHN  
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ENTREPRENEURIAL CENTERS

IOWA  
economic development

## Pappajohn Student Entrepreneurial Venture Competition

Up to \$25,000 in awards available

Applications due March 30, 2018

Pitch presentations April 3, 2018

## EntreFest

Conference &  
Pitch Competition

Up to \$100,000 in awards available

Cedar Rapids, IA • April 17-18, 2018



## Start Smart Workshops 2018

<b>March 14</b>	10:00-Noon	IowaWORKS, 600 S. Pierce Ave., Mason City, IA
<b>March 21</b>	6:00-8:00 pm	NIACC, PC 117 500 College Dr., Mason City, IA
<b>April 11</b>	6:00-8:00 pm	NIACC, PC 117 500 College Dr., Mason City, IA
<b>April 25</b>	6:00-8:00 pm	NIACC, PC 117 500 College Dr., Mason City, IA
<b>May 2</b>	6:00-8:00 pm	NIACC, PC 117 500 College Dr., Mason City, IA
<b>May 16</b>	6:00-8:00 pm	NIACC, PC 117 500 College Dr., Mason City, IA
<b>June 6</b>	10:00-Noon	IowaWORKS, 600 S. Pierce Ave., Mason City, IA
<b>June 20</b>	6:00-8:00 pm	NIACC, PC 117 500 College Dr., Mason City, IA

**#Start Smart** – This free two hour workshop is designed for anyone who is considering starting a business or expanding their current business. Participants will learn how to create a business plan, do market research, consider different types of business ownership and learn how to register a business. Registration is required for Start Smart. Please call 641-422-4111 or email [mary.spitz@niacc.edu](mailto:mary.spitz@niacc.edu).

Celebrating  
the Journey.  
Creating the  
Future.



NIACC will be celebrating our 100 Anniversary, watch for details/events coming soon.



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)

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