

Matt Curtis of Wayne's Ski & Cycle Wins 2022 Neal Smith Entrepreneur of the Year Award



L-R: Senator Amanda Ragan; Representative Sharon Steckman; Matt Curtis; Lori Cooling; Lisa Shimkat, State SBDC Director; Senator Bill Dotzler; Brook Boehmler, Regional SBDC Director



L-R: Robin Anderson, Mason City Chamber Executive Director; Pat Goedken, Clear Lake Bank & Trust; Tim Putnam, InSEER; Matt Curtis; Brook Boehmler, Regional SBDC Director, Candi Karsjens, Pappajohn Center Director; Dr. Steve Schulz, NIACC President; and Mary Spitz, Pappajohn & SBDC Admin. Assistant

Statewide Recognition Awarded by America's SBDC Iowa

The NIACC John Pappajohn Entrepreneurial Center and the North Iowa Area Small Business Development Center (SBDC) are proud to announce **Matt Curtis of Wayne's Ski & Cycle**, Mason City, as the winner of the 2022 Neal Smith Entrepreneur of the Year Award.

The Neal Smith Entrepreneur of the Year Award is presented by America's SBDC Iowa and honors an Iowa entrepreneur who has been in business a minimum of three years and has been significantly assisted by an Iowa Small Business Development Center. The award was established with a dual purpose—to honor long-time Iowa Congressman Neal Smith for his years of service to Iowa's small businesses and to recognize Iowa's entrepreneurs, who are the driving force behind Iowa's economic growth.

Brook Boehmler, Regional Director of the North Iowa Area SBDC, nominated Curtis for the Neal Smith Award, stating, "Matt has worked to keep Wayne's Ski & Cycle

nimble and relevant. This has included exploring new business niches, establishing a culture of employee buy-in, and moving the business location back to downtown Mason City. Matt is also notable for his support of his fellow entrepreneurs through the Pappajohn Center's entrepreneurial programming and mentorship. Matt's ability to identify and meet the evolving needs of his customers has made Wayne's Ski & Cycle a community mainstay."

Matt Curtis purchased Wayne's Ski & Cycle in 2004. Matt had never thought he'd be an entrepreneur, but when the previous owner approached him about buying the business, Matt realized what a great fit it was. "I followed the dream that I didn't even know I had," he said. "If there's one thing I've learned, it's that you have to take a chance."

The Neal Smith Entrepreneur of the Year Award and the Deb Dalziel Woman Entrepreneurial Award was presented at a ceremony on March 3, 2022, at 7:30 AM in the Legislative Dining Room of the Iowa State Capitol.

For additional information about Wayne's Ski & Cycle, visit www.waynesbike.com.

This is the sixth time that America's SBDC Iowa has recognized a North Iowa entrepreneur for their entrepreneurial excellence in nine years. Tony Halsted of Hoover's Hatchery, Rudd, won the 2016 Neal Smith Entrepreneur of the Year Award; Brad and Angie Barber of Cabin Coffee Co., Clear Lake, won in 2018; and Staci Ackerson of Shankland Insurance, Charles City, won in 2019. Shelly Zimmerman, Harrison-Thornburgh Insurance, Dumont, was awarded the Iowa SBDC's Deb Dalziel Woman Entrepreneur Award in 2014; Sarah Novacek of Legacy Logistics Freight, Mason City, won in 2016; Yulia Dannen of D&S Services, Mason City, won in 2021.



Lieutenant Governor Adam Gregg; Matt Curtis, and Governor Kim Reynolds

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Director's Notes

Over the past 25 years, the NIACC John Pappajohn Entrepreneurial Center has accomplished so much and contributed enormously to the entrepreneurial ecosystem and entrepreneurship in North Iowa and beyond. For a new director, the thought of filling the shoes of my predecessor's is a bit daunting. Having big shoes to fill is both a challenge and an opportunity to continue momentum while also placing my own stamp on future programs and initiatives. Inevitably the stamp I put on the position will be different than those who came before me, but John Pappajohn's vision and mission for the center holds firm in my heart and the heart of the great team we have working here. I would be remiss if I didn't honor those who built our center into what it is today.

I first salute Mr. John Pappajohn, who organized and financed the John Pappajohn Entrepreneurial Centers at five universities and colleges in Iowa in 1996 and has continued to support these centers for the past 25 years. His vision was to revitalize the entrepreneurial ecosystem in Iowa. Because of his efforts and generous donations, Iowa is ablaze with business activity, and entrepreneurship in Iowa continues to grow. He and his wife and partner of over 60 years, Mary,

were a great team. In March, Mary passed away. She was adored and loved by John, her family, and friends across the globe. Mary Pappajohn lived to serve others, which was demonstrated by both her words and actions. She had a true philanthropist heart and a great passion for making life better for others. She will be missed, and our hearts go out to John and his family.

I also want to acknowledge the directors who preceded me. David Hensley, Doug Morse, Jamie Zaniros, and Tim Putnam were all devoted to the cause, and because of their passion and leadership, they made a lasting difference in business growth and the culture of entrepreneurship in North Iowa. They each had different leadership styles and left their own signature, but the mission and vision of the center remained true.

"Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed people can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has."

– Margaret Mead

Because of their passion and commitment to the mission and vision of the center, there is no need for me to "reinvent the wheel" or rebuild anything in my own image. No, my job as the director is to continue the momentum they all created by keeping what is working in place while increasing our footprint and the number of entrepreneurs and businesses we serve. We will continue refining and aligning our processes and programming and stretch as a team. Our focus will remain to grow the entrepreneurial ecosystem by building on ramps and catalyzing the flow of talent, information, and resources entrepreneurs need for each stage of growth. As the new director, I know setbacks are bound to happen, and I won't make the right decision every time. However, when setbacks happen, my team and I will get right back up and keep going with a positive mental attitude (PMA). As a result of those who came before me and the rock star team surrounding me, the whole is greater than the sum of its separate parts, and our uncompromised mission and vision will continue to forge full-steam ahead.



Candi Karsjens, Director
John Pappajohn
Entrepreneurial Center

Start Smart On Demand

The NIACC Pappajohn Center and the Small Business Development Center offered a **free** two-hour workshop designed for anyone who is considering starting a business. At *Start Smart*, participants learn how to create a business plan, conduct market research, discuss different types of business ownership, and learn how to register a business. North Iowa entrepreneurs can now participate in *Start Smart* on their own schedule with On Demand Training through America's SBDC Iowa.

The Start Smart sessions have been recorded and divided into 6 parts, so you can watch them when it is convenient for

you. There will be short tests at the end of each session to ensure you understand the basic concepts. After viewing the *Start Smart* trainings, you can make an appointment to meet over the phone or in person with the Small Business Development Center Counselors to help review your business plan or provide guidance with other issues. To access this free training on the America's SBDC website, scan the QR code or visit <https://iowasbdc.org/on-demand-training/>



Spring Venture School Launch Day

The NIACC John Pappajohn Entrepreneurial Center hosted Venture School Launch Day on Thursday, March 24, 2022. The Spring 2022 Venture School cohort competed in person after attending classes virtually for 7 weeks of training, customer discovery, and developing their business model alongside local entrepreneur coaches. A panel of judges [Matt Curtis, Wayne's Ski & Cycle; Megan Peterson, MP Home Design; Jeff Potts, 2020 Creative LLC; and Katie Wold, Three on the Tree] selected First, Second, and Third Place winners, and one Honorable Mention award.

First Place – Dr. Tara Nichols DNP, Maters of Comfort© Private Practice, Mason City IA. Awarded \$1,500 prize.

Second Place – Josh Jeske, Terraform Tillage, Eldora IA. Awarded \$1000 prize.

Third Place – Sadie Yunek, The Ruff Life of Pets, Mason City IA. Awarded \$500 prize.

Honorable Mention – Grant Maulsby, Boxx Scaffolding, Clear Lake IA. Awarded \$250 prize.

The University of Iowa Venture School is a premier statewide program for entrepreneurs and is built from a streamlined curriculum developed by the National Science Foundation I-Corps at Stanford University and the University of California, Berkeley. Venture School emphasizes real-world entrepreneurship and innovation based on leading edge curriculum. Teams will accelerate the startup process by testing their business model hypotheses immediately. They get out of the building to talk to customers, partners, and competitors, rather than relying on statistics and secondhand market research.

Each team is assigned a local entrepreneur as their coach. On Launch Day, participants compete for seed money with the top team winning \$1,500. In addition, eligible teams may compete for cash awards at the state level during the Venture School Launch Day at EntreFEST in Iowa City on June 9-10, 2022. The cost for the course is \$299. Contact Mary Spitz at mary.spitz@niacc.edu with questions. If you are a local entrepreneur interested in becoming a Venture School coach, please contact Candi Karsjens at candi.karsjens@niacc.edu. To apply for the Fall 2022 cohort, visit www.venture-school.com and select the Mason City cohort in the dropdown menu.



Candi Karsjens, Dr. Tara Nichols, and Judge – Matt Curtis



Candi Karsjens, Josh Jeske, and Judge - Katie Wold



Judge – Megan Peterson, Sadie Yunek, and Candi Karsjens



Judge – Jeff Potts; Grant Maulsby, Stanley Woolery, and Candi Karsjens

Applications Now Open for the Annual John Pappajohn Iowa Entrepreneurial Venture Competition

The 2022 John Pappajohn Iowa Entrepreneurial Venture Competition application portal is now open. The seventeenth annual statewide competition will award \$100,000 in cash prizes to Iowa startups and entrepreneurial ventures.

The \$100,000 in seed funding includes a \$50,000 contribution from John and Mary Pappajohn, matched by \$50,000 from the Iowa Economic Development Authority (IEDA). The goal of this competition is to support Iowa's entrepreneurial ecosystem by assisting entrepreneurs.

Iowa businesses that have been in operation for four years or less, or are not yet cash-flow positive, are eligible

to apply. This competition is open to businesses including, but not limited to, technology, biotechnology, green technologies, medical, advanced manufacturing, agriculture, engineering, and education industries.

The deadline for first-round submissions is May 16, second-round submissions for select applicants is July 18, with final awards announced on September 15, 2022.

Participants will be judged first on their written submissions on the YouNoodle.com platform. Those who advance to the final round of the competition, will give a formal presentation to a panel of judges. First place will be awarded

\$40,000, second place \$25,000, and third place \$15,000. Awards for other honorable mention categories will total up to \$20,000.

The competition is a collaborative project of the Iowa John Pappajohn Entrepreneurial Centers located at Drake University, Iowa State University, North Iowa Area Community College, the University of Iowa, and the University of Northern Iowa. The Iowa Economic Development Authority provides funding to bring the total prize package to \$100,000.

For additional information about the competition or to apply, visit www.pappajohncompetition.com.

Venture School Coach Spotlight

Candi Karsjens, Director of the Pappajohn Center, would like to introduce Molly Watson, a member of our Venture School coaches network and owner of Home Style. Home Style offers design services covering a spectrum of projects, including colors, space planning, contractor referrals, materials, decor sourcing, and styling services for those needing help with interior refreshes and space redesign. As a Venture School coach, Molly assists entrepreneurs as they work to navigate the direction of their business model and identify the many puzzle pieces necessary for startups and how they fit together. As a business owner and Venture School alumni, Molly knows the obstacles and challenges new entrepreneurs face. According to Karsjens, "Molly has provided tremendous guidance and support covering many different aspects of starting and growing a business, and she is a valuable resource for our entrepreneurs." Developed by the University of Iowa, Venture School has become the state of Iowa's premier entrepreneurial training program, and cohorts run into the spring and fall using a hybrid classroom and lasting eight weeks.

Molly's outstanding knowledge of business development, marketing, strategy, and communication came from launching her own business three years ago and her over twenty years in corporate marketing and communications. When asked about



the best business advice she has received, Molly responded, "In business, relationships are everything." For more information on Molly's business, see her website at www.homestylecompany.com or 641.430.5841.

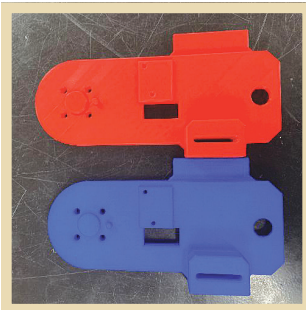
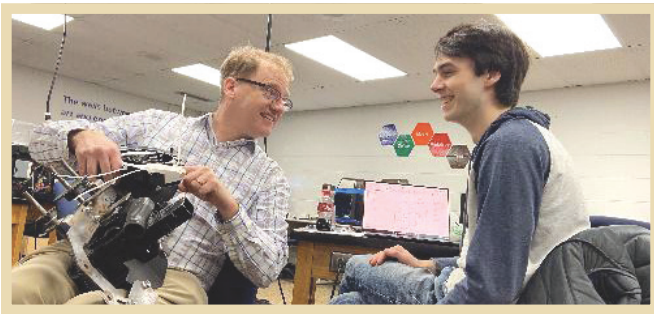
The Pappajohn Entrepreneurial Center follows the same mentor manifesto introduced by David Cohen and Brad Feld of Techstars®. Techstars® has a tested and successful model for creating a culture of entrepreneurs and innovation and building a mentor network to support them. The next Venture School cohort is in the Fall of 2022. Contact Candi Karsjens if you are interested in volunteering to be a coach for this program at candi.karsjens@niacc.edu

SAVE THE DATE



NIACC Innovation Workspace

The NIACC Innovation Workspace has been a hub of activity this semester. Art, engineering, and business students are using the space for academic and personal projects as well as entrepreneurs. Josh Jeske, a recent Venture School graduate, and Jayson Ryner, a former Venture School entrepreneur have worked with students to create their next version prototypes, designing models and printing component parts. We are excited to see the engagement in the workspace and look forward to continuing to grow these opportunities for students to work directly with businesses and entrepreneurs.



**LIMITED SPOTS
ARE AVAILABLE!**

*AN EXCITING OPPORTUNITY
FOR ANY STUDENT!*

Free Week-Long Summer Entrepreneurship Event Receive a \$500 NIACC Scholarship and compete for \$500 in seed money

- WHAT** 2022 Youth Entrepreneurial Academy
Fun, interesting opportunity to learn about starting your own business
- WHEN** Monday, June 13 – Friday, June 17; and Tuesday, June 21
- TIME** 8:30 am – 4:00 pm; and 5:30 – 8:30 pm on the 21st
- WHERE** North Iowa Area Community College
- WHO** Current high school students
- DETAILS** Over 260 North Iowa students have participated in this program. Approximately 25 aspiring student entrepreneurs from North Iowa will participate. Join in the interesting activities, insightful guest speakers, in addition fun field trips! Students will receive gas gift cards for transportation costs.
- APPLY** Applications are available from your school counselor or the NIACC John Pappajohn Entrepreneurial Center website. **Applications are due by May 16 or until the academy is full.**

The Youth Entrepreneurial Academy is **FREE**

Students who choose *NIACC First* will receive an automatic \$500 YEA scholarship! Students are eligible to participate in the academy for up to two years—totaling \$1,000 in NIACC scholarships!



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www.pappajohncenter.com

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