Winners of the 3rd Annual Central NE Business Idea Contest Announced

Doug Miller, Colleen Rickard and Maggie Arlt take top honors, prizes

The Chicken Coop in downtown Kearney was the place to be Nov. 13, 2013 where 9 top contenders showcased their business ideas. New inventions, IT, retail, service and food/restaurant ideas took center stage and the idea developers took questions from the "Sharks". The 2-minute video submitted previously was shown and each contestant was subjected to a 3 minute question and answer session. After hearing from all 9 finalists, the "Sharks" deliberated and delivered their top 3.

As members of the Top 3, Doug Miller with his automatic irrigation shutoff, Colleen Rickard with her Easy-C-Clean and UNK student Maggie Arlt were each given 1 minute to further describe their product/service and ask for votes. The audience then did their part by casting their ballots for one of the Top 3. After tallying the votes, the winners were announced. Doug Miller received first place and the $1000 prize, Colleen Rickard placed second with a $500 prize, and Maggie Arlt, third with a $250 prize.

Doug Miller's automatic irrigation shutoff will save valuable water and money when it rains and irrigation is not needed. The device will automatically shutoff the irrigation when a predetermined amount of rain has fallen. Miller thanked his wife and kids
for pushing him to enter. He wasn't going to do it, but now has other ideas he may enter in coming years.

Colleen Rickard's invention allows parents with children on nebulizers the opportunity to spend more valuable time with their children, shortening the 1 1/2 hour chore of sterilizing the tubes, etc. Her device allows any one including C-pap users, to put the tube, mask into a box with an ultraviolet light that will sterilize it in about 3 minutes.

Maggie Arlt's plan to offer individual soccer training took third prize. She would like to offer one-on-one training with "an experienced, invested coach who gives them the instruction, skills, confidence and dedication they need to improve and succeed, while at the same time having fun and seeing themselves get better."

Thirty-nine entries were submitted in late October for the Central Nebraska Business Idea Contest sponsored by UNK's Center for Rural Research and Development, Buffalo County Economic Development, UNK College of Business and Technology, and Invest Nebraska Corporation. Five judges representing the five divisions the initial entries were divided into, narrowed the field to the Top 10, who were invited to attend the Live Event. One finalist was unable to attend and the alternate could not be reached.
The event was emceed by Leslie Means, a previous Business Plan Competition winner, and Shawn Kaskie, Director of the UNK Center for Rural Research and Development.