

The logo for Greater Burlington Partnership features a stylized blue and red swoosh above the text. "Greater" is in blue, "BURLINGTON" is in large, bold, dark blue capital letters, and "Partnership" is in red.

Greater BURLINGTON Partnership

Making Connections, Building Community

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

For more information, contact:

Jason Hutcheson, 319-752-6365 or 319-850-0395

Doug Wilson, 319-752-3484

Kyle Carruthers, 319-759-0359

Martin James, 319-754-5463

Partnership Announces Business Plan Competition Winners

A ceremonial check for \$9,000 was awarded this morning during the Greater Burlington Partnership's Small Business Appreciation Breakfast.

Lea Nelson and Michael Burke, both residents of Burlington, received the top award in the 2011 Des Moines County Business Plan Competition and the accompanying \$9,000 seed capital grant intended to support the start-up costs. The company, called Burke Installed, will specialize in the home installation of computer, automation/control, whole house audio, and security applications.

Gabe Davis, also a resident of Burlington, received the honorable mention award for his business plan, Great River Manufacturing. The company intends to build custom jon boats and boat trailers.

"Michael and I are still grinning from ear to ear," said Nelson shortly after the announcement was made. "We are very grateful for the competition as it was the key in making us dive in. It really helped us solidify our business plan."

Burke Installed will use a portion of the proceeds to assist in its marketing efforts and to complete its in-home demonstration unit.

"This competition has completed its fourth year now," said Jason Hutcheson, administrator of the program. "There have been some good success stories, and our organization wants to continue supporting area entrepreneurs."

Burlington by the Book, the bookstore located in Downtown Burlington, was the recipient of the highest award last year.

In order to complete the competition, participants had to take a business plan writing course offered by Southeastern Community College. After the course, each participant submitted a draft copy of the business plan that was scored and constructively criticized. The finalists then gave an oral presentation to a final review panel. The Small Business Development Center offered one-on-one coaching to help participants assemble and strengthen the business plans.

The Greater Burlington Partnership administers the annual competition and grant awards are funded from pledges received during the organization's Partnering for the Future campaign. The 2012 Des Moines County Business Plan Competition will launch in January. For more information, log on to www.greaterburlington.com.