

18 Awards Presented for Business Ideas

The Kentucky Innovation Network recognized 18 winning individuals/teams during their annual Bucks for Bright Ideas Banquet held Wednesday, May 4 at the WKU Center for Research and Development. The awards consist of over \$30,000 in services donated by professional firms and technology companies in the region.

The Bowling Green office of the Kentucky Innovation Network, in partnership with the network's Owensboro and Elizabethtown offices, encourages their community members to submit their "great ideas" to the Bucks for Bright Ideas competition.

The competition is a great way to search for the "next big idea" in the region and bring clients into the network for support and mentorship. "The ideas submitted could become the foundation for new businesses in the region," said Jeff Hook, executive director for the Bowling Green office of the Kentucky Innovation Network.

Almost 100 business ideas were submitted from 18 counties in the combined region. Although not all ideas received awards each applicant will have the opportunity to work with the Kentucky Innovation Network to move forward with the idea.

"The Bucks for Bright Ideas program has been a great channel that we utilize to find individuals interested in starting their own business," said Lisa Williams, director of the Elizabethtown Kentucky Innovation Office. "All ideas remain confidential and awards are given to the individuals that submitted the idea, their business or product idea is not shared with participants."

A highlight of the evening was guest speaker Rebecca Wheeling, CEO and Co-Founder of "Schedule It", a program she co-developed specifically for insurance claims adjusters. Rebecca was a winner in the 2015 Bucks for Bright Ideas competition. She has gone on to launch her company, raising \$1 million in venture capital through the services of the Kentucky Innovation Network.

"The package of services that I was awarded from Bucks for Bright Ideas was invaluable to me as I launched my company," Rebecca Wheeling said. "The KY Innovation Network has always been there to guide me in the right direction and to introduce me to caring mentors, excellent service providers and great investors in my company."

All applicants will have access to one-on-one assistance from business development experts at no charge and their ideas will remain confidential.

Bucks for Bright Ideas was open to anyone living in the 28 counties of the Bowling Green, Owensboro and Elizabethtown region or a high school or college student in the region. The counties include Adair, Allen, Barren, Breckinridge, Butler, Daviess, Edmonson, Grayson, Green, Hancock, Hardin, Hart, Henderson, LaRue, Logan, McLean, Meade, Metcalfe, Monroe, Nelson, Ohio, Simpson, Taylor, Union, Warren, Washington and Webster.





