

EDC announces winners in business plan contest



Business plan winners

Wilkes EDC grant winners in business plan competition include, left to right, Bryant Reid, daughter Sadie Reid and DeAnna Reid, owners of Eden House; Greg Brady and Nate Griffn, owners of Anchor Coffee; H.S. Greene, owner Hidden Happiness Bee Farm; Georgina Thompson and Mark Thompson, owners of Ice-Ice-Baby; Derek Goddard, owner of Blue Ridge Development Group; and Janine Lewis, owner of iMedia.

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Staff

Anchor Coffee Co. won first place for business startups and Hidden Happiness Bee Farm won first place for existing businesses in the Wilkes Economic Development Corp.'s Entrepreneurial Grant Program.

Winners were announced in an EDC meeting today (Friday) at the Holiday Inn Express in Wilkesboro.

Representatives of businesses that entered by a deadline had all of April to complete a business plan. The Small Business Center at Wilkes Community College was available to assist them.

David Deal, Phil Taylor, Amanda Hamby and Angela Day, all current or former local business owners, were the judges. They reviewed the plans and concepts and considered feasibility and financial conditions of each contestant and were present when contestants made formal presentations on their business plans on May 27.

“The Wilkes EDC sees the small business sector as one of several critical components that address our efforts toward job creation, increasing the tax base for our cities and county and affording individuals the opportunity to build wealth,” said Wilkes EDC President Dan Little.

The two first place winners won \$5,000 apiece. Ice- Ice- Baby, runner-up in the existing business category, won \$2,000.

Also chosen as grant winners were:

- Blue Ridge Development Group, \$1,000;
- Ede House Floral, Events & Massage and iMedia NC received \$500 apiece.

Anchor Coffee, at the corner of D and Ninth streets in North Wilkesboro, is distributing fresh ground specialty grade coffee. Its sales will be primarily wholesale, but it will offer products through a website for direct purchasing. Nate Griffin and Greg Brady are the owners.

Hidden Happiness Bee Farm on Chestnut Mountain Road in far western Wilkes, owned by H.S. Greene, plans to produce custom wooden ware for beekeeping. Little said the business has committed to helping people buy only what they need to get started and then build on that relationship for years to come.

Ice-Ice-Baby will produce bulk ice and ice sculptures in Wilkes and the northwestern region. The company plans to be a Wilkes-based source of with reasonably priced wholesale and retail product that adhere to Federal Health & Safety codes, said Little. Mark and Georgina Thompson are the owners.

Blue Ridge Development Group will acquire and develop environmental compensatory mitigation banks that sell and trade credits on the open market to offset loss of these resources in sensitive areas. Derek Goddard and Justin Church are the owners.

Eden House is a massage studio and a full service event planner and custom floral design provider. DeAnna, Bryant and Angela Reid are the owners.

iMedia offers a variety of products and services with the goal of growing small business through marketing and plans to add virtual assistant services to new and existing clients. Janine Lewis is the owner.

Little said the competition was more about the viability of business plans than it was about the proper form.

Funding for the program came from the EDC and the Small Towns Economic Prosperity program grant awarded to the Town of North Wilkesboro.

Little said Sam Hinnant from the town was instrumental in securing the STEP grant and with administrating the entire process. Hinnant also is charged with complying with servicing of the grant.

He said the EDC anticipates repeating the competition and that anyone wishing more information or wanting to enter should call the EDC at 838-1402.