

Tuesday, September 14, 2010

Business concept winners awarded at VT KnowledgeWorks

The First Annual VT KnowledgeWorks Global Student Business Concept Challenge held Aug. 29 Sept. 4, allowing student teams from all over the world to compete for the \$25,000 grand prize and the VT KnowledgeWorks Global Challenge Trophy.

Students came from England, Finland, France, Israel, Italy, Mexico, Northern Ireland, Uruguay and the United States.

Top honors went to Colm Connolly and Vincent Murray of team Ecosy representing Queen's University, Belfast, Northern Ireland.

Their winning concept is a wood pellet-fueled patio heater that reduces fuel costs, increases mobility, and reduces the environmental impact of patio heaters used for outdoor dining and entertaining.

Their name and university will be etched into the base of the travelling trophy. The large, custom-designed trophy will reside at their home institution until next year's Second Annual VT KnowledgeWorks Global Student Challenge. At that time, it will return to Blacksburg for presentation to the next winner.

Two runner-up teams, EasyCheck of the Ruppin Academic Center in Emek Hefer, Israel, and team T2T of the University of Kent, England, each received \$2,500.

Efrat Nel, Shahar Peled, Hadas Geva and Inbal Gutman of team EasyCheck presented a reliable, non-invasive device that enables early detection of breast cancer before the tumor evolves.

Sinan Assaf and Ben Giambrone of team T2T presented a revolutionary, convenient, and safe method for arranging and paying for taxi rides using a mobile telephone.

The competition finals at Hotel Roanoke and Conference Center were part of a week-long celebration of student entrepreneurship and students' important contributions to the global economy.

At Hotel Roanoke, student attendees participated in an Entrepreneurship in the 21st Century Workshop led by Jim Flowers, Director of VT KnowledgeWorks, and attended the NewVa Corridor Technology Council Gala Dinner.

MEDICINE

Pulaski doctor returns to Canada

Pulaski physician Dr. Ralph Hasspieler left his medical practice Aug. 31 to return to his homeland of Canada.

Hasspieler announced that he has arranged for a physician with many years of experience in medicine,

Dr. Moses Quinones, to take over his practice beginning Sept 1.

"I came to Virginia in 1998 to establish a new practice," Hasspieler said in announcing his decision to close his practice.

"I built a home in Dublin and enjoyed new friends and colleagues. While working a thriving practice, my life was enriched by the many people who came to me for medical care. In all, I found the people of Virginia very warm and welcoming, and I will miss them."

Hasspieler said that family events have led to his decision to return to Canada. He said he will be establishing a new practice in Canada.

Hasspieler's patients may contact New River Medical Group at (540) 980-0550 for continued medical care.

Patients for weight loss and cosmetic procedures may contact Skin Deep at (540) 440-0461.

VTCRC

Firm provides help to hurricane victims

In the aftermath of Hurricane Alex, Blacksburg-based Portaqua responded by delivering purified water to devastated communities in northern Mexico.

Hurricane Alex entered Mexico near Brownsville, Texas and caused severe flooding in poor rural communities. Within 24 hours of the hurricane's landfall, FEMSA, a leading consumer company in Latin America supplying brands such as Coca-Cola and Powerade to over 215 million consumers, contracted Portaqua to provide emergency water to communities in the rural mountain regions near Monterrey.

Portaqua responded with a trailer water purification unit and Bagua emergency storage pouches.

Portaqua systems and personnel operated from 7 a.m. to 8 p.m. to provide water to approximately 10,000 people per day for six weeks.

The water available for treatment came from various sources and contained high levels of suspended solids, agricultural runoff and minerals, according to a release.

Local emergency response agencies also attempted to use standard emergency water filtration plants but due to these contaminants these systems were unsuccessful.

The Portaqua plant operated a total of 46 days without interruption, providing water within one hour of start up.

Portaqua is based at the Virginia Tech Corporate Research Center.

PULASKI COUNTY

Local catering firm helps feed the stars

Bakers Best Catering in Fairlawn was hired by the national television show "On the Road with Austin and Santino" to feed the cast and crew during location shoots in and around Radford.

The show, which airs Thursdays on Lifetime, follows the former "Project Runway" competitors as they travel to small-town America, dispatching fashion advice.

Bakers Best provided five meals for the cast and crew, according to owner Linda Eads.

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