



## 2010 ST. LOUIS REGIONAL BUSINESS PLAN COMPETITION

SPONSORED BY EDWARD JONES  
PRESENTED BY ST. LOUIS COUNTY ECONOMIC COUNCIL

### **About the Competition**

The 2010 St. Louis Regional Business Plan Competition has been organized to promote entrepreneurship and the development of startup and early-stage companies in the St. Louis region by encouraging submission of plans of original business concepts that will lead to the development of new growth businesses.

The competition encourages plans for new businesses and early stage companies. An early stage or seed-stage company typically is at the inventor stage where there is an idea, concept or even a product with little or no revenue.

Total prize money of \$100,000 will be awarded to the three top winners. Cash awards are being provided by Edward Jones through St. Louis County Economic Council (SLCEC). In addition, legal, accounting and marketing services will be donated by Thompson Coburn LLP, Carmody MacDonald P.C., Armstrong Teasdale LLP, RubinBrown LLP, UHY Advisors MO, Inc., LarsonAllen LLP, Fleishman-Hillard, Inc., Brighton Agency, Inc. and Standing Partnership, Inc.

### **Eligibility**

Prior to contest entry, each applicant must be registered with the Secretary of State's office and licensed by their local unit of government, if applicable.

Applicant team members must be 21 years of age or older at the time of entry and legal residents of the United States. Team members who are directors, officers or employees of SLCEC, consultants or freelancers who do business with SLCEC, or immediate family members of any of these persons are not eligible.

Every for-profit industry sector is eligible, but the business must be new or an early-stage company with no more than \$100,000 in annual revenue. Proposals for buy-out or expansion of an existing company, tax-shelter opportunities, subsidiaries, franchises, licensing agreements for distribution in a different geographical area, and the creation of value through "better management" or a new strategy are not eligible.

## Competition Rules

1. Presentation teams are limited to two company representatives.
2. Winning companies cannot compete in future St. Louis Regional Business Plan Competitions.
3. Applicant entities must be located in the St. Louis region, which includes the Missouri counties of St. Charles, St. Louis, Franklin, Jefferson, Warren, Lincoln, Washington, and St. Louis City, as well as the Illinois counties of Madison, St. Clair, Monroe, Clinton, Jersey, Bond, Macoupin, and Calhoun.
4. Applicant entities (corporation, limited liability company or limited liability partnership) must be registered with their respective Secretary of State's office.
5. No individual may be included as a team member on more than one business plan application.
6. No business may enter more than one business plan.
7. Any area of for-profit commercial endeavor will be considered.
8. All business plans must be the original work of those making the submission.
9. Applicants must describe an early-stage or seed-stage company in accordance with the guidelines provided.
10. The decisions of the judges are final including interpretation of the rules.
11. Partially completed applications will not be accepted. Applications must be received online by 5 p.m., March 9, 2010.
12. Applicants agree to uphold the integrity of the competition and adhere to competition rules.
13. Applicants will not be discriminated against on the basis of race, religion, ethnicity, color, ancestry, national origin, age, gender, or disability.

## Application

To participate in the St. Louis Regional Business Plan Competition, applicants must complete and submit the following by 5 p.m., March 9, 2010:

1. An online application
2. Agreement and Statement of Certification form executed by all team members

**NOTE: DO NOT SUBMIT A BUSINESS PLAN WITH YOUR APPLICATION. BUSINESS PLANS WILL ONLY BE REQUIRED AT THE SEMI-FINALIST STAGE.**

The judges will review all applications and select semi-finalists who must then submit their business plans by April 16, 2010. The semi-finalists also will be invited to make a ten minute presentation to the judges followed by a ten minute question-and-answer session on May 5-7, 2010.

Six finalists will be selected and invited to make a 20-minute presentation to the judges on May 25-27, 2010.

## Judging

1. Judges will receive and review all information submitted in connection with each application to the competition.
2. Judges will rely on the following criteria in judging the business plans:
  - Innovative nature, creativity
  - Feasibility and marketability
  - Funding

- Quality of product or service
  - Growth potential
  - Adaptation to change
  - Strength of management team
  - Internal organization
3. Judges may disqualify any application they believe violates the letter or spirit of the competition guidelines.
  4. Judges will not sign a non-disclosure agreement in connection with performing their duties for this competition. Each applicant is responsible for taking appropriate steps to protect its intellectual property when drafting its business plan and presentation.
  5. Judges agree not to initiate a professional relationship with individuals who have an active application before the competition. Judges will recuse themselves from discussion about and voting on an applicant to the competition if the judge has an existing personal or business relationship with the applicant. An application is considered active until the judges have made a decision about it or until it has been withdrawn by the applicant.
  6. Judges may obtain a credit report and background check on the principals of each applicant. Compliance with all provisions of the Fair Credit Reporting Act (15 USC 1681 et seq.) will be followed. Judges will not disclose any part of the reports to anyone except those involved in the judging process.

### Calendar

Date	Event/Description
January 19, 2010	Announcement of competition
March 9, 2010	Deadline for submitting online applications
March 11-19, 2010	Applications reviewed by committee
March 19, 2010	Semi-finalists notified
April 16, 2010	Complete business plans due
April 17 – May 4, 2010	Evaluation of business plans by judges
May 5-7, 2010	Ten-minute presentation by semi-finalists to judges followed by ten-minute question-and-answer-session
May 11, 2010	Finalists notified
May 25-27, 2010	Twenty-minute presentation by finalists to judges followed by a 20-minute question-and-answer session
June 1, 2010	Introducing the winners of the 2010 St. Louis Regional Business Plan Competition – celebratory event: first, second and third place winners announced, prizes presented, sponsors recognized



## **Awards**

Winners of the competition will be announced June 1, 2010. The winners will receive cash and in-kind services. In-kind services will be limited to one provider from each of the following service areas over a twelve month period following the award.

- First Place:** \$50,000 cash
- 30 Hours In-kind Services (each discipline)
- Accounting: RubinBrown LLP
  - Legal: Thompson Coburn LLP
  - Marketing: Fleishman-Hillard, Inc.
- Second Place:** \$30,000 cash
- 20 Hours In-kind Services (each discipline)
- Accounting: UHY Advisors MO, Inc.
  - Legal: Carmody MacDonald P.C.
  - Marketing: Brighton Agency, Inc.
- Third Place:** \$20,000 cash
- 10 Hours In-kind Services (each discipline)
- Accounting: LarsonAllen LLP
  - Legal: Armstrong Teasdale LLP
  - Marketing: Standing Partnership, Inc.