

High School Students Challenged to Create Business Ventures
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Humboldt County high school students will have the opportunity to turn their creative business ideas into reality thanks to a new competition designed to encourage youth entrepreneurialism.

The first ever Young Entrepreneurs Business Challenge kicks off this week, promising three awards of up to \$5,000 each to individual students or student teams who can put together the most convincing business plans. The awards must be used to further the students' proposed ventures as outlined in their plans. To help get their businesses off the ground, winners also will be entitled to 10 hours of consultation with the North Coast Small Business Development Center.

Sponsored by the Humboldt County Office of Education's Rising Stars Foundation in collaboration with other organizations, including the North Coast Small Business Development Center, Economic Fuel, Prosperity, College of the Redwoods and Humboldt State University, the competition has rigorous guidelines.

Applications for the contest are due Jan. 31, 2008, and written business plans must be submitted by Feb. 29. On March 6, there will be an optional trade show exhibit, and competitors will be required to deliver a two minute "elevator pitch" to judges. An elevator pitch refers to a quick, but convincing, proposal that can be finished in the brief time span of a typical elevator ride.

Finalists will make formal presentations of their business plans to a judging panel on April 7 and 8. Three winners will be selected, and a final awards ceremony will be held on April 9 at the Humboldt County Board of Education meeting.

Students interested in participating in the Young Entrepreneurs Business Challenge may contact the competition site coordinator at their high school.

More information is available online at www.humboldt.k12.ca.us/challenge or from event coordinator Lori Breyer at 445-7018.