

**Economic Fuel Winners Named
by Courtney Hunt-Munther, The Eureka Reporter
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After months of anticipation, Economic Fuel: The Humboldt County Student Business Challenge business plan competition finally concluded Thursday night at the Wharfinger Building in Eureka, with eight teams winning a total of \$117,000 for their businesses.

Members of the audience sat tensely as Humboldt State University President Rollin Richmond spoke about the competition's impact on the local economy, followed by College of the Redwoods professor Chris Gaines and HSU professor Nancy Vizenor, who commented on the participants' hard work, dedication and inspiration.

In the end, four teams won \$25,000 grand prizes: Agogo, a mobile vegetarian sushi eatery headed by entrepreneurs Kalindi Rogers and Erin Slattery; Innovative Medical Workshops, which will provide local health care workers with training and education, headed by Inga Denney and Jacob Hanson; TrenchScan, a seismic trench photography business headed by Jason Buck and Jamie Ford; and the Arcata-based Wild Chick Farm, specializing in raising and processing organic poultry products, headed by Shail Pec-Crouse and Sarah Brunner.

The \$10,000 runner-up prize went to Jim Rose of California Native American Petroleum, \$5,000 second runner-up prize went to Dan Hunter and David Stone of North Coast Solar and two honorable-mention prizes went to Patrick Wiley and Brandon Hemenway of AlgaRhythms and to Gregory and Samantha Hufford of Redwood Outfitters.

Of the win, Agogo's Kalindi Rogers said, "There are no words." Her business partner Erin Slattery added, "It's just numbness."

Though he didn't win one of the grand prizes, California Native American Petroleum's Jim Rose said, "I'm really happy for the teams that won. It was such an experience. There's no shame in finishing behind these groups."

When asked if he will continue pursuing his business, Rose commented, "It might take a little longer, but we're going to go full speed ahead."

Sponsored by The Eureka Reporter, Economic Fuel has given away a total of \$234,000 to budding entrepreneurs over the past two years. This year, more than 30 teams submitted business plans to Economic Fuel, which were then read and judged by a panel of six judges. On April 23, eight finalists were selected from the pool.

Finalist teams prepared and executed formal presentations at Humboldt State University's Kate Buchanan Room on Monday and Tuesday, and answered questions posed by the judges concerning aspects of their business plans.

Comprehensive stories about this year's competition, as well as details about the finalists' business ideas will be published Tuesday in The Eureka Reporter.