

**THE MONTANA CHAMBER FOUNDATION ANNOUNCES 2023 PROSPECTS AWARD WINNERS**

**Entrepreneurship “Shark-Tank Style” Competition Recognizes Business Ideas of Montana High School and Middle School Students**

April 25, 2023 (Helena, MT) – The Montana Chamber Foundation’s [winners of The Prospects Awards](https://www.montanachamber.com/montana-chamber-foundation/prospects/) were announced in a [virtual awards ceremony](https://youtu.be/VHsLfwndXlY) last week. For the third year, the statewide youth **entrepreneurship competition**offered scholarships and cash prizes for high school and middle school students with new ideas and existing small businesses.

“When we engage with our youth, we know we are investing in the future entrepreneurs and business leaders of Montana,” said Todd O’Hair, Executive Director of the Montana Chamber Foundation. “The Prospect competition serves as a platform for Montana students to present business ideas and provides access to local business leaders, empowering students to create their own futures.”

The competition drew more than 140 students from across the state. In total, more than $75,000 was distributed in cash, prizes, and scholarships. This year’s categories included: Best New Business Idea; Best Existing Business; Vacant Lot; and President’s Hustle Award.

For the first time, the top five competitors in the New and Existing Business categories will compete for the title of Grand Champion and $5,000 in awards. The competition will be held in-person on May 21-23 at MSU Jake Jabs College of Business & Entrepreneurship in Bozeman, MT

In addition to award money, the competition is an opportunity for students statewide to connect with industry experts through the Montana Chamber Foundation for mentoring, internships, apprenticeships, and work-based learning opportunities.

"Stockman Bank is proud to support the 2023 Prospects Awards,” said Bill Coffee, CEO of Stockman Bank. “To see the entrepreneur spirit alive and well in hundreds of Montana students is to know the future of Montana business is in good hands. We are honored to support their endeavors and excited to see these ideas turn into realities.”

“EdChoice works to empower students to access diverse educational pathways so that each individual can maximize their learning opportunities and achieve their goals and dreams”, said Brian McGrath, Vice President of External Relations. “These awards recognize their hard work and unique ideas that could become thriving businesses and we are proud to support these early entrepreneurs and innovators.”

EdChoice and Stockman Bank were the lead sponsors of The 2023 Prospects Awards. Additional support for the awards was provided by: Alaska Airlines; Blue Cross Blue Shield of Montana; Ember Marketing Group; Gallatin College, Great Falls Area Chamber of Commerce; Miles Community College, Montana High Tech Business Alliance; Montana State University Hilleman Scholars Program, Jake Jabs College of Business & Entrepreneurship and College of Agriculture & Montana Agriculture Experiment Station; Montana State University College of Business; Montana State University Northern; MTADA; RDO Equipment Co.; Two Bear Capital; University of Montana Western Foundation.

The Montana Chamber Foundation thanks all student contestants and recognizes the teachers who offered support. A special thanks to the volunteer judges and statewide partners who donated their time and expertise throughout the competition.

Full list of finalists available [here.](https://www.montanachamber.com/wp-content/uploads/2023/04/2023-FINALISTS_The-Prospects-Jr.-Prospects_4.20.23.pdf)

**NEW BUSINESS IDEA TOP PLACERS**

CHAMPION ($2,500): Stick Buddy, Tyler Bruursema & Tyler Power - Billings Career Center

SECOND PLACE ($2,000): Black Thorn Documentation, Justin Binford & Thomas Hicks - Gallatin High School

THIRD PLACE ($1,500): Duralane, Hailey Johnson - Billings Career Center

FOURTH PLACE ($1,000): Oasis, Carter Rayburn - Lima High School

FIFTH PLACE ($500): Munchi, Bennett Wright Ryan Holland Noah Mortenson Callum Coots

**EXISTING BUSINESS TOP PLACERS**

CHAMPION ($2,500): School of Music at the Emporium, Owen Day - Fergus High School

SECOND PLACE ($2,000): Rumble Creek Woodworking, Connor Matthew - Seeley-Swan High School

THIRD PLACE ($1,500): Skyline Cinema, Cully Lauver - Red Lodge High School

FOURTH PLACE ($1,000): Gilbee Grass, Abby Thayer - Billings West High School

FIFTH PLACE ($500): Stonefly Earrings, Seth Dunster, Seeley-Swan High School

**THE JUNIOR PROSPECTS NEW BUSINESS IDEA TOP PLACERS**

\*New category this year

CHAMPION ($300): FV48 Twins, Lauren & Isaac Ramsey - Culbertson Middle School

SECOND PLACE ($250): Jack of All Trades, Noah Fox & Sander Williams - Culbertson Middle School

THIRD PLACE ($200): 49 Ranch Raised Beef, Teaghan Triplett - Belt Middle School

**THE JUNIOR PROSPECTS EXISTING BUSINESS TOP PLACERS**

CHAMPION ($300): Made in Montana by Moose, Morgan Heitzman - Belt Middle School

SECOND PLACE ($250): KIO Inc., Kotone Olson - Washington Middle School Missoula

THIRD PLACE ($200): Amarah's Amazing Services, Amarah - Lewistown Junior High

**PRESIDENT’S HUSTLE AWARD ($1,000)**

Perfectly Imperfect Envelopes, Jillian Bottcher - Gallatin High School

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**About the Montana Chamber Foundation**

The [Montana Chamber Foundation](https://www.montanachamber.com/montana-chamber-foundation/) is the 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization established by the Montana Chamber of Commerce to fund business education and encourage entrepreneurship among K–12 and undergraduate students, participate in research projects, host events that promote economic development opportunities, and administer funds that support workforce readiness and entrepreneurship programs in the Big Sky State.

The Foundation maintains direct relationships with the Montana Office of Public Instruction (OPI), individual teachers and public school districts, Career and Technical Student Organizations (CSTO) and other nonprofits supporting student education.