

Challenge from A1

present) took home the first-place prize of \$6,000.

"There aren't many times that I can say I'm stunned, but today I'm stunned," Barclay said.

The start-up's business plan involves providing a

variety of hand-crafted beers and coffee, all brewed on site, on the corner of Hwy 99 and Main Street.

"Currently, Cottage Grove does not have a brewery and sit-down coffee house to call its own," Chapman said in the group's pitch.

Between them, Barclay and Sampson claim decades of expertise in coffee and

beer brewing, respectively. The founders are keen to open the business sometime in the summer, but they say the date has been a moving target.

The Business Challenge winnings will provide the group with some temporary financial relief, said Barclay.

"It's really going to help us continue moving forward," he said, adding that about \$200,000 of the founders' own money has been invested in the business so far. "We're at the point where we need more funding to continue moving."

Chapman added, "It's helping to bridge that gap while we're waiting for financing and a couple other pieces to fall into place."

Revitalized Concrete took the second-place prize of \$3,000. Business owner Andrew Abeyta described his start-up as offering "decorative concrete services" which help to avoid the wasteful and costly process of complete replacement of deteriorated or damaged concrete.

"The cement industry is one of the largest producers of man-made emissions in the world," Abeyta said. "So, they have a very big carbon footprint."

Abeyta said his company produces a high-polymer stampable concrete overlay which can adhere to the top of existing concrete slabs and provide a degree of strength and durability that will reduce the need for replacement.

"It's cutting down the carbon emissions relating to concrete," said Abeyta, a second-generation concrete worker.

The overlays may also act a sort of canvas as designs can be engraved into the surface, making it a visually attractive product for people who want some creativity in their projects.

Abeyta said he planned to expand his operation of affordable concrete products



DAMIEN SHERWOOD/COTTAGE GROVE SENTINEL

Shophe Free Rein owner Melanie Stuhlmiller delivers her five-minute business pitch to judges. Stuhlmiller took third place in the Business Challenge.

in the local market.

In third place, Melanie Stuhlmiller, owner of women's clothing boutique Shophe Free Rein, accepted a \$1,000 reward.

The business has been selling retail clothing online for about three years.

"My 'why' is to make sure women feel beautiful and supported in everything that they do," Stuhlmiller said, adding that she wanted to create a space for Cottage Grove women to shop without having to make the trip to Eugene.

Stuhlmiller played down the importance of being awarded, however.

"Winning doesn't impact [the business]," she said. "For me, just being a part of it was the impact — just learning so much and meeting new people and planning out the next step for my business was the most important thing that I got from this."

Stuhlmiller is keeping her fingers crossed for the clothing store to expand into a storefront on Main Street in July.

Other businesses in the top five included Clear Focus Enterprises, producer of a Matcha Green Tea and lemonade-mixed beverage, and Hazel People, makers of a hazelnut milk drink.

Hazel People co-founders Joey Jaraczewski and Andrew Ek were second-place winners at the 2017 Business Challenge with their parent company Sohr Foods (then called Sohr Performance + Nutrition), a health food and beverage provider.

In a fortuitous twist, Sohr Foods ended up acquiring food producer Real Live Food Oregon, 2017's third-place winner. The acquisition was advantageous for previous owner Kim Johnson, who re-entered the contest this year with her company Bohemia Food Hub, which was in part made possible by the Sohr Foods' purchase.

Before selling Real Live Food Oregon, Johnson had created a commercial kitchen space big enough to formalize into a new business model which provides support for other start-ups in the food and beverage sec-

tor.

The transaction was a win-win.

"We've done a lot since the last time we were here," Ek said. "After the competition, about a month in, we moved our company into [Johnson's] food kitchen and then we ended up buying Real Live Food Oregon last June."

The opportunity allowed Jaraczewski and Ek to establish a foothold and stay in the game.

"That company and brand keeps us alive as we get ready to build more hype around our hazelnut milk brand," said Ek.

Rounding out the awards on Saturday, Cottage Grove Sustainable Gardens, a sustainable garden consulting business, won \$500 for Best Elevator Pitch.

Though prize money was an incentive, contestants were often appreciative simply for the rewarding experiences that came with the process.

"It was great for me because I was in the middle of scaling my business," Johnson said of last year's event. "So, it gave me a lot of practice putting my business plan together really succinctly."

Johnson felt the experience was akin to graduating to a new level of entrepreneurship.

"The winning was kind of an extra bonus," she said. "It really helped me pull the whole package together and create a good hand-off for my fellow food entrepreneurs."

Event coordinator Kate Brown agreed the event's benefits extended beyond just the awards.

"This year we tried to put more focus on the education opportunities for participants and we were able to put on two different classes for participants to be able to learn more about creating a business plan," said Brown.

Challenge participants were invited this year to attend a four-part "Your Business Plan Accelerator" course, which provided three-months' worth of business planning software for free.

Cottage Grove's Business Challenge started when local

business owner Harold Frazier came to the Chamber of Commerce with a novel idea. Having found success in his own business, New Breed Seed Company, Frazier was motivated to give back to the community by encouraging entrepreneurship and job growth in form of a \$10,000 donation.

"The community had been very welcoming to us," Frazier said. "And as a person who had started a business, I was thinking that it would be nice to support other people who started businesses in the community."

The initial model was to issue a notice asking people to submit their business plans and give the best one \$10,000.

Palmer, enamored with the idea, contacted other people and groups such as the Cottage Grove Community Development Corporation and RAIN Eugene. From these meetings, the Business Challenge was born.

"It's really satisfying to me to see all these people turn out and support it," said Frazier, who donated another \$10,000 for this year's event.

Frazier, too, sees the value of the event as extending beyond the award money to include the networking and educational aspects.

"One is who you know and two is feedback," he said of the benefits. "Creating the Business Challenge here I think puts people's ideas into an environment where they're going to get feedback and they're going to meet people and I think both those things are super valuable for being able to start a successful business."

While nothing is set in stone, organizers are hopeful the Business Challenge can continue in the coming years.

"I would hope in the long run that more local business would see it as something they were interested in contributing to as well," said Frazier. "More than anything, I'd just like to see people be able to move toward their goals and help develop good jobs and I think that helps raise everybody up."

Comprehensive family, medical eyecare and optical services

CLEARVISION
PACIFIC CLEARVISION INSTITUTE

Cataract exams • Glaucoma exams • Lasik exams • Diabetic exams
Serving Cottage Grove Community since 2006

Welcome new patients
Office hours:
Monday thru Thursday 9-5, Friday 9-4
257 N. 8th St. • 541-942-5000
www.PCVI.com

Coast Fork Feed Co.
Est. 2013
Cottage Grove, Oregon

We Have Hanging baskets, Veggies and more!
Veggies are all Heirloom and grown by Coast Fork Nursery.

106 S 6th St, Cottage Grove, OR 97424
(541) 942-8770

EVERYONE DESERVES A GREAT SMILE!

CALL TODAY TO SCHEDULE YOUR INITIAL CONSULTATION • 541.686.1732

EUGENE 622 E. 22nd Ave Suite C 541.686.1732	CRESWELL 195 Melton Rd. 541.686.1732
---	--

or visit us at www.thornton-ortho.com

THORNTON Orthodontics

JULIE HANSEN
now at
SALON 7

SPECIALIZING in COLOR & CUTS

ASK ABOUT SPECIALS

1007 E. MAIN ST.
COTTAGE GROVE, OR

C: 541.968.2113
W: 541.942.7777

PUBLIC NOTICES
THE LOWEST RATES IN LANE COUNTY

PUBLIC MEETINGS, TRUSTEE NOTICES, PROBATE, AUCTION & FORECLOSURE NOTICES, AND MORE.

Published weekly in the Cottage Grove Sentinel and online at cgsentinel.com

Cottage Grove Sentinel

Contact: Meg Fringer
541-942-3325 x1200
mfringer@cgsentinel.com

Cottage Grove **GROCERY OUTLET** Bargain Market

200 Gateway Boulevard
Cottage Grove, OR 97424
(541) 942-5400
@CottageGroveGroceryOutlet

FRESH FINDS ON EVERY AISLE.
Different Deals Every Day.

WELCOME TO Bargain Bliss.

Get **\$3 OFF Today!**
SIGN UP FOR EMAILS AND GET \$3 OFF YOUR PURCHASE TODAY!

200 Gateway Blvd.
Cottage Grove, OR 97424
(541) 942-5400
Mon - Sat 8am - 9pm
Sun 9am - 8pm

SAVE 40-70% ON GROCERIES.
BEAUTIFUL, HUH?

SPRING Tune-Up

Only \$99*

We'll make sure your system is running effectively and efficiently. Call for details and an appointment today, and beat the spring rush!

Complete Heating & Cooling System Service
Reasonable Rates • All Work Guaranteed

JAMES HEATING & AIR CONDITIONING
COMMERCIAL & RESIDENTIAL

www.jamesheating.com
115 Lawrence St., Eugene, OR 97401
CCB #47396
Bus. (541) 461-2101 • Fax: (541) 686-4820

Home Pride Painting and Repair LLC
Over 30 years of experience

Schedule Now For Spring and Summer Interior and Exterior Painting
Call us for a Free Quote!

"We do small remodels, home repairs and decks!"
Serving Lane & North Douglas Counties

541-735-0089
ccb# 217560

SHERWIN WILLIAMS

TURNING 65 AND NEED HELP WITH YOUR MEDICARE CHOICES?

Call Paul to help simplify the complicated.

541-517-7362

Paul Henrichs ~ Local Independent Agent
coverage4oregon@gmail.com