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Business Innovation Group (BIG) News

Georgia Southern University

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Ocean Exchange Announces Winner of 2017 BIG Pitch Collegiate Award of $10,000

October 27, 2017

The seventh annual Ocean Exchange, hosted last week in Savannah, Georgia, featured the third year of the BIG Pitch Award, sponsored by Georgia Southern University, the College of Business Administration, and the Business Innovation Group.

Pipeguard Robotics, a team from MIT, won this year’s $10,000 BIG Pitch Award. The Pipeguard Robotics solution inspects water pipes from the inside using innovations in sensor membranes and the soft body drone to find leaks long before they become catastrophic, with the objective to reduce the 20 percent of clean water production daily lost to leaks.

Dr. Allen Amason, Dean of the College of Business Administration at Georgia Southern University, commented after the award was announced.

“It’s an elegant and practical solution to a vexing and widespread problem. I salute Pipeguard Robotics for their innovation and their hard work; they are going to save their clients a lot of fresh water, as well as a lot of money. I also salute the Ocean Exchange and all the participants in this year’s event. We are happy to be involved.”

In addition to the winning grant recipient, seven additional collegiate innovators presented sustainable solutions to a distinguished group of conference guests representing business and industry, entrepreneurs, academia, government and NGOs. Schools represented in the finalist round were from Arizona State, Columbia, Cornell, MIT, Oregon State, Rutgers, and University of Texas-Austin with solutions for precision agriculture, risk management for hydrology, waste heat to energy, water conservation in power generation, wind energy, and energy storage.

Each year, the Ocean Exchange seeks innovative, proactive and globally scalable sustainable solutions with working prototypes and applications that can cross industries, economies and cultures, in a competitive process in which two $100,000 and one $10,000 awards are granted to early stage companies.

The Business Innovation Group (BIG) at Georgia Southern University, located in downtown Statesboro, Georgia, is the business outreach arm of the University, committed to developing a vibrant entrepreneurship and innovation ecosystem for the southeast region. BIG provides resources for students and entrepreneurs to gain skills and training necessary to understand business principles, experience how businesses operate, and successfully launch new enterprises.

Georgia Southern University, a public Carnegie Doctoral/Research University founded in 1906, offers 118 degree programs serving 20,673 students. Through eight colleges, the University offers bachelor’s, master’s and doctoral degree programs built on more than a century of academic achievement. Georgia Southern is recognized for its student-centered and hands-on approach to education. Visit GeorgiaSouthern.edu.
The Economic Development Administration Selects GSU to run University Center

October 27, 2017
By Eminah Quintyne, Feature Writer

Georgia Southern is now one of 13 universities in the region to house a University Center Economic Development Program (UCEDP).

The UCEDP is run by the Economic Development Administration. It is a federally funded grant opportunity awarded to select institutions of higher education to facilitate and operate University Centers dedicated to building strong regional economic systems that support progressive entrepreneurship and innovation. Dr. Dominque Halaby, Director of Georgia Southern’s Business Innovation Group (BIG) said, “I need not tell you how ‘BIG’ a deal this is for our unit and our University. Some of the other awardees in this eight-state region include the University of Kentucky, University of Florida, Auburn University, Mississippi State, University of South Carolina, UNC-Chapel Hill, University of Tennessee and Georgia Tech. I am very proud of the strides we continue to make, and I am excited about what this award means for the future of our region.”

This opportunity is about utilizing the capacity of the university to positively impact local economies and change lives. BIG is charged to implement regional strategies to support learning, skills training, job creation, capable talent pools, and business expansion. The nature of a good economy exists when resources are allocated both efficiently and effectively. The government’s role is to facilitate public welfare and that is often done in the form of grants, education, or skills training. Grant funding for the benefit of public welfare provide jobs for those in need or for the poor. More people with earnings in turn spend money at local businesses, and that is good because it is likely the economy will grow.

“I chose to start my business here because I live here, I have a passion for food, and I was at a point in my life where I could work for myself. I love what I do because I offer fresh wholesome ingredients.” Said Elaine Minick-Stone owner of CAKE Bakery in downtown Statesboro.

On a regional scale, BIG will appeal to entrepreneurs who call this area home by creating a good environment to get startups to take risks. Resources, awareness of one’s skills, and believing you can launch a startup are among driving forces behind bringing economic growth to fruition. BIG’s business incubator offers leases for affordable office space which can often be a barrier for many startups, and BIG is multifaceted in its ability to provide valuable support