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11 firms picked to pitch at venture capital event

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A company developing a new engine for marine, auto and aviation use and a media development company marketing interactive computer screens for commercial use are among 11 Kansas firms selected to present their business plans to investors at the Great Plains Capital Conference.

GPCC, the only venture capital conference in south-central Kansas, will be Sept. 10 at the Wichita Marriott, 9100 Corporate Hills Drive.

A total of 32 companies applied to present at the conference, in its sixth year this year.

The 11 companies selected to present will each have about 16 minutes to pitch their business to investors in hopes of attracting capital.

It "is a huge step for my small company," said Jason Opat, founder of Integrated Media Group, a Wichita-based media development company. "It validates my personal work and (the work of) all the people at my company."

Opat's company is one of four presenting companies that are based in or have ties to Wichita.

"It's exciting," said Trish Brasted, president and CEO of Wichita Technology Corp., the conference's organizer. "It's always nice to be able to show your homegrown stuff."

Other Wichita companies presenting are Mpathx and Time Trails, both of which are technology-related ventures.

A fourth company, Chapman-based Grail Engine Technologies, was co-founded by Wichitan Nicholas Bennington, who also is its president.

Grail Engine CEO and chief research scientist Matthew Riley said the company is seeking capital to bring its concept two-stroke, multi-fuel and zero-emission engine to the automotive, marine and aviation markets.

"GPCC is an incredible way to get fresh new technology that has awesome potential to move forward," Riley said.

GPCC is one of several events that are part of the Kansas Day of Innovation held annually in Wichita.

Other events include a Kansas Bioscience Authority stakeholder luncheon that will include presentations by Tom Thornton, CEO of the KBA; former Lt. Gov. John Moore, director and CEO of the Center for Innovation for Biomaterials in Orthopaedic Research; and Tom Robb, chairman of the Kansas Alliance for Bioenergy and Biorefining.

For more information, see www.greatplainscc.com.

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