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## Project Innovation II Announces Top Prize Award Winners

Winners of the 2010-2011 Project Innovation II Business Competition were announced at a public event held on Thursday, May 12 at the University of Illinois Springfield's Public Affairs Center. Winners were selected from a panel of judges in two categories – Innovation and Acceleration.

The Innovation category concentrates on innovators whose products are in the early stages of development. The Acceleration category is focused on individuals and existing companies that have already completed extensive business plans for their products.

Jim Norris and Mark Gazda won the top prize of \$20,000 in the Acceleration category with their product Propel Doors, a system for automating existing sliding shed and barn doors.

Mike Nellessen and Michael Ledger won the top prize in the Innovation category with their innovation of Nellybean.com.

Finalists presented their entries to judges during a closed judging session earlier in the day. A public reception and presentation followed at the UIS Studio Theatre.

"The public reception was an element we added this year," said Erich Bloxdorf, Executive Vice President of The Chamber. "We wanted people to see the inventions up close and have an opportunity to interact personally with the inventors. I think it was a tremendous experience for everyone."

Mike Pence, Executive Vice President, Bank of Springfield and 2011 Chamber Board Chair, offered opening remarks at the awards ceremony. Mikal Sutton, The Chamber's Director of Medical Development, joined Bloxdorf in introducing the judges and announcing the winners of the competition.

"We received great applications this year in both categories, and the judges made very tough decisions," said Sutton. "Even though this is only the second year, we are truly impressed with the combination of innovative thinking and the potential for increased economic development in Sangamon County."

In addition to the two top prizes, other prizes awarded during the evening included:

**Acceleration**

\$10,000 awarded to Damon Dennis & Bob Harbour  
(product, Arctichaw)

\$5,000 awarded to Brian Dunaway  
(product, Air Filtration Products)

**Innovation**

\$3,000 awarded to Michael Covington  
(product, Chain Lube Guard)

\$1,000 awarded to Michael Kirchoff  
(product, Toolgate Workstation)

For additional information on the Project Innovation II Business Competition, final competitors and award winners, please contact Mikal Sutton at (217) 525-1173 or via email at [msutton@gsc.org](mailto:msutton@gsc.org)

