
Annual expo featured 'Pitch Competition' for local entrepreneurs



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SPRINGFIELD, Mo. -

The popular TV show "Shark Tank" lets entrepreneurs pitch business ideas to investors. A local version of that competition let start-ups take center stage on Thursday in Springfield at the annual B2B (business-to-business) Expo.

Four entrepreneurs in the technology space each had seven minutes to convince a panel of judges that their idea is the next big thing.

"Covy is a conference room scheduling and software kiosk to check people into your building," said Chris Allen, the first presenter.

"Emergenc-me is a platform to help keep your family and the community safer," said Jim Carr, the second presenter.

"We manage information for restaurants and use that information to help owners increase their profits," said Jason Klein of the company Logic Forte.

"We do GPS tracking for first responders, commercial organizations that need to travel into rural areas," said Robb Woolsey of the start-up Rural First.

Each idea pitched at the B2B Expo centered on technology: for safety, boosting the bottom line, or increasing efficiency.

The Springfield Area Chamber of Commerce helped make the opportunity possible.

"They just bring in new money and new revenue sources to our community -- fresh new ideas," said Kristin Lochner, manager of special events for the chamber.

The big prize was \$5,000 for development of one of the ideas. Rural First is the winner.

The entrepreneurs said the venue also provided great exposure.

"It gives me a great opportunity to get out in front of the Springfield Chamber membership and the business community and get my name out there, get my face out there," Klein said.

The [B2B Expo](#) is an annual event at the Springfield Expo Center.

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