



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

For more information, contact:

Jason Hutcheson, 319-850-0395

Christopher Murphy, 319-758-9583

Lynda Murray, 319-759-2532

Amy Tobias, 319-759-9791

Partnership Announces Business Plan Competition Winners

Downtown Burlington may have a new bookstore soon.

Burlington's Christopher Murphy has developed a new, independent, retail store concept called Burlington by the Book. Although Murphy has spent months working on the concept, he is beginning to see some fruits of his labor. That's because he has won the 2010 Des Moines County Business Plan Competition administered by the Greater Burlington Partnership. Lynda Graham-Murray of Burlington and Amy Tobias of Wapello received honorable mention awards in the annual competition.

As the recipient of the top prize, Murphy will receive a \$3,000 seed capital grant. Murray and Tobias will receive awards of \$1,500 each.

Murphy, the former manager of B. Dalton Bookseller, is eager to launch his new business.

"A community needs a bookstore," said Murphy. "There is a strong book buying market in our town, and I want to step in and fill it. The competition has shown me how to put all of my 22 years experience as a bookseller and my ideas for an independent bookstore in a nice little package."

In addition to the seed capital grant, Murphy will receive \$1,200 in rental assistance from Downtown Partners as well as a complimentary web site design by Hayloft Media.

Murray will use a portion of her award for a laptop, signage, and brochures for her venture, Dietitian Magician. Although the small nutrition consulting practice has been mainly a hobby for Murray, she intends to take this part-time venture to a new level.

Tobias will use her award to purchase additional equipment for her business, Amy Tobias Photography. A location in Downtown Burlington has already been secured.

"It is so encouraging to see budding entrepreneurs take the time to draft a business plan, allow it to be critically reviewed, and then take the suggestions in stride to strengthen the business concept," said Jason Hutcheson, administrator of the competition for the Partnership. "Even during a time of economic uncertainty, these three are moving forward. I hope they serve as inspiration to others."

In order to complete the competition, participants had to take a business plan writing course offered by Southeastern Community College. After the course, each participant submitted a draft copy of the business plan that was scored and constructively criticized. The finalists then gave an oral presentation to a final selection panel. The Small Business Development Center offered one-on-one coaching to help participants assemble and strengthen the business plans.

The Greater Burlington Partnership administers the annual competition and grant awards are funded from pledges received during the organization's *Partnering for the Future* campaign. The 2011 Des Moines County Business Plan Competition will launch in January. For more information, log on to www.GrowBurlington.com.