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**Partnership Announces Business Plan Competition Winners**

Rhonda Reif Moore, a small business owner in West Burlington, has won the 2008 Des Moines County Business Plan Competition administered by the Greater Burlington Partnership. Marika Nunnikhoven of Mediapolis received the honorable mention award.

As the winner of the competition, Moore will receive a \$4,000 seed capital grant. Nunnikhoven will receive a grant award of \$1,500.

“These entrepreneurs went through a rigorous process to complete the business plans,” said Jason Hutcheson, administrator of the competition. “All of the participants had to first take a business plan writing course. After the course, they each submitted first drafts that were scored and constructively criticized. The finalists then had to give an oral presentation to a review panel before the judges picked the winners.”

Moore will use the seed capital to launch a product catalog for her natural spa and personal care products business. Her business, Pathways to Tranquility, will open its doors in West Burlington and will feature lotions, oils, soaps, bath salts, and stress reduction items that Moore formulated herself.

Nunnikhoven will use the grant to acquire inventory for her business, Alternative Energy Solutions, located in downtown Mediapolis. “It’s an alternative energy business,” Nunnikhoven explained. “We sell products that save energy and money such as water heater exchangers, pellet stoves, wood stoves, gas fire places, wood fire places, pellet inserts, solar attic fans, and the like.”

Six local entrepreneurs participated in the 2008 competition sponsored by F&M Bank and Trust, Two Rivers Bank & Trust, and MidWestOne Bank. It was the first year for the competition.

“I had been kicking the idea around for awhile,” said Moore. “The business plan competition gave me a little extra incentive to sit down and put the plan into formation.”

The 2009 Des Moines County Business Plan Competition will launch in January. For more information, log on to [www.GrowBurlington.com](http://www.GrowBurlington.com).