

# BIG IDEAS CHALLENGE

*Student New Venture Competition*

*April 12, 2023*



**MINNESOTA STATE UNIVERSITY, MANKATO**  
CENTER FOR INNOVATION & ENTREPRENEURSHIP

# BIG IDEAS CHALLENGE

## Welcome

Introduction: Dr. Shane Bowyer

*Director of the Center for Innovation & Entrepreneurship*

*Associate Professor of Management*

Emcee: Luke Eggerbraaten

## Finalist Presentations

Allergy Aware: Brady Barr

HyperFocus: Dominic Bothe

Infinity 3D Concrete: Bryce Stalborger

## Lloyd Companies Video

## Finalist Presentations

2 Seasons Snow Removal & Lawn Care: Harrison Braudis

Fin's Finest Labs: Zachary Finholdt

Louie Labs: Ben Zuelke

Dan Armstrong

Franz Sherman

Heidi Roeschli

Yeng Moua

## People's Choice Voting

[PollEv.com/bic](http://PollEv.com/bic)

## Fireside Chat Developing Entrepreneurial Skills at Minnesota State University, Mankato

*Ibrahim Ellahi*

*Josie Stanford*

## Awards



## Big Ideas Challenge Finalists

### Allergy Aware

Dining out can be a daunting task for people with food allergies as they face the challenge of not knowing the ingredients in the food that they are being served. The solution lies in providing an allergy menu that clearly indicates the allergens present in each dish. That's where Allergy Aware steps in! We partner with restaurants to develop personalized allergy menus that create a safer environment for both the customers and staff, ensuring that everyone can enjoy their dining experience with confidence.



**ALLERGY AWARE™**

*Brady Barr; Finance Graduate 2022*

### HyperFocus

HyperFocus is a mobile application that is designed to help students with ADHD improve their academic performance in traditional classroom settings. Using a combination of techniques such as sensory stimulation, symptom identification, & management, HyperFocus helps students recognize their learning styles, manage their time effectively, and improve their attention and focus in the classroom.



*Dominic Bothe; Business Management*

### Infinity 3D Concrete

Infinity 3D Concrete is an innovative company that will utilize revolutionary technology to change the construction industry, and the world, through the limitless possibilities of 3D printing with concrete.



*Bryce Stalboerger; Construction Management*

### 2 Seasons Snow Removal & Lawn Care

2 Seasons is an Uber and Door Dash inspired company delivering snow removal and lawn mowing services at the convenience of the customer through an app by pairing them with local snow removal or lawn care companies for a one-time job. 2 Seasons is a third-party company providing snow removal and lawncare companies with the opportunity to create extra revenue by performing jobs for people who are not subscribed to their service.



*Harrison Braudis; Finance*



## Big Ideas Challenge Finalists

### Fin's Finest Labs

Fin's Finest Labs specializes in diagnosing diseases in animals, big and small, while subsequently offering solutions to treat these diseases. While offering prevention education and treatments for these animals and their homes, FF Labs focus on providing a customized local reliable resource to all animal owners.



*Zachary Finholdt; Accounting*

### Louie Labs

Louis Labs subscription boxes contain STEM based projects and activities tailored to individuals with visual impairments. In addition, we will develop low cost tools and aids for visually impaired professionals.



*Ben Zuelke; Integrated Engineering - Electrical*  
*Dan Armstrong; Integrated Engineering - Electrical*  
*Franz Sherman; Integrated Engineering - Electrical*  
*Heidi Roeschli; Integrated Engineering - Electrical*  
*Yeng Moua; Integrated Engineering - Mechanical*



### **Luke Eggebraaten**

#### *Phaser Marketing*

Luke is a serial Entrepreneur who graduated from Mankato in 2018 and currently resides in Gilbert, Arizona with his wife Olivia. Luke has always had a passion for business and marketing since going to college. He is the founder of Phaser Marketing which focuses on digital marketing programs for excavation companies around the world. Phaser specializes in working with 6-figure, 7-figure, and 8-figure construction companies that need help taking their online presence up a notch. Luke also started a sister company Dirt Work Marketing, is the co-host of the Dirt Bags Podcast, and is a partner in the drag racing company Turf Wars Racing. Luke is also an author and has launched his first book titled, "The Digital Dirt World" available on Amazon. You can connect with him or his businesses on all social media platforms or visit his website at [phasermarketing.com](http://phasermarketing.com).



### **Paul Abdo**

#### *Abdo Consulting Group, Inc.*

Paul Abdo is the CEO of Abdo Consulting Group, Inc. (ACGI), a holding company comprised of several different businesses in publishing, finance, real estate, and gaming. Paul has long established roots in Mankato being born and raised in the city as well as being a graduate of Minnesota State University. Entrepreneurship and private family business was instilled in him by his father who started an accounting firm more than 60 years ago in Mankato. It is now the largest privately held firm in the mid-west and has locations in three different states. The family business branched out to publishing where Paul helped it grow into one of the largest educational print and digital companies in the country. The company has over 7,000 books in print in 10 different languages serving educational institutions throughout the world.



Paul sits on the boards of the following companies owned by ACGI: BankVista, a community bank serving southern and central Minnesota with three branches; SharpLink, a high-tech gaming company that recently went public; and Abdo Properties, a company that owns commercial real estate. Paul works with others on these boards and the C-level teams to help strategize and grow these businesses.

Paul and his wife Julie have three children all attending college out of state. He hopes at least one will continue in the family business and have the entrepreneurial bug.

### **Tony Frentz**

#### *Tandem Bagels*

Tony Frentz has over 30 years of experience as an entrepreneur and executive successfully developing, operating and expanding businesses. His extensive experience includes creating, negotiating, and managing complex projects in the telecommunications, construction, commercial real estate industries, manufacturing businesses, and business investments. This experience includes developing, managing, and owning multiple businesses including a multi-state fiber optic company, a multi-unit retail food service business, award winning commercial properties, manufacturing companies, and a capital investment firm.



## Big Ideas Challenge Judges

### **Melissa Bradley**

#### *Snell Motors*

Melissa Bradley is the General Manager and co-owner of Snell Motors. In her role, she oversees daily operations for the company's Buick/GMC/Cadillac dealership and Snell Auto Wash. Melissa graduated from Minnesota State University, Mankato with a degree in Economics. In 2013 she graduated from the National Auto Dealers Association's Dealer Academy in Washington D.C., which gave Melissa the skills and experience to run any department within a dealership. And she's had to put those skills to the test over the last 13 years. Melissa has assumed different roles and responsibilities while she has been with Snell. In general, she's been hands-on with all aspects of the business. In 2016, Melissa was honored as a recipient of the Minneapolis-St. Paul Business Journal's "CFO of the Year" for Medium Private Companies. Melissa has also received the honor of being named one of the "YWCA Young Women of Distinction."



Outside of Snell, Melissa is an advocate for automotive dealer issues in legislation at the state and federal level; she is a member of the National Auto Dealers Next Generation Dealers; and she is involved in several Mankato-area nonprofits including Minnesota State University Foundation Board, Mankato Foundation Board and Feeding our Community Partners Board. Melissa and her husband Spenser enjoy traveling, spending time on the lake, and spoiling their dog, Blarney.

### **Mike Hahn**

#### *Small Business Development Center*

Michael (Mike) Hahn is a builder of entrepreneurs and communities with an extensive background in small business development and downtown revitalization. He is the founder of an urban Main Street initiative in Waterloo, Iowa. Hahn later joined the staff at the University of Northern Iowa as a Program Manager, overseeing the operations of a business accelerator incubating new businesses within the community. Eventually promoted to Regional Director of the University's Small Business Development Center (SBDC), he managed one of the busiest centers in Iowa serving over 800 businesses annually. Returning to downtown revitalization, Hahn spearheaded efforts in Fargo creating the first self-taxing Business Improvement District (BID) in North Dakota. Currently, he is the Regional Director of the SBDC at Minnesota State University, Mankato. In 2020, the Small Business Administration (SBA) recognized the Mankato SBDC with the Center of Excellence Award.



## Big Ideas Challenge Judges

### Michael Sowada

#### MS-CCC LLC

Mike Sowada was raised in Bloomington, MN. A proud 1986 graduate of Minnesota State University - Mankato (Horns up!) with a Bachelor of Science in Computer Science and Mathematics. Catching the entrepreneurial bug, he later attended the University of St. Thomas for his MBA in Entrepreneurship.

Mike started his career at Accenture as a consultant. Being fluent in technology and business, the internet and ecommerce became his big break heading Musicland's ecommerce initiative. Mike worked for multiple internet firms including Net Perceptions Inc and wwwrrr LLC. DKS Systems LLC was the first company he started and sold. Followed by many others. VISI Inc, at the time Minnesota's largest Data Center company, being the largest and most well-known. It was sold to TDS Telecom, a Fortune 500 Company.

Mike is currently a Data Center consultant and founded and runs MS-CCC, an e-retailer that specializes in vintage sports cards, coins and collectables.

Mike is married with 4 grown children and enjoys fishing, reading, golfing, broomball, walking his dogs, and spending time with his family.



### Susan Michaletz

#### PoppedCorn, LLC

Susan Michaletz is a small business owner with a wide variety of experience. After graduating from Minnesota State University, Mankato with degrees in Accounting and Finance, Sue became a CPA while working at Arthur Andersen & Co.

With her experience as a CPA Sue became CFO for a Muni Bond firm, a family real estate development company, then President of a national property management and development Company. During this time, Sue started Range Systems in 1999 which she sold several years later.

Sue is currently President of PoppedCorn, a retail store in Minnetonka with 2 locations within US Bank Stadium. Sue started PoppedCorn, LLC in Oct 2014 in Minnetonka with the idea to provide outstanding gourmet popcorn and gifts. Her plan is to franchise in the future.

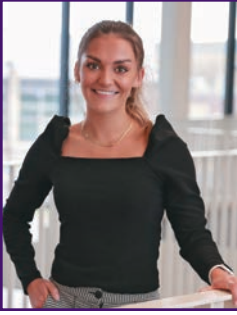


Sue is a current Minnesota State University, Mankato Foundation board member and serves on the Real Estate Committee. She has extensive experience serving on Boards, and provides both for profit and non-profit board training and education.





## Big Ideas Challenge Guest Speakers



**Josie Sandford;** *Senior*  
*B.S. Marketing*  
*Entrepreneurship & Innovation minor*



**Ibrahim Ellahi;** *Senior*  
*B.S. International Business & Marketing*  
*Entrepreneurship & Innovation minor*



# Thank You Sponsors

The College of Business would like to extend their gratitude to those who have given financial support throughout the year for the Big Ideas Challenge.

## Primary Sponsor

Craig & Pat Lloyd, '72 Alumnus,  
Founder of Lloyd Companies



## Additional Sponsors

BankVista

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## High-Tech Sponsor

Launch Minnesota



## Ag/Food/Beverage Sponsor

Pioneer Bank



## **Craig & Pat Lloyd**

### *Lloyd Companies*

After meeting and graduating from Mankato State University, Craig and Pat Lloyd got married and began their journey as entrepreneurs. It was back in 1972 when they moved to Sioux Falls, S.D to manage apartments for Craig's uncle, Bob Lloyd.

Craig and Pat did it all to make ends meet for their growing family. Over the years, their team grew, their dreams evolved, and Lloyd Companies became a full-service construction, development and real estate company. Craig and Pat's humble beginnings, small town hospitality and family values kept them focused, where quality, integrity and relationships matter and most importantly where people are the foundation.

Although Craig and Pat no longer serve in the day-to-day operations of the company, they both serve on the company Board of Directors. It is not always easy for Craig to completely pull away from the work that he loves, but the two of them are enjoying the much-deserved time traveling with good friends, family and most of all, their grandchildren.



# Thank You Mentors and the Small Business Development Center

The mentors met with and assisted the finalists with their business plans and pitches. Thank you to the Small Business Development Center for connecting us to all our mentors this year.

## Mentors

Kevin Sanger

Laura Babcock

Matt Lessard

Nancy Goodwin

Paul Vesey

## Special Recognition

The following members of the College of Business team have provided tremendous vision, leadership and support in the development and growth of the Big Ideas Challenge.

**Dr. Shane Bowyer;** Director of the Center for Innovation & Entrepreneurship

Asst. Professor of Management

**Ashley Niss;** Marketing & Events Coordinator of the Center for Innovation & Entrepreneurship

**Dr. Cheryl Trahms;** Associate Professor of Management & Entrepreneurship

**Jen Cucurullo;** Director of Marketing & Communications

**Dr. Tom Clement;** Asst. Professor of Management

**Maverick Entrepreneurship Club members**

**College of Business Marketing Team**





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