

WTN NEWS

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Green technology company wins Burrill business plan contest

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Madison, Wis. - The greening of business is considered one of the more sustainable trends in entrepreneurship, and new ventures don't come any greener than Sky Vegetables.

The company, which plans to build and operate commercial greenhouses on the rooftops of supermarkets in the United States, took the top prize in the 2008 G. Steven Burrill Business Plan Competition.

The annual competition evaluates the business plans of students in the business school at the University of Wisconsin-Madison.

Sky Vegetables took home the top prize of \$10,000 following a review of the business plans of 17 start-up companies. The company, which intends to reach the break-even point within 20 months, would operate its greenhouse as a separate entity from the supermarkets. Its business model calls for the year-round cultivation of vegetables, fruits, herbs, and flowers to transport to the stores for retail sale. According to the company, the lack of transportation, packaging, and storage costs provides the venture with a competitive advantage.

Other top finishers, their place, and cash prize are:

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- Parallel Kingdom, which has developed a massive multiplayer online role playing game for cell phones and other mobile platforms, second place, \$7,000.
- NxtMile, a maker of running shoes engineered to meet the specific biomechanical needs of over 40 and experienced runners, third place, \$4,000.
- ProactiCare, which is marketing a patient-monitoring system to prevent pressure ulcers (bedsores) among elderly patients in nursing homes, fourth place, \$1,000.

The Burrill competition has encouraged UW-Madison business students to design technology related businesses, but this year the competition was open to non-technology businesses. In addition to cash prizes, it also rewards participating companies for sustainability and short business plans.

The Nelson Institute for Environmental Studies award for sustainability (\$1,000 prize) went to Drive Alternatives, which is marketing a website combining user-generated data and mashups for the owners of vehicles using alternative fuels.