



News Release

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Statewide Business Competition Features Strong Link to University Research

PIERRE, S.D. – Four top winners in the recent Governor’s Giant Vision Business Competition can trace their lineage to ideas and research generated from South Dakota public university campuses.

The \$20,000 top prize in the competition was Nanofiber Separations, which was founded on the South Dakota School of Mines & Technology campus in 2011. Nanofiber Separations produces cutting-edge materials that greatly enhance process efficiencies and economics in the biopharmaceutical, water treatment, desalination, blood products, and air purification industries.

Second place went to AgriVax of Brookings, a start-up company associated with research currently underway at South Dakota State University. MedgeneLabs/AgriVax is an animal health company that develops diagnostic and therapeutic products protecting food animal supplies from infectious diseases.

Global Thinking Laboratories, a Whitewood-based company, produces stable isotopes used in the medical test MRI process. It finished third in the competition. Founded by students pursuing their doctorate in physics at the University of South Dakota, Global Thinking Laboratories hopes to expand into the agricultural market and surpass \$3 million in company income by year three.

Another spinoff from USD was the fourth-place finisher in the Giant Vision competition, Antimicrobial Materials of Sioux Falls. The company’s patent-pending technology bonds chlorine at the molecular level, making fabrics, rubber, and hard surfaces antimicrobial during production.

“For the second consecutive year, the top three winners in this competition emerged from basic research activity in the public university system,” said Paul Turman, the South Dakota Board of Regents’ vice president for research and economic development. “The state’s investments in building research capacity, infrastructure, and talent over the past decade are certainly starting to pay off and hold promise for future economic development in South Dakota.”

The Governor’s Giant Vision business awards were created as an opportunity for entrepreneurs to compete for seed money and a chance to achieve their dream of starting a successful business. Giant Vision also features a student awards competition; student representatives from SDSU, Northern State University, and School of Mines finished among the top four in that contest.