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Rysticken, The High Lift LLC win 2021 NEW Launch Alliance Pitch Event

Divorcist, Brat Wave also honored as vibrant New North entrepreneurial community is highlighted

NEW NORTH, December 3, 2021 – The High Lift LLC, a business idea of 20-year-old entrepreneur Emilee Rysticken, was the winner of the NEW Launch Alliance Pitch Event, held Dec. 2 at the Urban Hub in Green Bay. Divorcist and Brat Wave LLC took second and third place, respectively. The three winning entries emerged from a group of 12 entrepreneurial pitches which had advanced from local pitch competitions held across Northeast Wisconsin last month.

Along with receiving prize money, the three winners will be invited to give an update to an even wider investor and business audience during the New North Summit, scheduled for June 9, 2022, at Lambeau Field.

“What an energizing night it was,” says Barb LaMue, president and CEO of New North Inc., the event host. “There are so many phenomenal business ideas germinating in the New North region. It really was exciting to hear all of the pitches. Emilee and her business concept, The High Lift, was especially impressive because of her intense desire to make her rural hometown a better place.”

The winning entrepreneurial pitch was The High Lift LLC, presented by Emilee Rysticken of Two Rivers, Wis. She received the first-place prize money of \$3,000.

Rysticken is creating The High Lift in her rural community of Two Rivers. It is a modern coffee shop and community gathering space, planned for a summer 2022 opening. Located in a former, renovated auto body shop, it will feature a wide range of hours, ample seating, outdoor green space and a drive-thru for a place to relax, study and gather with friends.

She is doing much of the construction-related work herself. To this point, Rysticken has tiled the floor, changed all of the electrical outlets and performed drywall work. She also plans to build all of the tables which will be used within The High Lift.

“My heart is really in Two Rivers. My goal is to build a better community,” says Rysticken, a third-generation resident of the town of roughly 12,000 people, located in Manitowoc County alongside Lake Michigan. “The prize money from New North is huge. Right there, it probably will help me to buy my espresso machine, which is one of the most expensive pieces of equipment I will need.”

More information on The High Lift can be found on Facebook and Instagram @thehighlift.

Second place went to [Divorcist](#), presented by Elizabeth Paulson and Eliza Cussen, both of Green Bay, Wis. Their pitch centered around an online gift registry and community of support for those experiencing divorce and breakups. Divorcist describes itself as the first breakup-positive gift registry and aims to make this period a respected and dignified stage of life for people.

The duo said that, as a pre-revenue business, the prize money of \$2,000 is significant for their launch, along with substantiating Divorcist within the community. “It’s super validating for us,” says Paulson, “as we continue to do proof of concept to people.”

Divorcist is a recent graduate of The Blueprint Green Bay, an entrepreneurship training initiative of the Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation, New North Inc., and the Greater Green Bay Chamber.

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Third place was won by Brat Wave LLC, presented by Jesse Foster of Menasha, Wis. [Brat Wave](#) was created to assist the average griller in cooking brats more evenly by “cooking the curves,” along with reducing flame flare-ups while on the grill. A patent-pending, contoured cooking sheet, it cradles the meat on its concaved and convex edges and browns the curves.

A U.S. military veteran, the colorful Foster started his business six weeks ago out of his own frustration with cooking brats. He self-manufactures each Brat Wave out of stainless steel.

Others making entrepreneurial pitches at the competition were Alto Gear (presented by Benjamin Leibham), App Ease (Nicole Tilot), Blank Sheet Fabrications (Mark Blank), Blossom Baby (Marissa Dyess), Doggy Dupa Dog Leash (Brian Jankowski), GoGuide (Carter Brown), Homeschool Art Box (Sarah Harmeling), INKBOX (Bill Zimmermann), and Sativa Building Systems (Zachary Popp).

Judges for the pitch competition were Tara Carr of the Small Business Development Center at the University of Wisconsin-Green Bay, Dr. Preston Cherry of Concurrent Financial Planning, Irene Strohbeen of Irene Strohbeen and Associates, Kimyatta Ratliff of Universal Designs Salon and ColorBold Business Association, and Anna Steinfest of AFF Research and the Green Bay Packers Mentor Protégé program. The judges were coordinated by Ryan Kauth of GreenLeaf Bank.

A total of 32 entrepreneurial pitches previously were made at local qualifying events across the New North region, held in November during Wisconsin Startup Week. These events – Audible, Fast Pitch, LevelUp and Accelerate – were hosted by the Greater Green Bay Chamber, FVTC Venture Center, Oshkosh Chamber of Commerce, Envision Greater Fond du Lac, Progress Lakeshore and Sheboygan County Economic Development Corp.

BrightStar Foundation and WBD, Inc., provided sponsorship for both the regional and local pitch events.

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About New North, Inc.

New North, Inc., is a 501(c)3 non-profit, regional economic development corporation fostering collaboration among private and public sector leaders throughout the 18 counties of Northeast Wisconsin, known as the New North region. The New North brand unites the region both internally and externally around talent development, brand promotion and business development, signifying the collective economic power behind the 18 counties. The counties include Outagamie, Winnebago, Calumet, Waupaca, Brown, Shawano, Oconto, Marinette, Door, Kewaunee, Sheboygan, Manitowoc, Fond du Lac, Green Lake, Marquette, Florence, Menominee and Waushara. www.thenewnorth.com

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BrightStar is a 501(c)3 non-profit foundation created to facilitate job creation and increase Wisconsin’s economic activity by deploying donated funds into equity stakes in early-stage, rapid growth companies. This unique approach is enabling the formation of new investment capital in Wisconsin through charitable donations to the foundation. Contributions to BrightStar are tax deductible. www.brightstarwi.org

About Wisconsin Business Development, Inc. (WBD)

WBD, Inc., is a business finance resource that provides the knowledge, services and access to capital needed to create jobs, grow businesses and build communities, primarily through their Service Company and SBA’s 540 loan products. www.wbd.org

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