

FIRST CAPITAL CHALLENGE

GROWING ENTREPRENEURS IN KINGSTON

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First Capital Challenge Announces \$50,000 Grand Prize Winner

First Capital Challenge announced today that Laura Tattersall of Made in the Shade Perennials is the \$50,000 Grand Prize winner of this year's business plan competition.

Made in the Shade Perennials is devoted to growing quality perennials that thrive in shade for sale to landscape contractors and eventually to garden centres. In the planning stage for over a year, this new company will start production in the spring of 2006, offering over 150 varieties of woodland and shade plants, including varieties that are often hard for landscapers to buy outside of the main spring selling time.

Laura Tattersall has worked in the horticultural trades for over 26 years, beginning as a summer student in a garden nursery in Montreal while working towards a degree in mathematics. She has experience as a grower, a landscaper, a retailer, and a sales representative for a major production nursery in Quebec. Laura is widely known and well respected in this industry, giving her a running start as she offers her own home-grown plants. She was also the winner of the \$1,000 Tune-Up Round prize when this year's competition began last fall.

Now in its fourth year, First Capital Challenge is a business plan competition open to anyone anywhere who has an idea for a business they would like to start in Kingston. Since its inception, fifteen new businesses have been started employing over 35 people. This year, seventeen candidates with business ideas ranging from publishing to boat building to the manufacture of a flight simulator submitted business plans.

Over the last six months, a series of workshops and mentoring sessions have been available to participants to help them strengthen their plans. Finalists were selected by a panel of three independent judges, all experienced entrepreneurs. In addition to reviewing the business plans, the judges heard oral presentations from the four finalists before selecting the winner.

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First Capital Challenge is a not-for-profit corporation and is made possible by a group of sponsors including Bank of Montreal, Business Development Bank, Advanced Technology Education Consortium, Empire Financial Group and RBC Financial Group. Viner Kennedy Frederick Allan & Tobias LLP and KPMG LLP contribute professional advice to both the corporation and the winner. The \$50,000 for the Grand Prize is contributed by local individuals and businesses, with the Kingston Economic Development Corporation matching funds to contribute half the prize money.

A list of candidates, as well as details about the competition, may be found at www.firstcapitalchallenge.com.

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