

# Calling all entrepreneurs ...

◆ **Start-Up Challenge:** New Hampshire residents can win cash, training and services to get their new businesses off the ground.

By **MARK HAYWARD**  
New Hampshire Union Leader

**MANCHESTER** — The stock market is plunging. Credit is as tight as a miser's purse strings. Loyal workers are getting pink slips.

What better time to start your own business? Such is the feeling of the Manchester Young Professionals Network, which is celebrating its fourth year with a contest to pry the entrepreneurial genius out of the most timid of future business tycoons.

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DAVID LANE/UNION LEADER

Guests mingle at the Manchester Young Professionals Network's birthday bash at the Currier Gallery of Art in Manchester last night.

## Entrepreneurs

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The organization's New Hampshire Start-Up Challenge is accepting submissions from anyone in New Hampshire. The top 20 applicants will be enrolled in a 10-week training program at Southern New Hampshire University's Entrepreneurship Institute.

The Young Professionals Network will select the top two business plans to come out of the training program, one from a traditional for-profit; the other for a social innovation or socially responsible plan. Each winner will receive \$25,000 and in-kind start-up services that include office space, legal services and accounting services.

"The economy is what it is, and good businesses thrive no matter what," said Kate Benway, past president of the Network. "The entire proposal is a risk. We're about doing everything we can to make it less of a risk."

The challenge was announced

at a gathering of about 300 Young Professionals, where the entrepreneurial spirit runs deep.

"It's a dream to be my own boss," said David Day, a Manchester resident and network engineer for SynClear, a small company based in Chelmsford, Mass. The child of an entrepreneurial family, Day said he's trying to find that one brainstorm and pursue it.

The competition is designed to help entrepreneurs develop a solid business plan that will result in financing, whether through a bank or venture capital firm, said Joe Kenney, the vice president of commercial lending for Ocean Bank and chairman of the program. He said Ocean Bank is writing business loans at present.

"Any time," he said, "is a good time to start up a business."

To apply to the New Hampshire Start-up Challenge, visit [www.MYPN.org/startup](http://www.MYPN.org/startup).