



PitchFork Challenge Guide

September 2018

Purpose:

So you want to hold a business plan pitch competition!

This guideline is a list of questions and logistics to consider as you plan your own pitching competition. We are not the experts, but we want to share what we learned in organizing our first pitch competition and explain how we did it and the thinking behind it.

We did not do this by ourselves and in many ways it did take a community to bring this to fruition. We want to thank our inaugural crew of volunteers who were vital to the success of the first PitchFork Challenge. Our PitchFork judges and coaches: Roy Wallen, Andrea O'Brien, Laurel Adams, Jim Verzino, Patrick Knittle, and Peter Hansel were dedicated and diligent in their time and advice to the entrepreneurs. We also want to thank our finale event MC, Clay Adams who provided the right tone of fun and importance to the big event.

We hope this guide will help you as you plan your own pitch competition.

Don't hesitate to reach out to us if you have questions.

Good luck and remember to have fun!

The Hannah Grimes Center

www.hannahgrimes.com
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Background:

The Hannah Grimes Center's PitchFork program was created out of the frustration of seeing the rate of rural startup businesses plummet after the 2008 great recession and not recover. We saw the evidence of this in our own rural region. With the lack of access to financing and capital stated as the main reason for the decline in startup rates everywhere, but especially in rural areas, in the fall of 2016 the Hannah Grimes Center (HGC) created PitchFork, an application based program for entrepreneurs to learn how to pitch their business and then present their business opportunity to investors and service providers on a quarterly basis.

PitchFork is a tool to increase the number of businesses and to encourage a supportive startup ecosystem by increasing visibility, skills, and opportunity for startups. We want to encourage the people with great business ideas to start and grow and we want them to know that this is an excellent place to do all of that and more.

After running PitchFork for two years it was clear to us that the startup ecosystem needed a jump start. We simply needed more qualified businesses to pitch each quarter and we felt money would help provide that forward motion momentum that startups need.

The PitchFork Challenge was born and we decided to run the competition as part of one of the five program tracks in the inaugural two-day summit we co-founded with The Keene Sentinel, Radically Rural.

With this perspective, we felt it was important to encourage the early stage entrepreneurship and the all important idea phase by creating two separate awards. One award would go to a will-be entrepreneur who has a great idea. The audience would determine who would receive the award, which we deemed the People's Choice Award. The idea track award would be a smaller sum of money, \$1,000 to help advance the idea. The award for the rural startup would be larger at \$10,000 with judges deciding who would receive the award.

Why?

When creating a pitch challenge in your area, first ask yourself why? What goal(s) do you want to meet with this competition? Is it to stimulate startup activity? Create more jobs in your area?? Once you can articulate this you can build the competition to be aligned with that goal, from the application questions to the judging criteria. Starting with the end in mind is a great way to plan for the entire competition.

For HGC, we decided we wanted to encourage the startup ecosystems in a broader rural region and opened the application process to rural areas in New Hampshire, Vermont, and Massachusetts. Our location offered the opportunity to reach across state lines to neighboring rural regions that are quite similar to ours. We believe in thinking and acting regionally and know that the ripple effect, both positive and negative, carries across state lines in small communities. It creates a larger network for our businesses and we believe that increases their chances for success.

Timeline:

April 10:	Create application format/questions
May 8:	Application launch and invite judges
July 31	Application deadline
August 2:	Application review and selection
August 3:	PitchFork decision notice (selected ten businesses and eight ideas)
August 15:	First round of pitches (closed event) to the judges and coaches only <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Eliminate two from each track-Idea and Startup Business (eight businesses and six ideas advanced to the semi-finals)• Video tape the pitches to send to the presenters• Q&A time
August 23:	PitchFork Challenge Semi Finals (live free event) <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Eliminate two from each track (six businesses and four ideas advanced to the final event)• No Q&A time• Second round of eliminations• Public voting for the idea presentations
August 29:	Q&A Session (20 minutes each) with the judges
September 25:	Required dress rehearsal and tech check two days before the event
September 27:	PitchFork Challenge Finals: Radically Rural session 2 and announce the two winners at CONNECT event

Pitch Guidelines:

Be clear about the pitch challenge. State who is eligible to apply, the application criteria, pitch guidelines, judging criteria, and the scheduled event requirements at all times. If the dates are listed for the applicant as part of the application, it is presumed the applicant will be able to attend all of the required events (See Appendix A)

Application:

We used one method of collecting applications - google forms. We did not accept paper applications or other methods of applying.

Using google forms is an easy way to collect the application information, print it out for review with the selection committee, and to provide the completed applications to the judges for their review prior to meeting the presenters. It makes everyone's life easier!

Business Opportunity Track Presenters:

Pitch guidelines: Five minute presentation with a power point pitch deck

We decided on this time limit as we knew we wanted six presenters in the final round with an additional five minutes of Q&A time, for a total of 10 minutes per presenter. The final event quickly became at least an hour with this in mind. If the presentations were longer we felt it would be too long of an event. We also kept in mind that someone could drop out, we felt five would be a good number too, but that four would be too few. So, while, six is a lot, we accomplished our goal.

Idea Track Presenters:

Pitch guideline: Two minute presentation with no pitch deck. The idea track presenters were allowed to create one custom slide that had the following information on it: Name, business name, and a snappy business concept description with a background photo/graphic of their choosing.

Judging Criteria and Lens:

State the criteria the presenters will be judged when the application is launched. Create a rubric for the judges to use (See Appendix B) to help with scoring and deliberation.

The judging criteria we developed for the competition and rubric:

- Market
- Product/Service
- Team
- Traction
- Pitch performance

We decided not to weight the criteria.

Lesson learned:

While we stated the criteria when we launched the challenge, it was not until the judges were listening to the pitches, that we received questions as to a broader lens and bigger picture, in which to judge the criteria. We did not want that lens to just be about job growth, so we took some time to discuss this and decided viability and community

benefit would be the lenses. We selected [this article](#) to demonstrate the community benefit concept and shared it with the judges and participants.

Judges: Number and Experience

When we thought of the number of judges and who should make up the panel, we learned that having an odd number of people and also more than three would be important. We invited five judges (See Appendix C) to be on the panel with a diverse mix of expertise. Our judges were : a fourth generation family owned business president, an executive director of an economic development corporation with a non-traditional revolving loan fund, an entrepreneur in residence growing a food accelerator, a CFO of a local food company and angel investor, and an SBDC advisor from another city (so as not to have a conflict of interest).

Judges: Planning

It's important to plan out the entire event so you can communicate the time commitment and expectations with the judges in the invite, which is significant when juggling five busy schedules and to ensure they can attend all of the events.

Event MC:

For the finale, consider asking a friend of the organization who can shepherd the event to make it fun and keep things running smoothly.

In the preceding rounds HGC's program director MC'd the event. Having someone new for the finale, adds another special aspect to the event for the participants and for the attendees.

PitchFork Logistics:

Round 1 Preview of Accepted Presenters

In this event, the presenters pitched the judges and coaches either their idea or business opportunity. The event was closed and not open to the public. When their acceptance into the competition was sent to the entrepreneurs we stated we wanted to see their best and most practiced pitch on this day as two people from each track would be eliminated that day. This is the first time the judges and the presenters met each other.

All the presenters, both idea and startup business track, were required to be at this event all day. After each presentation, there was time for Q&A from the judges. It is part of the learning process for presenters to see many styles of pitching and to see what is effective as well as what are common mistakes.

After all the presentations were given, the judges then deliberated and the two lowest scored presentations in the business opportunity track were eliminated.

The idea track presentations were judged by our executive director and a business strategy coach and were judged on viability and pitch performance.

An email communication went out to everyone the next day. For those who progressed to the semi-final round they were reminded of important dates and logistics (See Appendix B).

Semi-final Required Dress Rehearsal:

We scheduled a dress rehearsal early in the day of the semi-final event. We wanted to make sure the presenters landed their time and to hear their updated presentations. Each presenter went through their presentations twice in the room the semi-final event would be hosted in later in the evening.

The room was reserved for the entire day up until the event and the presenters who were able stayed to practice on their own.

Semi-Final Event:

The semi-final event was a festive evening. It was free and open to the public and we had cocktails and hors d'oeuvres to create a memorable event for the semifinalists and attendees.

This is the first event where voting for the Idea Track People's Choice Award would be used. We decided to have in essence three judges for the idea track, the audience would vote, but have it count for one of the "judges" and to then also have our executive director and a business strategy coach as the other two judges. Since it was a free event, we wanted to even out the possible perception that the presenter who had the most family and friends at the event would get through if the votes by the audience was the sole deciding factor.

We created an agenda and had them on each of the seats for the attendees (See Appendix E).

Lesson Learned:

We recognize that having only one week in between the first round closed session and the semi-final event did not give enough time for the presenters. Next year we will give the presenters two weeks to revise and prepare their pitches. However, the presenters were excellent and we were impressed with how much they incorporated the feedback from the judges and coaches and were prepared with polished pitches.

The judges deliberated after the event to eliminate two business opportunity startups.

The votes were counted and the two judges decided which two idea track presenters to eliminate.

The next day communication was emailed out to all of the semi-finalists as to who would/not progress to the final round.

Because the semi-final event did not have Q&A, we scheduled a date for time for the judges to have 20 minutes with each startup business opportunity track presenter.

Q&A Session:

The judges kept their rubrics which had their notes from the semi-final event and brought them to this session. Each presenter had their slide deck up and projected onto a large screen so that the judges could reference the presenters slides in their feedback.

Before each Q&A session, we stated to the entrepreneur that the comments they are about to hear are from different perspectives and that at times the judges may contradict each other and that they should take what makes sense to them and leave what doesn't make sense **as this is their business**. A statement like this at the beginning is important to allow the judges to disagree and for the entrepreneur to take ownership of what is important feedback and what is not.

After all of the entrepreneurs met with the judges, it's good to review the important upcoming dates with the judges and presenters.

Send out the feedback summary to each person by the next day.

Required Dress Rehearsal and Tech Check:

This was scheduled to be two days ahead of the final event to make sure the pitches were done and to choreograph the wireless microphone handoff. Each presenter signed up for a 30 minute slot to run through their pitch twice. No major feedback was given as it's two days before the event. For this dress rehearsal there was the added element of using new wireless microphones and showing each person how to operate them and how the handoff should go.

The room was also set up as it will be for the finale to help the presenters understand the event. It's helpful for the presenters to practice in the room they will present in.

PitchFork Challenge Finale:

It's the big day!

All the planning leading up to this was in preparation for today. (See Appendix F)

Award Plaques:

HGC is fortunate enough to have a nearby Charter school that has a skilled teacher who makes beautiful wooden plaques with laser etching. She created a special award for the winners. If this was not possible the other idea was to have a "big" check presentation for a photo opportunity. The awards were presented at a larger annual event, CONNECT, in the evening after the PitchFork Challenge finale.

Overall:

Communication:

Keep your communication clear and regular to all the different parties: presenters (idea track and startup business track), judges, coaches, MC, and colleagues. You want to ensure that everyone understands the next steps with enough time to prepare for it.

Marketing:

Promote the pitch competition as much as possible through various channels, area business chambers, partner organizations and businesses, board members, and networks of the judges, coaches and MC.

Think about all the different area news outlets, radio programs, and civic clubs to promote the pitch competition. You want to engage and excite people to sponsor, apply for the competition, and to attend the events.

To Do Lists & Supplies:

First Round Closed Event:

Pre Event:

- Review the applications and select who will advance
- Email the decision (accept/decline) to all applicants. To those who are accepted remind them of all of the required dates in the email and has all the requirements, deadlines, and event logistics
- Email the judges ahead of time with a link to the google drive with all of the accepted presenters' applications so they can review them prior to hearing their pitches
- Be available and encourage all of the applicants to meet with the person running the competition

Post Event:

- Upload and email the video presentations to each presenter
- Inform the presenters who advanced to the semi-finals and remind them of important dates
- Meet with any of the presenters who would like to discuss their presentations and their businesses
- Promote/market who advanced forward to the semi-final round to build momentum and buzz

Supplies:

- Projector
- Screen
- Laptop
- Current slide deck from each presenter
- Clicker to advance the slides

- Rubrics for the judges
- Ipad/laptop for a countdown timer for the presenter
- Ipad/iphone to video the presentations as learning tool for the presenter

Semi Finals:

Pre Event:

- Set up an RSVP system for the semi-final (we use Eventbrite)
- Market and promote this to the public well in advance
- Arrange food/drinks
- Create and print agenda with the line-up for the presenters, judges, and event attendees
- Create the voting mechanism for the People's Choice Award (jars, boxes, paper etc.)

Post Event:

- Inform the presenters who advanced to the semi-finals. Have each of them sign up for a Q&A time slot with the judges and remind them of important dates and logistics of that Q&A session.
- Thank and remind the judges of the Q&A session details

Supplies:

- Projector
- Screen
- Laptop
- Current slide deck from each presenter
- Clicker to advance the slides
- Rubrics for the judges
- Ipad/laptop for a countdown timer for the presenter
- Create the voting mechanism for the People's Choice Award (jars, boxes, paper etc.)

Q&A Session:

Pre Event:

- Confirm each presenters time slot and inform them of the logistics for the day
- Inform the judges of the line-up and also the logistics for the day

Post Event:

- Email summary of feedback session to each entrepreneur
- Meet with any of the presenters and entrepreneurs

Supplies

- Paper and pen for the judges and presenter
- A note taker to summarize the feedback points and to email the feedback to each presenter
- Laptop
- Projector

- Clicker to advance the slides
- Slide decks from the semi-final event

Tech Check

Pre Event:

- Email presenters to sign up for their tech check rehearsal and any other event reminders
- Create the layout for the room the final pitch event will be in and have it set up for the tech check if possible.

Post Event:

- Email encouragement to presenters and any other reminders for the finale
- Email the judges reminders for the finale

Supplies:

- Projector
- Screen
- Laptop
- Current slide deck from each presenter
- Clicker to advance the slides
- Ipad/laptop for a countdown timer for the presenter
- Wireless microphones if possible

The Finale:

Pre Event:

- Write draft script for event MC and review with him/her
- Create and email the presentation line-up and agenda for all parties: presenters, judges, MC, and fellow colleagues
- Create an agenda for the final event for the audience to follow along
- Create voting mechanism for People's Choice Award
- Arrange for the award/plaque for the winner(s)
- Create process for giving the prize money to the winner(s)

Post Event:

- Send thank you's and congratulations to everyone involved
- Inform the winner(s) of the process for receiving the prize money
- Cut the check(s)
- De-brief with presenters, judges, and colleagues

Supplies:

- Projector
- Large screen
- Laptop for the slide presentations
- Clicker to advance the slides
- Wireless microphones if possible
- Ipad or another laptop for a countdown clock for the presenters
-
- Phone/timer for the Q&A time
- Rubrics printed for the judges
- Voting mechanism if you have a “People’s Choice Award” for the semi final and final round.
- An award to present the winner(s)

Appendix A: PitchFork Application Questions

The PitchFork Challenge Application Questions and Criteria:

1. What category are you applying for?
 - Business track (\$10,000 cash award)
 - Idea track (\$1,000 People's Choice Award)

Business Opportunity Track:

1. Company Name
2. Primary Company Contact Name
3. Company Address
4. Phone Number
5. Email Address
6. Company Principal Place of Business
7. Date of Company Formation
8. Industry
9. Primary Product of Service Offering
10. Team
11. Number of Employees
12. Total Funding to Date
13. Revenue Generated in the past 12 months
14. Projected Revenue for the Next 12 months
15. Projected operating expenses for the next 12 months
16. Projected break even time frame
17. How will the company use the PitchFork Challenge award of \$10,000?
18. Briefly provide a company overview
19. Briefly provide an industry overview and describe the market opportunity
20. Briefly describe the competition
21. Briefly describe the company's business model
22. Applicants may submit a pitch deck along with the application (option to upload items)

Business Idea Track:

1. Primary Contact Name
2. Primary contact number
3. Company principal place of business
4. Email address
5. Industry
6. Primary product or service offering
7. Briefly describe the business idea
8. Briefly describe an industry overview and describe the market opportunity

9. Briefly describe the competition
10. Briefly describe the business model.
11. How will the PitchFork Challenge People's Choice Award of \$1,000 be used to advance the idea?

Who's eligible?

The PitchFork Challenge is open to any resident and business that is located in the counties below with a population of 30,000 or less:

NH: Cheshire, Sullivan, and Hillsborough

VT: Windham, Bennington, and Windsor

MA: Franklin

Business Track:

- Businesses must be for-profit
- May not be more than three years old by September 1, 2018
- May not have raised more than \$250,000 in funding
- May not have earned more than \$250,000 in past year revenue

Idea Track:

- Business idea is for-profit
- Business idea has not earned any revenue

What will I win?

- For the business track: at least \$10,000
- For the idea track: \$1,000 based on the People's Choice Award

Important Dates:

- August 15: 8:15am until 12:00pm: Round One-Closed Event
- August 23: 5:00pm-8:00pm: Live semi-final pitch (5:00pm-7:00pm).
- August 29: 8:30am-10:30am: 20 minutes of Q&A with the judges
- September 27: 2:00pm-5:00pm: Live final pitch event during the Radically Rural Summit (2:00pm-4:00pm)
- September 27: 5:00pm-9:00pm: CONNECT event, with the award presentation

**Appendix B:
Judges Rubric**

Judge:

Participant:

Business:

Please rate the pitch with 1 being the lowest and 5 being the highest

Criteria	1	2	3	4	5	TOTAL
Traction (validation/customers/potential customer)						
Market (potential overall market, growth potential)						
Product/Service (viability)						
Team (experience/expertise/advisors)						
Pitch Performance						
TOTAL:						

Instructions:

Rate each Business Opportunity Track on a scale of 1-5 on each piece of criteria. Check the box corresponding to the number. Write the number for each category in the total column after listening to all of the presentations. You may change your initial rating after listening to all of the presentations. Add the total column for your final score.

Notes:

Appendix C:

Invitation Email to Judges

Dear Laurel,

We are combining forces of our PitchFork program and our inaugural two day Radically Rural Summit (September 27 & 28) by creating [The PitchForkChallenge](#), where entrepreneurs will pitch their business product/service to win a \$10,000 cash award. We will also have a track for people to pitch a business idea to win a People's Choice Award for \$1,000.

We are asking you to be part of the judging panel to help us decide who will win the \$10,000!

To help you make this decision we are asking our judges to commit to the following dates/times:

- August 15: 8:15am until 12:00pm: Hear the first cut of ten entrepreneurs pitch and provide feedback.
- August 23: 5:00pm-8:00pm: Live semi-final pitch (5:00pm-7:00pm). After, you will narrow down the field from ten to six and make the decision as to who will go to the final event to have an opportunity to win \$10,000 (7:00pm-8:00pm deliberation)
- August 29: 8:30am-10:30am: 20 minutes of Q&A with each finalist to help them understand your questions, concerns and the strengths you see and to develop their final pitch
- September 27: 2:00pm-5:00pm: Live final pitch event during the Radically Rural Summit (2:00pm-4:00pm) and make the decision for the prize award (4:00pm-5:00pm). At the CONNECT event from 5:00pm-7:00pm the judges will announce the winner and present the check.

We value your insights in understanding entrepreneurial opportunities and hope you will accept our invitation to be a judge at our first PitchFork Challenge.

Let us know if you have any questions we can answer to help you make your decision. More information about the Radically Rural summit is attached in the form of a speakers guide. Speakers, panels and sessions are still being firmed up, so it is an early version. But it offers a good overview of the summit and of the PitchFork event which is part of the Entrepreneurship Track.

MAK and Kate

Appendix D:
PitchFork Acceptance Email

Dear Jordan,

Thank you for applying to pitch your business opportunity at our PitchFork Challenge with a chance to win \$10,000.

Congratulations! You have been selected to go to the next round which is to pitch on August 15. Please be aware that the judges will eliminate two businesses and two ideas after listening to the pitches on the 15th so we encourage you do your very best to polish your pitch!

Please see the attached documents to help you prepare for August 15 and please reach out and let me know if you need help with your presentation. We are here to support you to be your very best.

Kate

Appendix E:

PitchFork Semi-Final Agenda



PitchFork Challenge
Semi-Final
August 23, 2018
5:00pm-7:00pm

5:00pm-5:30pm	Networking and cocktails
5:30pm-5:35pm	Welcome
5:35pm-5:50pm	Idea Track Presenters: <ul style="list-style-type: none">· Kimberly Kaufman· Juan Rosario· Brenna Morris· John Anderson· Katherine and Kim O'Neill· Taryn Fisher
5:50pm-6:30pm	Business Opportunity Track Presenters <ul style="list-style-type: none">· William Poole: Porter Hill Sweets· Keith McDonald: NH Tap· Heather Holloway: Mill Hollow Works· Dan Profitt: Butcher Pete's Mobile Meat· Linda Rubin: Frisky Cow Farm Products· Laina Barkat: Waywayrd Ark Production· Jordan Scott: Machina Arts· Kira Wadsworth: Elm City Compost Initiative
6:30pm-7:00pm	Networking and cocktails
7:00pm	Event ends

Appendix F:

PitchFork Final Agenda and Script

PitchFork Challenge - Finals

Thursday, September 27, 2018

1:00pm-4:00pm

Event: 2:00pm-4:00pm

The Hannah Grimes Center
25 Roxbury Street, Keene, NH
Roxbury Conference Room

Congratulations to making it to the first ever PitchFork Challenge Finals!

We are so excited to have all of you -judges, businesses, idea generators, MC, and coaches – join us for the PitchFork Challenge Finale! Thank you for all of your diligence and hard work that has gotten us to this point!

The final event is similar to the lead up events, except that Clay Adams will be the event MC and will facilitate the Q&A section with the judges and the presenters. Judges will have the first opportunity to ask questions, if there is time remaining, a question from the audience will be accepted.

This event will also be 360 live streamed on You Tube. You can tell your family and friends who are not able to make it to Radically Rural to watch for the link on HGC's Facebook page to watch you pitch!

Business Idea Track Information:

- Each presenter will have 2 minutes to pitch their idea without a power point presentation. The pitch is based solely on the crafting of your words.
- After each presentation, there will be two minutes for Q&A time from the judges. Clay Adams will facilitate the Q&A portion.

Business Opportunity Track Information:

- Each presenters will have five minutes to present with a pitch deck.
- After each presentation, there will be five minutes for Q&A time from the judges. Clay Adams will facilitate the Q&A portion.
- The judges will be thinking about the following items when scoring your pitch: Traction, Team, Market, Product, Location, and Pitch performance.

Roles:

Event MC:

Clay Adams, President/CEO Mascoma Bank

Judge:

Jim Verzino, Entrepreneur in Residence Windham Grows

Judge: Andrea O'Brien, Sustainability Director Manchester SBDC
Judge: Patrick Knittle, CFO Against the Grain
Judge: Peter Hansel, President Filtrine
Judge: Laurel Adams, President Regional Economic Development Center
Serving Southern New Hampshire

Timeline:

1:00pm Arrival: Presenters, Judges, MC, HGC staff, and volunteers
1:15pm Photos (presenters by group, judges and MC)
1:30pm Doors open for RR attendees
2:00pm Clay Adams: Welcome, flow of the event, intro judges, and voting

Business Idea Track Presentations:

2 minutes for presentation, 2 minutes for Q&A, 1 minute for transition

2:10pm: Juan Rosario
2:15pm: Brenna Morris
2:20pm: John Anderson
2:25pm: Kate and Kim O'Neill
2:30pm Clay Adams: Thank you to the Will-Be Entrepreneurs for presenting their ideas. Don't forget to vote.

Business Opportunity Track Presentations:

5 minutes for presentation, 5 minutes for Q&A, 1 minute for transition/scoring

2:32pm: Dan Profitt, Butcher Pete's Mobile Meats
2:43pm: Heather Holloway, Mill Hollow Works
2:54pm: Keith McDonald, NH Tap
3:05pm: Albert Diemand, Elm City Compost Initiative
3:16pm: Jordon Scott, Machina Arts
3:27pm: Linda Rubin, Frisky Cow Gelato
3:38pm: Clay Adams: Close, thank you, voting reminder
3:40pm: Time for tastings and voting
4:00pm PitchFork Challenge ends and the judges will deliberate in the Buckminster conference room on the lower level. Kate will pick up the boxes and count the idea votes.
5:00pm CONNECT Event
6:50pm Clay Adams (\$10,000 award) and Chris Masiello (People's Choice Award) will announce the PitchFork winners

Timeline with Clay's Script:

Timeline:

1:00pm	Arrival: Presenters, Judges, MC, HGC staff, and volunteers
1:15pm	Photos (presenters by group, judges and MC)
1:30pm	Doors open for RR attendees
2:00pm	Clay Adams: Welcome, flow of the event, intro judges, and voting process for Idea Track

CLAY: Welcome to the inaugural Radically Rural Summit created by the Hannah Grimes Center and the Keene Sentinel and welcome to the PitchFork Challenge Finals! We are so happy you are here. I'm Clay Adams, president/CEO of Mascoma Bank and I have the pleasure to MC this event today. Mascoma Bank, along with TD Bank Foundation, and Masiello Insurance, are happy to support this session of Radically Rural.

I would like to introduce our judges: (there will be name signs for each judge)

- *Jim Verzino, Director and Entrepreneur in Residence Windham Grows*
- *Andrea O'Brien, Sustainability Director Manchester SBDC*
- *Patrick Knittle, CFO Against the Grain*
- *Peter Hansel, President Filtrine*
- *Laurel Adams, President Regional Economic Development Center Serving Southern New Hampshire*

The PitchFork Challenge is a business pitch competition focused on supporting the rural entrepreneurial ecosystem. It was intentionally created to provide money and momentum to increase the rate of rural startups by supporting the idea phase and the early challenging years of being a startup. We created the PitchFork program in 2016 in response to the low startup rates in rural areas after the great recession. This is not just another pitch competition, but a great way to jumpstart ideas, connections, and small businesses. We'll share all that we learned in putting this challenge together so you can take it back to your rural area and create something similar, but also unique to your region. The PitchFork Challenge How To Guide is available on the Hannah Grimes Center's website. We hope today's event will inspire more rural entrepreneurs everywhere to start a business.

The people presenting today have successfully made it through three judging rounds! (clap)

Today, we will have four will-be entrepreneurs present their business ideas. They are not fully formed business, just yet, but in the all-important idea phase! You, the audience will decide who from the idea track will receive the \$1,000 People's Choice Award by voting with the PitchFork token each of you received when you checked in

today (hold up the PitchFork paper token). There are boxes in the back of the room for you to vote after the event. Each idea track presenter will present their idea for two minutes with some time for the judges to ask questions from the presenter afterwards.

After the idea track round, we will hear business pitches from six local entrepreneurs. All of these businesses are less than three years old and are in the critical startup phase. And again, there will be time for Q&A afterwards.

A quick reminder, to please make sure your phone is turned off! We would hate for a phone to ring, ding, or sing in the middle of someone's pitch.

Alright, let's get started with the idea round and welcome our first business idea presenter...

- *Announce each person (clap them up)*
- *Facilitate the 2 minute Q&A (Kate will time this)*
- *Thank the presenter and judges (the hook to end the Q&A time)*
- *Repeat*

Business Idea Track Presentations

2 minutes for presentation, 2 minutes for Q&A, 1 minute for transition

2:10pm: Juan Rosario
2:15pm: Brenna Morris
2:20pm: John Anderson
2:25pm: Kate and Kim O'Neill
2:30pm Clay Adams: Thank you to the Will-Be Entrepreneurs for presenting their ideas.

CLAY: Thank you Juan, Brenna, John, Kate and Kim for presenting your business ideas. Remember, all of you will have an opportunity to vote at the end of today's session for the idea you would like to see win the \$1,000 People's Choice Award. That award will be announced this evening at CONNECT.

Next, we'll have six entrepreneurs present for five minutes for their chance to win \$10,000! We will have time for Q&A from our judges afterwards. Without further ado, let's welcome the first presenter...

- *Announce each person and business name (clap them up)*
- *Facilitate the 5 minute Q&A (Kate will time this)*
- *Thank the presenter and judges (the hook to end the Q&A time)*
- *Repeat*

Business Opportunity Track Presentations

5 minutes for presentation, 5 minutes for Q&A, 1 minute for transition/scoring

2:32pm:	Dan Profitt, Butcher Pete's Mobile Meats
2:43pm:	Heather Holloway, Mill Hollow Works
2:54pm:	Keith McDonald, NH Tap
3:05pm:	Albert Diemand, Elm City Compost Initiative
3:16pm:	Jordon Scott, Machina Arts
3:27pm:	Linda Rubin, Frisky Cow Gelato
3:38pm:	Clay: Closing, thank you, and voting

CLAY: Thank you to the entrepreneurs for their compelling business pitches. Let's give all of the presenters and our judges a big round of applause! (clap)

Thank you, to all of you for attending Radically Rural and supporting small business entrepreneurs. We hope you have enjoyed listening to the pitches. In closing, remember that the audience decides who will win the \$1,000 People's Choice Award. The judges will decide the winner of the \$10,000 cash prize. Both will be announced this evening at CONNECT.

Make sure you cast your vote in the boxes in the back of the room by 4pm. Take advantage of tasting the Bundt Sister's bundt cakes and Linda Rubin's Frisky Cow Gelato as you vote. We'll see you at CONNECT and see who the winners are in just a little bit.

3:40pm	Time for tasting and voting
4:00pm	PitchFork Challenge Finals end and the judges deliberate in the Buckminster conference room on the lower level. Kate will pick up the boxes and count the idea votes.
5:00pm	CONNECT Event at KSC's Mabel Brown Room
6:50pm	Clay Adams (\$10,000 award) and Chris Masiello (People's Choice Award) will announce the PitchFork winners.

Contact Information

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