



***For Immediate Release***

Contact: Elizabeth Skinner

Phone: (814) 898-6500

E-mail: [elizabeth.skinner@ebizitpa.org](mailto:elizabeth.skinner@ebizitpa.org)

## ***Erie KIZ Kicks Off Third Annual Erie County College Business Plan Contest***

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**ERIE, PA (November 7, 2007)** --- The Erie Keystone Innovation Zone (KIZ) has officially kicked off the Third Annual Erie County College Business Plan Competition giving local college students the opportunity to compete for big cash giveaways while supporting redevelopment and expansion efforts in the community.

Full-time and part-time undergraduate and graduate students currently enrolled in any of the four Erie area colleges – Mercyhurst College, Gannon University, Edinboro University, and Penn State Erie, The Behrend College – are invited to participate in the competition. Individual students and integrated student teams from engineering, business, the arts and other disciplines gain a chance of winning by developing a brief business plan for the 2007-2008 academic year. Mixed undergraduate and graduate teams with business mentors are encouraged.

To enter, students must submit a two to three page concept paper by December 7, 2007. Entrants must have a new business concept. New enterprises, new technology development, and existing company expansion or turnarounds are eligible and encouraged. Each entry will be judged based on the quality of the business plan, innovation, chance of commercial success and implementation, potential to create jobs, and professionalism of the plan and presentation. Finalists will be invited to present their business ideas before a panel of judges on April 5, 2008.

Participating students are eligible to win \$15,000 in cash prizes provided by the Ben Franklin Technology Center and the Center for eBusiness and Advanced Information Technology (eBizITPA). Awards of \$7,500, \$5,000, and \$2,500 will be given to the top three business plans. Cash prizes may be used for entrepreneurial or educational pursuits.

Additional information can be found online at [www.kizerie.com](http://www.kizerie.com). For further information, contact Ryan Hess at [bizcontest@ebizitpa.org](mailto:bizcontest@ebizitpa.org).

*The Center for eBusiness and Advanced Information Technology (eBizITPA), headquartered in Erie, Pa., is a statewide Ben Franklin Technology Development Authority Initiative, designed to help Pennsylvania enterprises understand and use information technology and e-business tools.*

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