



Reviving dead shopping malls and disconnected suburbs



A mostly vacant Jefferson Plaza shopping center in 2007. STAFF PHOTOS BY JOHN MCCUSKER Shot Tuesday, June 5, 2007. (*John McCusker*)

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By [Katherine Sayre, NOLA.com | The Times-Picayune](#)

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on March 06, 2015 at 3:35 PM

Old assumptions about life in the suburbs are mostly wrong these days.

Big families don't live there anymore. Two-thirds of suburban households are children-free. The aging baby boomers there feel disconnected. The privacy once offered by a cozy cul-de-sac to raise a family isn't so alluring anymore.

The flight of the wealthy from overcrowded cities has been reversed. For 10 years now, more Americans in poverty live in the suburbs than in cities.

Ellen Dunham-Jones, Georgia Tech architecture and design professor and a researcher in rethinking the suburbs, said in a speech in New Orleans on Friday that within that dim picture lies an opportunity -- a chance to bring urban renewal philosophy to the most visual symbols of suburban decay.

Dying malls, half-vacant strip malls, beat-up big-boxes.

"We think of the suburbs as a leafy, green, healthy place to raise a family and in many respects there are lovely, wonderful, leafy suburbs that will hold their value for a long time, but most of those were built in the '20s," Dunham-Jones said. "The post-war suburbs have not been aging very well."

Her research, she said, has focused on "what do you do with dead malls, dying big boxes, aging office parks, dying commercial strip corridors."

The United States is figuring it out, bit-by-bit. Dunham-Jones said she co-wrote a book on the issue in 2009. She had 80 case studies at the time. Today, her database has 1,200 examples of old retail centers converted into more sustainable, densely developed communities.

Dunham-Jones' spoke at a meeting organized by the Urban Land Institute. She talked to a room full of city planners, developers and public leaders at the Regional Planning Commission's office near the Orleans-Jefferson parish line.

She said there are three approaches to redeveloping old retail spots: revamp existing buildings, start fresh with new buildings or return to green space.

In one example, Willingboro, N.J., took a struggling commercial strip and removed one building while adding green space. A Woolworth's store became a library, a Sears became a jobs center. A community college moved in. "They created a town center without really doing much, not spending an enormous amount of money, but relocalizing that community from what had been chain stores now into a local place," she said.

In a community six miles outside Denver, a 100-acre mall was divided into 22 blocks with walkable streets, retail, apartments and office space. In a Minnesota town, a strip mall built on top of a wetland before the Clean Water Act was in place was removed. A lake was restored. The lake attracted the first new private housing investments in the neighborhood in 40 years. The waterfront property attracted developers.

Today, one-third of enclosed shopping malls are considered dead or dying, she said.

Jerry Bologna, Jefferson Parish Economic Development Commission executive director, pointed to three retail properties that are taking on a new life: the former Metairie nightlife hotspot Fat City, the once-vacant 2424 Manhattan Boulevard shopping center and the Jefferson Plaza shopping center at Causeway Boulevard and Jefferson Highway.

Jefferson Plaza sits under-used, covered in graffiti on vacant storefronts, he said. But the property carries the potential to have a big impact.

It's only a couple of blocks from Oschner Medical Center, which employs more than 13,000 people, he said, and has become an international health care destination. Visitors on the way from the planned airport terminal, set to be finished by 2018, will drive past Jefferson Plaza, he said.

"This is one of the reasons we're really going to tackle this," Bologna said. "We have the opportunity here to redevelop this property as mixed-use."

Development group The Feil Organization is in the process of acquiring Jefferson Plaza now, he said. The Feil Organization has several properties in the area, including the New Orleans Costco and Lakeside Shopping Center in Metairie.

Bologna said for last December's holiday shopping season, total sales tax revenues in Jefferson Parish were up by 8 percent -- but revenues were down at every major shopping mall in the parish.



Metairie development district would control \$1.2 million fund



18th Street in Fat City in Metairie runs into the back of Lakeside Shopping Center. Officials say the area could benefit by the creation of a Downtown Development District that could allocate funds to capital improvement projects -- an idea under consideration by a board that could be formed if the Jefferson Parish Council votes in support of it on March 3, 2015. *(Chris Granger, NOLA.com / The Times-Picayune)*

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By [Adriane Quinlan, NOLA.com | The Times-Picayune](#)

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on March 03, 2015 at 5:26 PM, updated March 03, 2015 at 6:04 PM

Fat City advocates are considering modeling a new taxing district on one in New Orleans, where the **Downtown Development District** has worked since 1974 to scrub up a 1¼-square-mile sector to attract new investment and brighten city life. On Wednesday (March 4), the **Jefferson Parish Council** will weigh the first step: Creating a 9-member board to oversee development in the **Metairie** area that includes Fat City and Lakeside Shopping Center.

An increasingly popular tool for planners, development districts create a permanent government structure to focus on a core area. They have authority to allocate public spending and to ask voters for

tax increases for work in the district. "When you want to take a neighborhood to the next level, this is what you do," Councilwoman Cynthia Lee-Sheng said.

Lee-Sheng's district includes the area under consideration: from Veterans Memorial Boulevard to West Esplanade Avenue between Causeway Boulevard and Division Street. The call for the development district came in a 2013 report by the Fat City Advisory Committee, the members of which have since hopped into a non-profit known as Fat City Friends.

A Louisiana law dating from 2008 created a tax increment financing district with the same boundaries, and Jefferson Finance Director Tim Palmatier said the fund now holds \$1.2 million. The proposed development district board would have control of that money, said Fat City Friends Project Manager Warren Surcouf III.

"At Fat City Friends right now, we make recommendations. We don't necessarily have the authority to move funds around," Surcouf said.

The added authority would let the proposed board do everything from extending bicycle lanes and adding garbage cans to managing a fund for façade improvements, Surcouf said. It also could provide Fat City with the McGuffin that local business owners have long been hunting: a government-funded parking garage. (No promises, though: "We wouldn't want to paint ourselves into that corner," Surcouf said. "At the same time, we know there is an issue that needs to be resolved.")



Development districts such as this are a trend across the United States, although the New Orleans Downtown Development District was the country's first, said Kurt Weigle, president of the New Orleans district. "In the last 15 years, there has been a mushrooming of organizations just like ours because they have been shown to be so effective at creating and sustainable development in downtowns," Weigle said. "I think they are on the right path, following the lead of so many places across the world," Weigle said of Fat City boosters.

The New Orleans entity generally encompasses the Central Business District and Warehouse District. Businesses and residents there pay about 10 percent in extra property taxes, Weigle said, to ensure a higher quality of life and business.

"I think that at least partly due to the investments of the downtown district, we've seen \$6.5 billion in new investment in downtown," Weigle said. "We helped to create a better investment environment downtown, through cleaning, public safety and the promotion of downtown to create a place where people want to be."

But focusing public assets in a single area has drawbacks, according to a 2008 report by a government watchdog on special tax districts in Jefferson Parish. The Bureau of Government research **found** that a special district can redirect public money away from more urgent needs, and that even if districts are successful, they can still have a negative affect on the parish overall. The report said successful special districts might draw customers from businesses outside of their boundaries, and an increase in traffic can require more cash for infrastructure repairs, which would come from the parish general fund.

Still, focusing on the area around Fat City could help Jefferson Parish overall, said Jerry Bologna, executive director of the Jefferson Economic Development Commission. "Sometimes to put an increased focus in one area, it does benefit the parish as a whole," Bologna said. "I think Fat City -- because of its location, because of its proximity to the interstate to major thoroughfares -- it provides us with a really attractive location. I think if we push this increased focus on it, it only benefits the entire parish later with increased revenues and tax collections. The whole parish stands to benefit from that."

In Metairie, the proposed district's governing board would be appointed by local officials. One member each would be named by the parish president, sheriff, the 94th District member of the Louisiana House of Representatives, the 9th Senate District senator and each of the Parish Council's two at-large members. The council's 5th District member, now Lee-Sheng, would have three appointments.

"We're just setting up the board to explore this, to start talking about these issues," said Lee-Sheng. "There might not be anything."



PRESS RELEASE
February 27, 2015

New Neurology Center Opens in Jefferson Parish *JEDCO helps finance project*

(Metairie, LA) -- [The Jefferson Parish Economic Development Commission \(JEDCO\)](#) is pleased to announce the grand opening of Spectrum Neurology Center, a state-of-the-art medical facility, in Metairie. Pioneered by Dr. Troy Beaucoudray, this new neurology center provides patients with a high level of quality care in Jefferson Parish.

Spectrum Neurology Center employs five people, all focused on providing a multi-disciplinary approach to the treatment of neurological disorders. Specializing in the diagnosis and treatment of painful neurological conditions, Dr. Beaucoudray offers his patients a detailed neurological evaluation, high quality diagnostic testing and numerous treatment options for their symptoms. Very few specialists in the state of Louisiana have his combination of training, which is an asset to this region.

JEDCO played a vital role in establishing this new medical practice. The organization provided all outside financing for the project, which included real estate acquisition, renovations, the purchase of equipment and working capital. Of the more than \$707,600 investment, JEDCO financed over \$636,800 of it.

"Jefferson Parish is home to some of Louisiana's finest healthcare providers and Spectrum Neurology is yet another addition," says Jerry Bologna, JEDCO's executive director. "This company was created out of a vision to do what's best for the patients in Jefferson Parish and we are proud to have played a role in bringing that dream to fruition. We look forward to watching Spectrum Neurology grow and provide high quality care to the people of our community for many years to come."

"The most frustrating part of the current field of medicine is the inability to be a doctor," says Dr. Beaucoudray. "Due to reimbursement cuts, reduced revenue and as a doctor previously working in a group practice, I became a production line and had to see more and more patients to compensate for this loss of revenue. As a result, this produced longer wait times and less quality time with the patient. Now as a business owner, with the help of JEDCO, I can control my overhead and revenue stream and actually generate the same revenue while seeing fewer patients. As a result, I am getting get back to the basics of being a doctor by offering the simplest aspect to my patients: quality time."

Spectrum Neurology Center is located at 4213 Teuton Street in Metairie near the East Jefferson General Hospital. The company opened in early January.

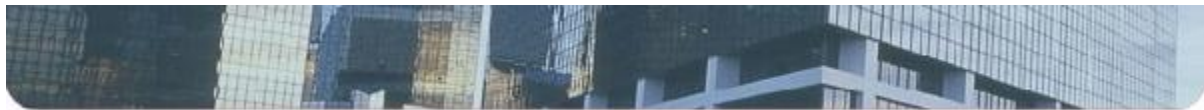
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About JEDCO: JEDCO is an independent, yet complementary arm of Jefferson Parish government with the main objective of attracting, growing and creating new business in our area. Since its inception in 1987, JEDCO has aided thousands of companies through [business incubator](#) and [loan programs, tax incentives and rebate programs, workforce development](#) and information services. While dedicated to assisting existing Jefferson Parish businesses, JEDCO's efforts also target the recruitment of new businesses for the area.

About Dr. Troy Beaucoudray: Dr. Troy Beaucoudray was born and raised in the New Orleans area. He completed his Neurology residency training at Tulane University and served as chief resident in his final year. Following residency he completed a fellowship in Clinical Neurophysiology/ Neuromuscular Disease at the University of Texas Medical School in Houston. He received specialized training in EMG/NCV and the diagnosis and treatment of disorders of the muscle and nerve. Eager to expand treatment options for his patients, he then completed a second fellowship in Interventional and medical pain management at Louisiana State University (LSU) Health Science Center in New Orleans. With his advanced specialized training in Neurology, Neurophysiology, Interventional Pain Management and his previous post graduate training in chiropractic, Dr. Beaucoudray has the opportunity to offer his patients a multi-disciplinary approach to the treatment of painful neurological conditions.

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Neurology Center opens in Metairie

By: Maria Clark, Reporter February 27, 2015 0

The Spectrum Neurology Center located at 4213 Teutro St., which specializes in a multi-disciplinary approach to the treatment of neurological disorders, opened today in Metairie.

The center is pioneered by Dr. Troy Beaucoudray, who specializes in the diagnosis and treatment of painful neurological conditions. The clinic was largely financed with the help of Jefferson Economic Development Commission.

The organization provided \$636,800 in financing towards real estate acquisition, renovations, the purchase of equipment and working capital.

The total investment was more than \$707,600. The center, which is located near the East Jefferson General Hospital, now employs five people.

In regards to the new practice Dr. Beaucoudray said, "The most frustrating part of the current field of medicine is the inability to be a doctor. Due to reimbursement cuts, reduce revenue and as a doctor previously working in a group practice, I became a production line and had to see more and more patients to compensate for this loss of revenue."

He added that now as a business owner he is better able to control his overhead and revenue stream and generate the same revenue while seeing fewer patients.

Read more: <http://neworleanscitybusiness.com/blog/2015/02/27/neurology-center-opens-in-metairie/#ixzz3VQfQxx6X>



PRESS RELEASE
March 12, 2015

2015 January/February Newsletter: Entrepalooza

(Jefferson Parish, LA) -- At JEDCO, we like to kick off the first quarter of the New Year with a bang and what better way to do that than with a battle of the brains behind some of our most innovative startups? We're in the third year of the [JEDCO Challenge](#) powered by [First NBC Bank](#). It is a Jefferson Parish-based pitch competition held during [New Orleans Entrepreneur Week \(NOEW\) presented by IBERIABANK](#). Each company in the competition will have seven minutes to pitch. There is \$20,000 on the table and a bundle of business-boosting services to help the winner grow his/her company. We're less than two weeks away from the big event!



Over the last two months, we've dedicated time and resources to this competition, making sure that we put on a great showcase for our community. And we begin by choosing the right startups to compete. Through a rigorous review process, we chose five companies that are changing our world for the better and they all have some ties to Jefferson Parish:

[AxoSim Technologies](#), [Cook Me Somethin' Mister](#), [InnoGenomics Technologies](#), [myMix Nutrition](#), and [Sock Spot](#). We can't wait to feature them later this month, but if you can't wait either, all of the company profiles, which include spotlight videos, can be found on our [JEDCO Challenge](#) website.

We also nominated three of our finalists for a chance to participate in [The Big Idea](#), the culminating event of New Orleans Entrepreneur Week. There are 12 spots available for that competition and 22 companies vying to make it in. That's where you, the community, can help. [All 22 companies are featured on NOLA.com](#). You can read about them, watch their pitches, and most importantly, you can vote once a day for your favorites. We've nominated [AxoSim](#), [Cook Me Somethin' Mister](#), and [Sock Spot](#).

We hope you will join us for the [JEDCO Challenge](#)! Not only is it a great opportunity for you to see some incredibly talented entrepreneurs with ties to our community, but also, you'll have a say in which company will walk away with the top prize by texting your vote at the competition. **It's happening on Monday, March 23rd at Southport Hall. The event starts at 2:00 and it's completely free to the public. Register through**



NOEW.org. You'll be asked to create a login and then, click on the star next to the JEDCO Challenge to add the event to your NOEW schedule.

JEDCO is here as a resource for our local businesses. Whether you're an entrepreneur, a small business owner, or part of a large company, we work with you to make sure your business thrives in Jefferson Parish through a vast array of tools available to help you grow. Visit our website at www.jedco.org to learn more about what we can do for you!

Economic Accolades

Congratulations to Kristen Preau Moore of Cook Me Somethin' Mister, one of our 2015 JEDCO Challenge finalists! Her company was recognized by the U.S. Chamber of Commerce as a [2015 Blue Ribbon Small Business Award](#) winner!

We'd like to give a big JEDCO welcome to our newest commissioner, Brian Heiden, and our 2015 Board Officers: Paul Rivera (Chairman), Mark Madderra (Vice Chairman), Bruce Layburn (Treasurer) and Mario Bazile (Secretary). See our full list of commissioners [here](#).

Business Blurbs

Boomtown Casino New Orleans hosted the [grand opening](#) of its new 150-room hotel back in January. It was a \$20 million investment!

Entergy Louisiana powered up a state-of-the-art 550-megawatt [natural gas unit](#) at the Ninemile Point Plant in January. This unit uses 30% less fuel than existing natural gas combustion units.

We welcomed [Spectrum Neurology](#), a state-of-the-art medical practice, to Metairie last month. JEDCO assisted with the financing of the project.

The City of Kenner will be the [first stop](#) of the 2015 Association of Volleyball Professionals Beach Tour on May 22nd-24th!

The City of Kenner is seeking proposals from developers interested in giving [Laketown a new look](#). The deadline to submit proposals is May 8, 2015.

Upcoming Events

The JEDCO Challenge is less than two weeks away. We hope to see you at Southport Hall on March 23rd at 2:00 PM. Check out www.jedco.org/challenge for details about how to register.

While we're on the subject of entrepreneurship, feel free to take a look at all of the events happening during [New Orleans Entrepreneur Week \(NOEW\)](#). The festival runs March 20-27, 2015. You can add the JEDCO Challenge, and any other event, to your NOEW schedule by clicking on the star next to the event on the calendar.

Looking for something fun to do this Friday night? The [Jefferson Chamber of Commerce](#) is hosting their Annual Gala at the Saints Practice Facility. If you're looking to get your groove on in the glow of the Lombardi Trophy, this is the best way to do it! Find details [here](#).

Young professionals in Jefferson Parish are invited to attend the Jefferson Chamber Young Professionals Trivia Night at Mellow Mushroom on March 25th. Find details, and register, [here](#).



If you haven't gotten your tickets for the [Indy Grand Prix of Louisiana](#), there's still time. The big race happens April 10th - 12th and is expected to bring in over 80,000 people to [NOLA Motorsports Park](#) in a single weekend!

Our next [Prosper Jefferson](#) seminar is scheduled for April 29th at the East Bank Regional Library. [Gambel Communications](#) will present on Social Media Marketing. The event runs from 9:00 - 10:30 AM and it's free to the public. Register at www.jedco.org/events.

Get connected and stay engaged with JEDCO. You can like us on [Facebook](#) and follow us on [Twitter](#) to stay up-to-date on all the latest happenings in the Jefferson Parish business community. Please check out our new [Conference Center Facebook Page](#)!

A big shoutout to all of the JEDCO Challenge sponsors! We couldn't do it without you! [First NBC Bank](#), [365 Connect](#), [Ardyn Thriffiley and Associates](#), [ARPR](#), [Almos Energy](#), [Biz New Orleans](#), [Business Innovation Center at Churchill](#), [Carver](#), [Darden](#), [Koretzsky](#), [Tessier](#), [Finn](#), [Blossman & Areaux, LLC](#), [Cox Communications](#), [Gambel Communications](#), [Jefferson Chamber of Commerce](#), [LSBDC GNOR](#), [MMI Culinary Services](#), [M S Benbow & Associates](#), [Postlethwaite & Netterville](#), [Sandler Training](#), and [Simmons & White](#).

We would also like to thank our supporting partners: The Jefferson Chamber of Commerce, Idea Village, Elmwood Business Association, Goldman Sachs 10,000 Small Businesses, Greater New Orleans, Inc., Jefferson Parish, New Orleans BioInnovation Center, Propeller & 504ward.

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PRESS RELEASE
March 13, 2015

JEDCO Welcomes New Commissioner to the Board *Announces 2015 Officers*

(Avondale, La) - The Jefferson Parish Economic Development Commission (JEDCO) is pleased to introduce the 2015 Board of Commissioners and Board Officers to the community. The individuals who serve on the JEDCO Board represent area business organizations and parish leaders. They work closely with the JEDCO staff to achieve the organization's mission of attracting, retaining and expanding business in Jefferson Parish.



The JEDCO Board of Commissioners appointed Paul Rivera as the 2015 Chairman of the Board. In 2014, he served as the Vice Chair of the JEDCO Board. Paul represents the J.P. Marine Fisheries Advisory Board and he is the Chief Financial Officer for the Jefferson Parish Sheriff's Office, overseeing the finance and budget process, the accounting and payroll functions, and the financial reporting and investment functions. When Paul isn't working, he is active in the community. He has served on a variety of professional and civic associations throughout his career, including the American Institute of Certified Public Accountants, the Louisiana Society of Certified Public Accountants, the Boy Scouts of America, and Visitation of Our Lady Catholic Church in a variety of capacities.

Brian Heiden is the newest commissioner to serve on the JEDCO Board. Nominated by the Jefferson Chamber of Commerce - West Bank, Brian is the Senior Vice President and Commercial Lender at the Manhattan Office of Gulf Coast Bank and Trust. Brian has been a West Bank resident since 1965, serving a variety of local organizations, including the Harvey Canal Industrial Association, the West Bank Rotary Club of Gretna, the West Bank Boys & Girls Club, and the Archbishop Shaw High School Alumni Association. Brian also served on the Crescent City Task Force Commission and the Southeast Louisiana Flood Protection Authority Nomination Committee.



The Jefferson Parish President nominates one representative to serve on the JEDCO Board of Commissioners. The Parish Council nominates seven members and 13 board appointees represent local business organizations. Business representatives serve five years. Those board members nominated by the Parish Council and President serve for the duration of the nominator's term in office.

2015 Board of Commissioners

Nominating Organization

Paul Rivera - Chairman
Mark Madderra - Vice Chairman
Bruce Layburn - Treasurer
Mario Bazile - Secretary

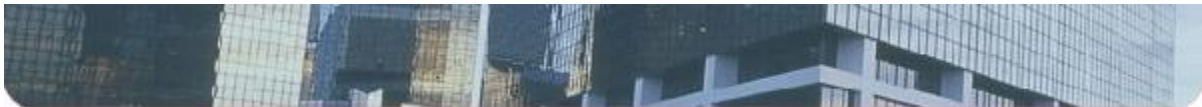
J.P. Marine Fisheries Advisory Board
Apartment Association of Greater N.O.
Home Builders Association
District 5 - Cynthia Lee-Sheng

Jimmy Baum
David Colvin
Tina Dandry-Mayes
Bruce Dantin
Joe Ewell (Past Chair)
Jim Garvey (Past Chair)
Brian Heiden
Greg Jordan (Past Chair)
Roy Gattuso
Steve LaChute
Joe Liss
Dr. Vinicio Madrigal (Past Chair)
Lynda Nungent-Smith (Past Chair)
Bill Peperone (Past Chair)
Mayra Pineda
Mike Rongey
Stan Salathe (Past Chair)

Elmwood Business Association
Jefferson Chamber of Commerce - West Bank
Women Business Council Gulf Coast
District 2 - Paul Johnston
District 3 - Mark Spears
Committee for a Better Jefferson
Jefferson Chamber of Commerce - West Bank
Jefferson Chamber of Commerce - East Bank
District 1 - Ricky Templet
Councilman-at-Large, Division A - Chris Roberts
East Jefferson Business Association
Parish President - John Young
N.O. Metropolitan Association of Realtors
District 4 - Ben Zahn
Hispanic Chamber of Commerce
Councilman-at-Large, Division B - Elton Lagasse
Harvey Canal Industrial Association

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NOEW: DNA testing company wins JEDCO Challenge

By: Maria Clark, Reporter March 24, 2015 0

DNA testing company InnoGenomics Technologies won \$80,000 in cash and business services at the third annual JEDCO Challenge on Monday.

InnoGenomics Technologies is headquartered in Jefferson Parish and develops genetic testing solutions used in forensic science. The company is currently developing a liquid biopsy method used to detect and monitor cancer through a minimally invasive blood test.

Dr. Sudhir Sinha, the president and CEO of InnoGenomics Technologies, previously served as the lab director for a DNA testing laboratory called ReliaGene Technologies. The company was acquired by Orchid Cellmark in 2007.

The JEDCO Challenge is a pitch competition during New Orleans Entrepreneur Week that highlights startups with ties to Jefferson Parish. Dr. Lowry Curley, of AxoSim Technologies, Kristen Preau Moore of Cook Me Somethin' Mister, Crutcher Reiss of myMix Nutrition and Neil Pierson of Sock Spot also competed for the prize package.

InnoGenomics Technologies' prize included cash, mentoring services, free office space, advertising, public relations assistance, sales training and accounting services.

InnoGenomics Technologies Wins The JEDCO Challenge



By 3-24-15

JEFFERSON PARISH, LA – A company that developed a blood test that can save lives won the 2015 JEDCO Challenge Monday afternoon.



The Jefferson Parish Economic Development Commission (JEDCO) and First NBC Bank, in partnership with the Jefferson Chamber, announced InnoGenomics Technologies as the winner of the third annual JEDCO Challenge.

Jonathan Tabak, the company's Vice President, delivered the winning pitch.

InnoGenomics Technologies is dedicated to the development of innovative genetic testing solutions that solve crimes and save lives. The company's patented technology has multiple applied science applications, including the ability to enable forensic scientists to unlock answers from the most challenging DNA evidence. Currently, the company is developing

a liquid biopsy method to detect and monitor cancer through a minimally invasive blood test. InnoGenomics' scientific team has in-depth expertise in molecular biology, forensic genetics and molecular diagnostics; and the company's management team has over 85 combined years of experience in successful biotechnology commercialization. InnoGenomics is focused on harnessing the power of genomics to transform healthcare and forensic investigations.

Dr. Sudhir Sinha, the President & CEO of InnoGenomics Technologies, previously established and served as the President and Lab Director of ReliaGene Technologies, an accredited DNA testing laboratory located in Jefferson Parish until it was acquired by Orchid Cellmark in 2007. ReliaGene was a JEDCO success story. Dr. Sinha started the venture through the JEDCO incubator in 1991.

"We couldn't be more excited about the high level of innovation and excellence showcased through the JEDCO Challenge this year," says Jerry Bologna, JEDCO Executive Director. "All of the startups that participated in this event represent the future of business in Jefferson Parish. We look forward to watching them grow and thrive in our community. We are also very excited to celebrate the successes of InnoGenomics Technologies. This company has proven itself as a true innovator in its industry and we are excited about the potential for the positive impact that InnoGenomics will have on Jefferson Parish and the rest of the world."

"The InnoGenomics team is thrilled to have won this prestigious competition," Jonathan Tabak says. "It validates our business concept while reinforcing our strong ties to Jefferson Parish. We want to thank JEDCO for this tremendous opportunity."

Held during New Orleans Entrepreneur Week (NOEW) presented by IBERIABANK, which is produced by The Idea Village, the JEDCO Challenge is a pitch competition to highlight entrepreneurs with ties to Jefferson Parish. Out of 33 applicants, five startup reps including Dr. Lowry Curley, PhD of AxoSim Technologies, Kristen Preau Moore of Cook Me Somethin' Mister, Crutcher Reiss of myMix Nutrition, Neil Pierson of Sock Spot and Jonathan Tabak, InnoGenomics Technologies, were chosen to compete for the Jefferson Parish prize package.

The entrepreneurs pitched to over 100 people at Southport Hall Monday afternoon. The winner was partially chosen by a panel of Jefferson Parish business leaders: Betsie Gambel, founder of Gambel Communications, Anoop Jain, founder of Humanure Power, Ray Areaux, founding partner of Carver, Darden, Koretzky, Tessier, Finn, Blossman & Areaux, Kerry Kirby, founder and CEO of 365 Connect and Fred Beebe, a senior vice president at First NBC Bank.

The judges scored the pitches on presentation, innovation, ability to answer questions effectively, Jefferson Parish impact and company scalability. The entrepreneurs also received points based on a crowd vote and business plans submitted in advance of Tuesday's pitch competition.

InnoGenomics Technologies won a prize package worth almost \$80,000 in cash and business services, including:

- \$22,500 in cash thanks to First NBC Bank, Postlethwaite & Netterville, 365 Connect, MMI Culinary Services, Atmos Energy, Daul Insurance and Simmons & White.
- 25 hours of strategic and competitive intelligence work from Ardyn Thriffiley & Associates
- Ad placement for three, half page ads to run in Biz New Orleans at the end of this year
- One year of free office space in the JEDCO Business Innovation Center
- Legal services through Carver, Darden, Koretzky, Tessier, Finn, Blossman & Areaux's Intellectual Property Practice Group
- 10 hours of insurance consultation with Daul Insurance
- 20 hours of PR services with Gambel Communications
- Membership with the Jefferson Chamber, an introductory meeting with Chamber President Todd Murphy and recognition at the Chamber's Small Business Luncheon.
- Accounting services with LaPorte CPAs and Business Services
- In-kind engineering services from M S Benbow & Associates
- One year of weekly sales training with Sandler Training
- Business consultation with Simmons & White
- The second and third places winners will also receive PR assistance from AR/PR.

"The JEDCO Challenge provides a wonderful platform for the companies participating," adds First NBC Bank President & CEO Ashton Ryan. "Not only does it connect these entrepreneurs with businessmen and women who can help them grow and achieve success in Jefferson Parish, but it also gives our community a real opportunity to see the true talent, energy and creativity present in our community right now."



Genetic test firm wins competition

Written by [A media source](#) // Tuesday, 24 March 2015 20:20 //

A company that is developing a blood test to detect and monitor cancer won the 2015 Jefferson Economic Development Commission Challenge and close to \$80,000 in cash and business services that go with the top prize.

InnoGenomics Technologies' current services also include genetic testing that allows forensic scientists to unravel even the most challenging DNA evidence. The company is led by President and Chief Executive Officer Sudhir Sinha, who previously established ReliaGene Technologies, a DNA testing lab in Jefferson Parish. ReliaGene began in the JEDCO incubator in 1991. Orchid Cellmark bought the lab in 2007.

InnoGenomics Vice President Jonathan Tabak made the winning pitch in the contest, which attracted 33 competitors.

Tabak said the win validates the company's business concept and reinforces the firm's strong ties to Jefferson Parish.

InnoGenomics' management has more than 85 years combined experience in commercializing biotechnology. The company's scientists have expertise in molecular

THE NEW ORLEANS ADVOCATE

InnoGenomics wins \$80,000 JEDCO Challenge

InnoGenomics claims \$80K for top Jefferson Parish pitch

ADVOCATE STAFF REPORT

March 25, 2015

[0 Comments](#)

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InnoGenomics Technologies' services include genetic testing that allows forensic scientists to unravel even the most challenging DNA evidence. The company is led by President and Chief Executive Officer Sudhir Sinha, who previously established ReliaGene Technologies, a DNA testing lab in Jefferson Parish. ReliaGene began in the JEDCO incubator in 1991. Orchid Cellmark bought the lab in 2007.

InnoGenomics Vice President Jonathan Tabak made the winning pitch in the contest, which attracted 33 competitors.

The blood test is still in the research-and-development phase, Tabak said. InnoGenomics is somewhere between two and four years from completing the clinical trials required for U.S. Food and Drug Administration approval, and global acceptance of the test.

The company also plans to offer the service as a Laboratory Developed Test, under a less burdensome set of regulations that will allow InnoGenomics to offer the test through partners like Ochsner and regional hospitals, Tabak said.

"The main reason we were so excited to win the pitch competition yesterday was that we can use those funds to pay the administrative costs ... involved with obtaining cancer patient blood samples to further our research and development," Tabak said.

InnoGenomics' management has more than 85 years of combined experience in commercializing biotechnology. The company's scientists have expertise in molecular biology, forensic genetics and molecular diagnostics. The company's DNA testing already is generating some revenue, and InnoGenomics' plans call for expanding its customer base for the testing while pushing forward with the cancer detection and monitoring technology.

The pitch competition is held during New Orleans Entrepreneur Week and highlights entrepreneurs with ties to Jefferson Parish.

Five startups were chosen out of 33 applicants to compete in the event at Southport Hall. Lowry Curley, of AxoSim Technologies; Kristen Preau Moore, of Cook Me Somethin' Mister; Crutcher Reiss, of myMix Nutrition; and Neil Pierson, of Sock Spot, were the others who made pitches.

Judges scored the pitches on presentation, innovation, answering questions effectively, impact on the parish and scalability. The entrepreneurs also received points based on a crowd vote and business plans.

"We couldn't be more excited about the high level of innovation and excellence showcased through the JEDCO Challenge this year. All of the startups that participated in this event represent the future of business in Jefferson Parish. We look forward to watching them grow and thrive in our community," JEDCO Executive Director Jerry Bologna said.

The prize package included:

\$22,500 in cash thanks to First NBC Bank, Postlethwaite & Netterville, 365 Connect, MMI Culinary Services, Atmos Energy, Daul Insurance and Simmons & White.

One year of free office space in the JEDCO Business Innovation Center.

Legal, insurance and accounting services; public relations help; membership in the Jefferson Chamber; and sales training.

InnoGenomics Technologies Wins Annual JEDCO Pitch Competition

[Julia Ballard](#) | March 24, 2015 | [0 Comments](#)

[Jefferson Parish Economic Development Commission](#) (JEDCO) collaborated with First NBC Bank for the second consecutive year to host the annual [JEDCO Challenge](#), a pitch competition showcasing the brightest entrepreneurs living and working in Jefferson Parish with unique ideas that have the high potential to grow and positively impact the area.

JEDCO has also partnered with Jefferson Parish to make the third annual event a success. Out of over 30 applications, five companies have made it to the final pitch, which took place yesterday (March 23) during [New Orleans Entrepreneur Week](#) (NOEW).



InnoGenomics Technologies won the challenge, taking home the \$20,000 prize. The company is developing innovative new products and solutions for human DNA identification testing, including novel systems designed for testing challenging and compromised forensic samples. The startup hopes its genetic testing solutions will solve crimes and save lives.

AxoSim Technologies, Cook Me Somethin' Mister, myMix Nutrition, and Sock Spot also participated in the 2015 JEDCO Challenge.

"Jefferson Parish is fortunate to have such a dynamic entrepreneurial community and this competition helps to recognize those companies," says Jerry Bologna, JEDCO's Executive Director. "This year's finalists represent a wide range of industries and talent which showcase the diversity and quality of our startup community."



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
March 24, 2015

InnoGenomics Technologies Wins the JEDCO Challenge

(Jefferson Parish, LA) -- A company that has developed a blood test that can save lives won the [2015 JEDCO Challenge](#) Monday afternoon. The Jefferson Parish Economic Development Commission (JEDCO) and First NBC Bank, in partnership with the Jefferson Chamber, are pleased to announce InnoGenomics Technologies as the winner of the third annual JEDCO Challenge. Jonathan Tabak, the company's Vice President, delivered the winning pitch.

[InnoGenomics Technologies](#) is dedicated to the development of innovative genetic testing solutions that solve crimes and save lives. The company's patented technology has multiple applied science applications, including the ability to enable forensic scientists to unlock answers from the most challenging DNA evidence. Currently, the company is developing a liquid biopsy method to detect and monitor cancer through a minimally invasive blood test.



InnoGenomics' scientific team has in-depth expertise in molecular biology, forensic genetics and molecular diagnostics; and the company's management team has over 85 combined years of experience in successful biotechnology commercialization. InnoGenomics is focused on harnessing the power of genomics to transform healthcare and forensic investigations.

Dr. Sudhir Sinha, the President & CEO of InnoGenomics Technologies, previously established and served as the President and Lab Director of ReliaGene Technologies, an accredited DNA testing laboratory located in Jefferson Parish until it was acquired by Orchid Cellmark in 2007. ReliaGene was a JEDCO success story. Dr. Sinha started the venture through the [JEDCO incubator](#) in 1991.

"We couldn't be more excited about the high level of innovation and excellence showcased through the JEDCO Challenge this year. All of the startups that participated in this event represent the future of business in Jefferson Parish. We look forward to watching them grow and thrive in our community," says Jerry Bologna, JEDCO Executive Director. "We are also very excited to celebrate the successes of InnoGenomics Technologies. This company has proven itself as a true innovator in its industry and we are excited about the potential for the positive impact that InnoGenomics will have on Jefferson Parish and the rest of the world."

"The InnoGenomics team is thrilled to have won this prestigious competition," Jonathan Tabak says. "It validates our business concept while reinforcing our strong ties to Jefferson Parish. We want to thank JEDCO for this tremendous opportunity."

Held during New Orleans Entrepreneur Week (NOEW) presented by IBERIABANK, which is produced by The Idea Village, the JEDCO Challenge is a pitch competition to highlight entrepreneurs with ties to Jefferson Parish. Five startups were chosen out of 33 applicants to compete in Tuesday's event at Southport Hall. Dr. Lowry Curley, PhD of AxoSim Technologies, Kristen Preau Moore of Cook Me Somethin' Mister, Crutcher Reiss of myMix Nutrition, and Neil Pierson of Sock Spot joined Tabak to compete for the Jefferson Parish prize package.

The entrepreneurs pitched to over 100 people at Southport Hall Monday afternoon. The winner was partially chosen by a panel of Jefferson Parish business leaders: Betsie Gambel, founder of Gambel Communications, Anoop Jain, founder of Humanure Power, Ray Areaux, founding partner of Carver, Darden, Koretzky, Tessier, Finn, Blossman & Areaux, Kerry Kirby, founder and CEO of 365 Connect, and Fred Beebe, a senior vice president at First NBC Bank.

The judges scored the pitches on presentation, innovation, ability to answer questions effectively, Jefferson Parish impact and company scalability. The entrepreneurs also received points based on a crowd vote and business plans submitted in advance of Tuesday's pitch competition.

InnoGenomics Technologies won a prize package worth almost \$80,000 in cash and business services, including:

- \$22,500 in cash thanks to First NBC Bank, Postlethwaite & Netterville, 365 Connect, MMI Culinary Services, Atmos Energy, Daul Insurance and Simmons & White.
- 25 hours of strategic and competitive intelligence work from Ardyn Thriffily & Associates
- Ad placement for three, half page ads to run in Biz New Orleans at the end of this year
- One year of free office space in the JEDCO Business Innovation Center
- Legal services through Carver, Darden, Koretzky, Tessier, Finn, Blossman & Areaux's Intellectual Property Practice Group
- 10 hours of insurance consultation with Daul Insurance
- 20 hours of PR services with Gambel Communications
- Membership with the Jefferson Chamber, an introductory meeting with Chamber President Todd Murphy and recognition at the Chamber's Small Business Luncheon.
- Accounting services with LaPorte CPAs and Business Services
- In-kind engineering services from M S Benbow & Associates
- One year of weekly sales training with Sandler Training
- Business consultation with Simmons & White
- The second and third places winners will also receive PR assistance from AR/PR

"The JEDCO Challenge provides a wonderful platform for the companies participating," adds First NBC Bank President & CEO Ashton Ryan. "Not only does it connect these entrepreneurs with businessmen and women who can help them grow and achieve success in Jefferson Parish, but it also gives our community a real opportunity to see the true talent, energy and creativity present in our community right now."

The JEDCO Challenge would not have been possible without support from the regional business community. JEDCO would like to sincerely thank everyone who made this event possible in its third year.

SPECIAL THANKS TO OUR 2015 SPONSORS: [First NBC Bank](#), [365 Connect](#), [Ardyn Thriffily and Associates](#), [ARPR](#), [Atmos Energy](#), [Biz New Orleans](#), [Business Innovation Center at Churchill](#), [Carver, Darden, Koretzky, Tessier, Finn, Blossman & Areaux, LLC](#), [Cox Communications](#), [Daul Insurance](#), [Gambel Communications](#), [Jefferson Chamber of Commerce](#), [LaPorte CPAs and Business Advisors](#), [MMI Culinary Services](#), [M S Benbow & Associates](#), [Postlethwaite & Netterville](#), [Sandler Training](#), and [Simmons & White](#).

JEDCO CHALLENGE SUPPORTING PARTNERS: Jefferson Parish, The Jefferson Chamber of Commerce, Idea Village, Elmwood Business Association, Goldman Sachs 10,000 Small Businesses, Gillis, Ellis & Baker,

Greater New Orleans, Inc., New Orleans BioInnovation Center, New Orleans Entrepreneur Week, Propeller & 504ward.

###

About JEDCO: The Jefferson Parish Economic Development Commission (JEDCO) is an independent, yet complementary arm of Jefferson Parish government with the main objective of attracting, growing and creating new business in our area. JEDCO's mission is to proactively influence the economy through the retention and creation of quality jobs, entrepreneurship and investment in Jefferson Parish. Follow JEDCO on Facebook at www.facebook.com/JeffersonParishEconomicDevelopment and Twitter at @JEDCO_News. www.jedco.org

About First NBC Bank:

First NBC Bank received a charter to begin operation from the Louisiana Office of Financial Institutions in May 2006. Through overwhelming support from the local community, the Bank's initial capital footings exceeded \$60 million, which set a record for the largest initial capital raised by a Louisiana chartered institution. There are 31 banking offices on the South and North Shores of the Greater New Orleans metropolitan area. First NBC Bank has been selected as one of the Best Places to Work six times in a row *New Orleans CityBusiness*.

The bank's mission is to deliver world-class service through developing long-term relationships with clients while providing a great place to work for its employees and demonstrating outstanding corporate citizenship within its communities, resulting in exceptional returns for its shareholders. <https://firstnbcbank.com/>

About New Orleans Entrepreneur Week: New Orleans Entrepreneur Week (NOEW), presented by IBERIABANK, is the annual business festival celebrating entrepreneurship, innovation, and advanced thinking in New Orleans. Produced by the Idea Village, NOEW engages a dynamic global community to support growing companies and elevate entrepreneurial successes through eight days of discussion, debate, education, competition, and celebration. This year, NOEW 2015 will take place March 20-27, 2015 and 10,000+ are expected to engage through over 70 events. www.NOEW.org

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THE IDEA VILLAGE
FOR ENTREPRENEURS AND THOSE WHO BELIEVE IN THEM

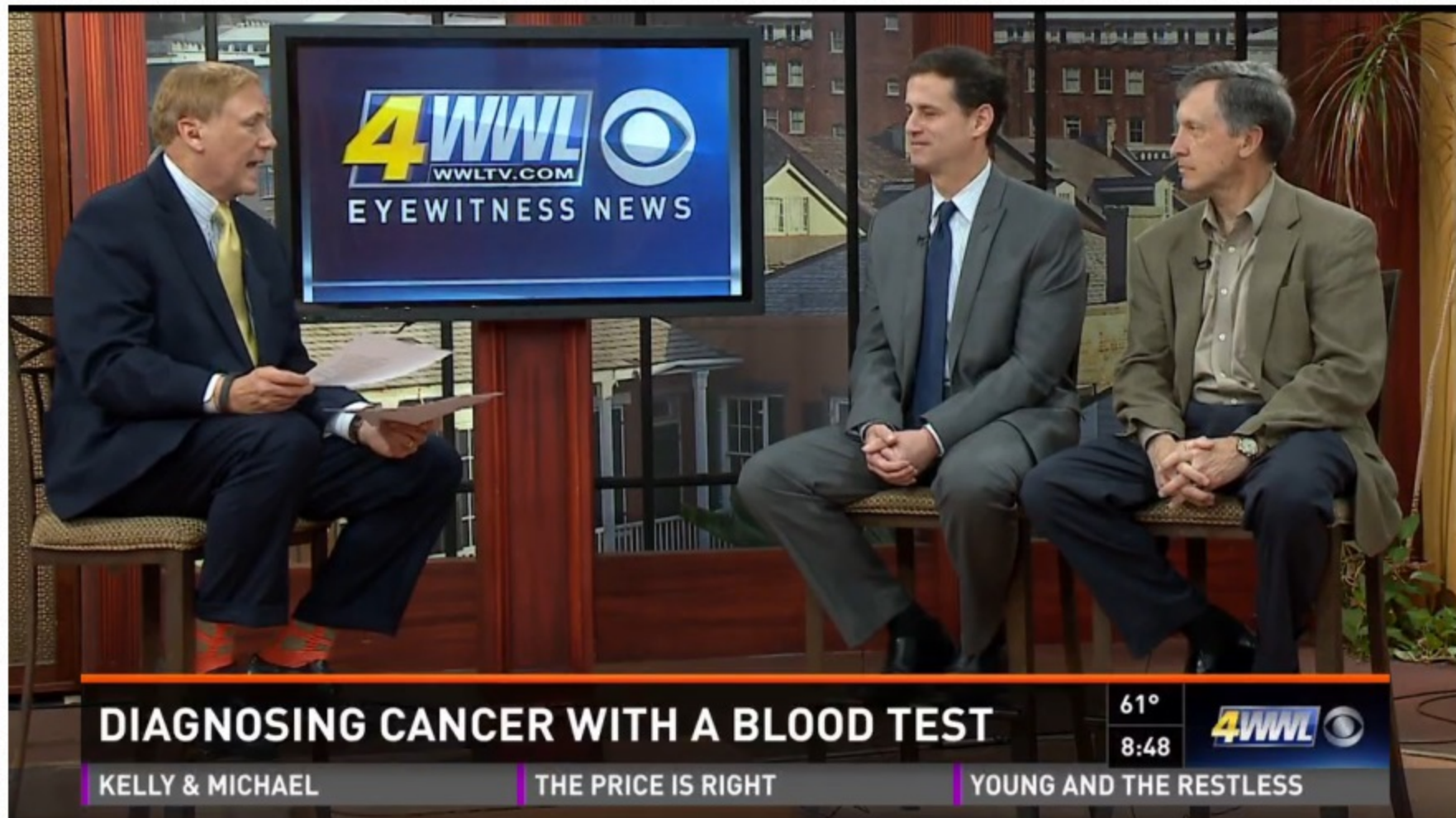
Digital Gumbo: Cancer Test



3



31



DIAGNOSING CANCER WITH A BLOOD TEST

KELLY & MICHAEL

THE PRICE IS RIGHT

YOUNG AND THE RESTLESS

61°

8:48



Mark Lewis, our digital gumbo expert, with Jonathan Tabak, the Vice President of Inno-Genomics Technologies, explains how a liquid biopsy could make a major impact on the way doctors diagnose cancer patients.



The Big Idea top 12 finalists revealed for #NOEW2015

[Big Idea top 12 finalists revealed: did your favs make it?](#) NOLA.com | The Times-Picayune's Presscote Stokes and Jennifer Larino reveal the top 12 finalist who will move on to the final round this Friday at The Big Idea pitch challenge as part of New Orleans Entrepreneur Week. The winner will receive \$25,000 in cash and donated services.

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By [Jennifer Larino, NOLA.com | The Times-Picayune](#)

Email the author | [Follow on Twitter](#)

on March 23, 2015 at 8:20 PM, updated March 24, 2015 at 1:40 AM



The final tally is in for The Big Idea.

NOLA.com | The Times-Picayune readers have spent a month voting for the up-and-coming New Orleans startup they think should compete at [The Big Idea](#) pitch challenge as part of [New Orleans Entrepreneur Week](#) right now. The winner will get \$25,000 in cash and donated services.

The top 12 Big Idea finalists will go on to pitch their ideas in front of thousands of Big Idea spectators on Friday on Fulton Street.

1. [AxoSim Technologies](#), 8,789 votes (JEDCO nominee)

Founders: Lowry Curley, Michael J. Moore

Big Idea: "Nerve-on-a-chip" technology for safer prescription drug development.

2. [HYPE Academy](#), 6,228 votes

Founders: Arianne Craig Jolla, Joshua Jolla

Big Idea: A homeschool tutoring and education resource center.

3. [Passion Dance Center](#), 6,131 votes

Founder: Tamika Jett

Big Idea: School for elite dancers and other performing artists.

4. [Cook Me Somethin' Mister](#), 2,655 votes (JEDCO Nominee)

Founder: Kristen Preau Moore *Big Idea:* Easy-to-fix jambalaya and gumbo made with all New Orleans ingredients.

5. [Greenman Dan](#), 2,652 votes

Founder: Dan Johnson *Big Idea:* A landscaping system that harvests rain to reduce flooding.

6. [ORA Estuaries](#), 2,536 votes

Founder: Tyler Ortego

Big Idea: Growing oyster reefs into coastal protection.

7. [Earth Prime](#), 2,127 votes

Founders: Sam Skydell, Henry Clar duQuesnay, Justin Workmon

Big Idea: Recirculating hydroponic system for home-growing fresh produce.

8. [TrueSchool Studio](#), 2,011 votes

Founder: Amy Vreeland

Big Idea: Research and design group for innovative classrooms and schools.

9. [Sock Spot](#), 1,944 votes (JEDCO Nominee)

Founders: Neil Pierson, Jan Pierson

Big Idea: A book/toy combo that helps kids and parents keep track of lost socks.

10. [Young Scholars](#), 1,654 votes

Founder: Ty Salvant

Big Idea: Educational enrichment program for families who homeschool.

11. [Welcome to College](#), 1,562 votes

Founder: Justin Bayer

Big Idea: Maximizing the impact of college visits for students and educators.

12. [CAD Printing](#), 1,266 votes

Founder: John R. Williamson Jr.

Big Idea: Customized design and printing for garments, signs, banners and more.

The Monday night announcement is the culmination of a month-long partnership between NOLA.com | The Times-Picayune and [The Idea Village](#) to provide the official online voting platform for [The Big Idea](#) pitch competition, [New Orleans Entrepreneur Week's](#) culminating event.

Short capsules of all 22 nominated businesses and their entrepreneurial founders' big ideas were posted Feb. 24 at [NOLA.com/big-idea](#), accompanied by an elevator pitch video recorded last month in the NOLA.com production studio at One Canal Place.

A reader poll listing all 22 nominees (see below) was embedded in every Big Idea post during the voting period. Readers were invited vote in favor of as many of their favorite nominees as they liked, up to a maximum of one vote per nominee per day. At the start of business Monday, more than 45,000 votes had been cast, with additional votes continuing to be counted through the deadline.



Big Idea nominee AxoSim Technologies: using chips instead of animals to test drugs

Print



By NOLA.com | The Times-Picayune

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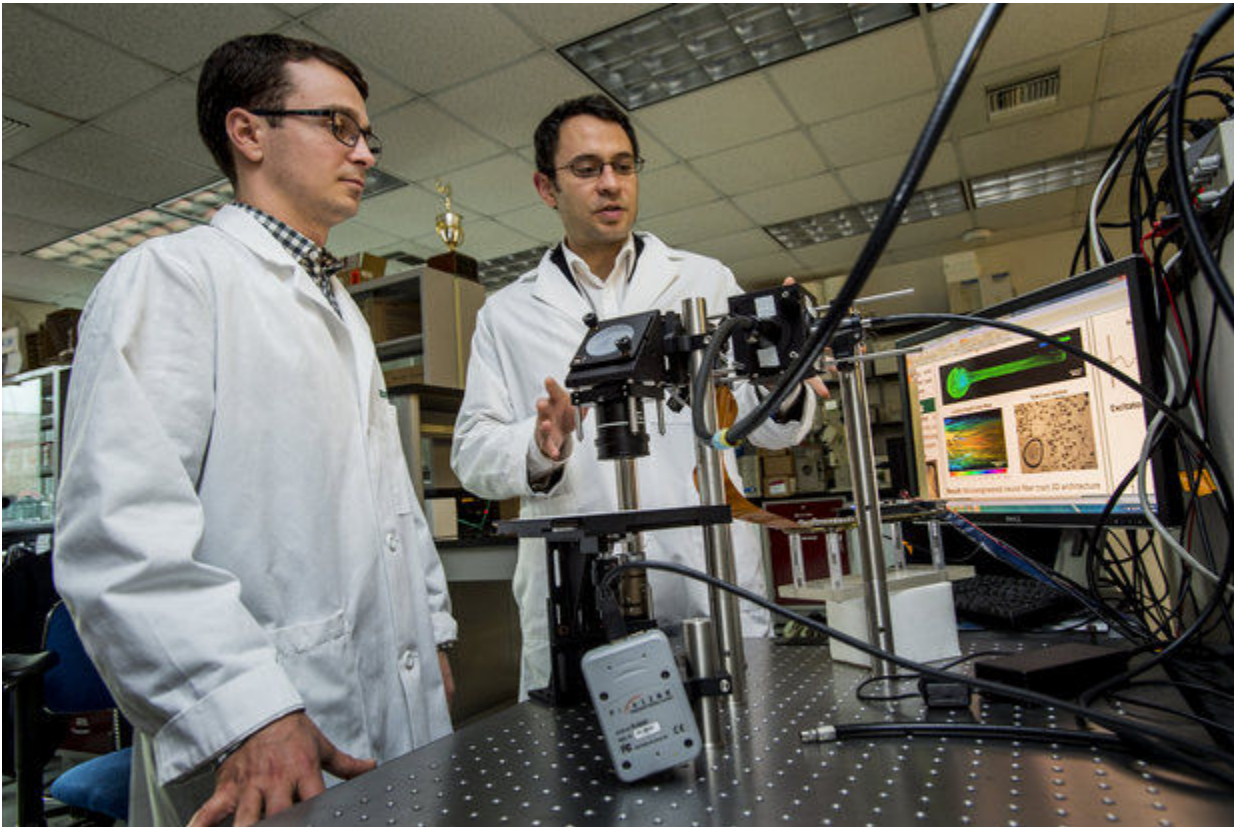
on February 24, 2015 at 11:00 AM, updated February 24, 2015 at 11:22 AM

New Orleans Entrepreneur Week's Big Idea 2015 nominee AxoSim Technologies is described as "improving the drug development process of new treatments. Currently, the only data available preclinically relies on either simplistic cell models or animal testing. Employing micro-engineering techniques and novel biomaterials, AxoSim developed a 3D cell-based model that acts and functions like a nerve. This alternative to costly animal testing gives pharmaceutical companies access to high content data faster, earlier and at a lower cost than currently possible. AxoSim's patent pending core technology was developed in the lab of Dr. Michael J. Moore at Tulane University. Our mission is to assist in the development of safer and more effective drugs, ultimately accelerating medical breakthroughs and improving people's health."

- **Founders:** Lowry Curley
- **Co-founder:** Michael J. Moore
- **Web:** axosim.com
- **Twitter:** @axosim
- **Facebook:** facebook.com/axosimtech
- **Nominated by:** JEDCO



Lowry Curley and Michael J. Moore's Big Idea: Faster, safer drug development with bioengineered nerves



Lowry Curley and Michael J. Moore, founders of AxoSim Technologies, at Tulane University.)Photo by Paula Burch-Celentano/Tulane University)

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By [Katherine Sayre, NOLA.com | The Times-Picayune](#)

Email the author | [Follow on Twitter](#)

on March 17, 2015 at 1:30 PM, updated March 17, 2015 at 1:31 PM

Developing a potentially life-saving drug is a lengthy, costly endeavor.

Two researchers at Tulane University hope to improve that process with a bioengineered 3D model of a nerve -- a so-called "nerve on a chip" -- to help researchers more quickly weed out versions of drugs that carry toxic effects while reducing animal testing.

Michael J. Moore, a Tulane University professor, served as Lowry Curley's biomedical engineering Ph.D. adviser. In 2014, they co-founded AxoSim Technologies to bring their technology out of the lab and into the world of pharmaceutical research.

"Our overall mission is to improve the lives of people around the world by accelerating the development of medical breakthroughs and life-changing new therapeutics," Curley said.

Their 3D cell-based model acts and functions like a nerve.

Curley said their technology allows for a view on how safe -- or toxic -- a drug in development will be on the nervous system, including treatments for cancer, heart problems or diabetes.

Drug researchers create hundreds of versions of a new drug to be narrowed through testing, Curley said. AxoSim offers a quicker, more accurate and less costly way to do that by detecting signs of toxicity, he said, while decreasing the need to test the drugs on animals. Drugs right now typically take 10 to 15 years to get to market, he said.

Curley got his PhD from Tulane University in 2012. He left for a year of work in Belgium, although he had hoped to stay in New Orleans.

"I always wanted to end up here but there wasn't a big biotech opportunity here yet," Curley said.

Now, Curley and Moore's work is part of a growing biotech sector in the city. In November, the company won the 2014 BioChallenge business pitch **at the New Orleans BioInnovation Center**, which came with a \$25,000 prize.

They're currently competing for the Big Idea pitch competition as part of New Orleans Entrepreneur Week, which also carries a \$25,000 reward.

The funding would go toward buying equipment for testing, Curley said.

AxoSim was nominated by JEDCO to compete in the Big Idea pitch. They got the MOST VOTES out of all the companies vying for a spot in the competition. AxoSim was also a JEDCO Challenge finalist.



Kristen Preau Moore's Big Idea is promoting New Orleans culture through jambalaya

[Print](#)



By [Katherine Sayre, NOLA.com](#) | [The Times-Picayune](#)

Email the author | [Follow on Twitter](#)

on March 04, 2015 at 10:00 AM, updated March 04, 2015 at 10:02 AM

Kristen Preau Moore in character as "Jambalaya Girl" wears dangling fork earrings and a green apron, an image stamped on the packaging of her growing jambalaya rice mix business.

Moore, 32, said her journey to food entrepreneur is rooted in a desire to work for companies with close connections to the culture of New Orleans -- even dating to high school.

During a job at Jazzland amusement park, she played the pink-haired armadillo, Miss Ima Dilla, in the park's Swamp Critters crew.



After graduating from the University of Southern Mississippi, she returned home to work for the University of New Orleans athletics and, later, the local architecture firm Eskew+Dumez+Ripple.

"I wanted to be an ambassador for companies that represented New Orleans well," Moore said.

Five years ago, she started Cook Me Somethin' Mister, using her dad's jambalaya recipe, in partnership with Chef Paul Prudhomme's Magic Seasonings blend, to create a mix for easy cooking.

Her father founded ADGAS outdoor cooking equipment business more than 30 years ago. She remembers helping her father cook jambalaya at big charity and sports events outside in a large cast iron pot.

Fast-forward to 2005, a few months after she had graduated from college. Moore evacuated to Kentucky for Hurricane Katrina. As a way to raise money for recovery efforts, she traveled to 11 cities, tailgating and cooking jambalaya, raising more than \$100,000.

"I saw how much people not only love our city, but how much they loved our food," she said.

She developed her rice mix with the idea of bringing that "authentic taste and experience of New Orleans" across the country. Despite stiff competition in this arena, her product is distributed across Louisiana and the Gulf Coast. One store in Australia picked up the mix.

Moore is one of 22 entrepreneurs who hope to win the \$25,000 prize at the Big Idea pitch during New Orleans Entrepreneur Week in March. She hopes to expand nationally and internationally, including traveling to Australia to appear at a music festival food booth, to continue her role as a New Orleans ambassador.

JEDCO nominated Cook Me Somethin' Mister to participate in the Big Idea. The company was a finalist in the JEDCO Challenge.



Big Idea nominee Cook Me Somethin' Mister: bringing jambalaya to the world

New Orleans Entrepreneur Week's Big Idea 2015 nominee Cook Me Somethin' Mister is described as "bringing an authentic taste of New Orleans to the world, starting with an easy-to-prepare jambalaya and gumbo. Drawing from her upbringing in the New Orleans cooking scene and her creation of a nationwide tailgating fundraiser following Hurricane Katrina, owner Kristen Preau, a.k.a. Jambalaya Girl, created Cook Me Somethin' Mister from her Dad's jambalaya recipe. Kristen's caricature as the Jambalaya Girl wearing her signature fork earrings is now printed on thousands of bags of Cook Me Somethin' Mister products. All products are packaged for retail and foodservice. Products are currently available in more than 100 grocery stores, 10 Sam's Clubs, 10 major food service distributors and can be ordered online and on Amazon Prime."

- **Founder:** Kristen Preau Moore
- **Web:** cookmesomethinmister.com
- **Twitter:** @jambalayagirl
- **Facebook:** facebook.com/jambalayagirl
- **Instagram:** jambalayagirl
- **Nominated by:** JEDCO



Big Idea nominee Sock Spot: tracking lost socks with a book and a toy

Print



By NOLA.com | The Times-Picayune

Follow on Twitter

on February 24, 2015 at 11:00 AM, updated February 24, 2015 at 12:23 PM

New Orleans Entrepreneur Week's Big Idea 2015 nominee Sock Spot is described as "an educational solution to a household problem: A family of four loses over 60 pairs of socks a year! Sock Spot teaches your children order and tidiness, while saving you time and money. It is a book-and-toy combo packaged with an organizing toy rack of colorful character sock clips and an illustrated storybook. The Sock Spot installs horizontally or vertically on your washer/dryer or anywhere in your laundry room with kid-friendly suction cups. The book tells an adventure of a boy and his lost sock where you will meet the same characters featured on the toy and a jingle that helps kids remember what to do with that single unpaired sock. Each purchase helps to fund autism research and family support."

- **Founder:** Neil Pierson
- **Co-founder:** Jan Pierson
- **Web:** Sockspot.com
- **Twitter:** @Sockspot
- **Facebook:** facebook.com/Sockspot
- **Instagram:** Sock_Spot
- **Nominated by:** JEDCO



Neil Pierson and Derek Cummiskey's Big Idea: Reuniting lost socks with a book and a toy



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By [Katherine Sayre, NOLA.com | The Times-Picayune](#)

Email the author | [Follow on Twitter](#)

on March 18, 2015 at 1:30 PM

Growing up, Neil Pierson watched his father troubleshoot an chronic family laundry predicament -- the lost sock.

Pierson, 43, remembers his father created a gadget involving springs, metal clips and magnets to keep single socks stowed on the washer and dryer, waiting for when matching partners inevitably appeared again.

Now, Pierson has taken his dad's concept and turned it into a commercial venture, a combination book and toy encouraging kids to keep their socks together through the story of a boy and a lost sock, encountering characters and a jingle along the way.

The Sock Spot is an educational tool that teaches kids organization, tidiness and "respect for their socks," Pierson said.

The jump from family fix to entrepreneurial initiative goes back eight years. His son Roman, who is now 10, was diagnosed with autism when he was 2. The family struggled to pay expensive therapy bills, a stressful time that set off an intense period of creativity for Pierson.

A physical therapy assistant in nursing homes, Pierson moved from New Orleans to the north shore to enroll his son in an autism program in St. Tammany Parish public schools.

He said Sock Spot has sold 1,500 of its first 3,800 through online and boutique sales in the last six months. The company just made an agreement to appear in Barnes and Noble in Metairie and Covington, he said.

His business partner, Derek Cummiskey, illustrated and helped write the companion book.

Putting stranded socks back in the sock drawer only confuses the situation, Pierson said, while separate bins with orphan socks become dusty and forgotten. "The No. 1 answer is people throw it away," he said.

He often reminds people: a family of four loses up to 60 pairs of socks every year.

He's focusing on business success right now, but he hopes to eventually fund autism family support and research through his company. Pierson counts that as a major life goal. "That is from the soul," he said.

Sock Spot was nominated by JEDCO to participate in the Big Idea. Sock Spot was also a JEDCO Challenge finalist.



Crutcher Reiss' Big Idea is a customizable health and fitness supplement



Crutcher Reiss, CEO of myMix Nutrition, is competing in the Big Idea pitch contest during the 2015 Entrepreneur Week. *(So It Goes Productions)*

[Print](#)



By [Jed Lipinski, NOLA.com | The Times-Picayune](#)

[Follow on Twitter](#)

on March 09, 2015 at 10:01 AM, updated March 09, 2015 at 10:19 AM

Crutcher Reiss was tired of Wall Street. After three years as an analyst at J.P. Morgan, he felt uninspired. His then-girlfriend Sarah Kirkwood, who worked for Morgan Stanley, felt the same way. "We'd run out of gas from a passion standpoint," Reiss, a 28-year-old New Orleans native, recently recalled.

The two had met at the University of Virginia, where Reiss played tight end for the football team and Kirkwood played outside hitter for the volleyball team. After graduating, they maintained a passion for health and fitness. So they started brainstorming business ideas for the health and fitness market on Sunday nights.

Most health and fitness supplements, they realized, did not consider customers' different goals, body types or lifestyle restrictions. An aspiring marathoner required different ingredients in a supplement than an aspiring powerlifter or a pre-natal mother.

Reiss and Kirkwood, who were married June 2013, came up with an idea: a protein-based powder that allows users to customize the ingredients to suit their unique needs. They called it myMix.

After vetting the concept with dietitians, scientists and professional athletes, they launched a beta version of the [website](#) from their Manhattan apartment in the fall of 2013. In June, they moved to New Orleans, where the rent they'd paid for that Manhattan apartment afforded them a mortgage on an Uptown house and a lease on an 800-square-foot office in the New Orleans BioInnovation Center.

"New Orleans opened its doors in a way that I didn't anticipate," said Reiss, who has received guidance from the small business incubator The Idea Village.

Last year, Kirkwood took a job as the athletic director of Sacred Heart high school, though she continues to serve as an advisor to myMix. Reiss runs the start-up with the help of a Tulane intern and a handful of part-time contractors.

He is now one of 22 entrepreneurs competing for a \$25,000 prize at the Big Idea pitch contest during New Orleans Entrepreneur Week.

Reiss plans to launch a 2.0 version of the website this month. In the future, he hopes to open a bigger lab space and a commercial kitchen, creating jobs in New Orleans.

myMix Nutrition was one of the JEDCO Challenge finalists.



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
March 3, 2015

JEDCO Challenge finalists nominated for The Big Idea

(Jefferson Parish, La) -- The countdown is underway to the [JEDCO Challenge](#), a pitch competition for entrepreneurs with ties to Jefferson Parish. The third annual event, powered by [First NBC Bank](#) and in partnership with the [Jefferson Chamber](#), will feature five incredible startup companies that are changing the world for the better. It will be held during [New Orleans Entrepreneur Week \(NOEW\)](#), presented by IBERIABANK, which is produced by [The Idea Village](#).

This year, JEDCO also had a chance to provide an extra opportunity for some of the startups competing in the JEDCO Challenge. Through the organization's partnership with The Idea Village, JEDCO nominated three companies for potential participation in [The Big Idea](#), the culminating event of NOEW 2015. This event features 12 of Greater New Orleans' most promising startup ventures and you, our local community, **have a chance to decide which companies will be included.**

Twenty-two Big Idea nominees, including the three nominated by JEDCO, are featured on a [NOLA.com voting platform](#). From now until Monday, March 23rd, the public can vote for their favorite entrepreneurs once a day. The 12 community favorites, as determined by the gross number of votes received, will go on to participate in The Big Idea.

JEDCO nominated [AxoSim Technologies](#), [Cook Me Somethin' Mister](#), and [Sock Spot](#). These three companies will pitch during the JEDCO Challenge, but they're also eligible to compete in The Big Idea and **they need your help to get there.**

AxoSim Technologies:

The brains behind this cutting edge, nerve-on-a-chip technology say they're improving the drug development process by decreasing the need to test on animals. See AxoSim's video pitch [here](#). Vote for all the JEDCO Challenge nominees [here](#).

Cook Me Somethin' Mister

This locally-owned family business brings an authentic taste of New Orleans to the world through its easy-to-prepare jambalaya and gumbo mixes. See Cook Me Somethin' Mister's video pitch [here](#). Vote for all the JEDCO Challenge nominees [here](#).

Sock Spot (Pleasantree, LLC)

This book and toy combo solves the household problem of misplacing socks through an educational story packaged with an organizing rack that installs on any washer/dryer. See Sock Spot's video pitch [here](#). Vote for all the JEDCO Challenge nominees [here](#).

The JEDCO Challenge will also feature two other innovative startups: [InnoGenomics Technologies](#), which has developed a blood test to detect and monitor cancer, and [myMix Nutrition](#), an e-commerce store that allows people to buy their own custom protein powder products. myMix Nutrition was also nominated for The Big Idea. You can see the company's pitch video [here](#).

Register to attend the JEDCO Challenge powered by First NBC Bank at 2 p.m. on March 23rd at Southport Hall to see all five of these companies pitch in the third annual Challenge. Each company will have seven minutes to present a live pitch in front of a panel of Jefferson Parish business leaders. Entrepreneurs will be scored based upon the live pitch, a condensed business plan submitted in advance of the competition and crowd vote. JEDCO will give the crowd an opportunity to choose their favorite pitch. A small number of points will be awarded to the crowd favorite and added to the overall score. The entrepreneur with the winning pitch will receive a growing prize package of in-kind business services and direct capital.

Click [here](#) to register for the JEDCO Challenge. You will need to create a login through NOEW.org. Add the event to your schedule by clicking on the star next to the [JEDCO Challenge](#) in the NOEW calendar.

JEDCO created [the Challenge](#) in 2013 to identify, engage with and assist our up-and-coming innovators. The goal of the competition is to elevate opportunities for local entrepreneurs in the area through direct capital, business services, increased visibility and mentorship.

Visit the [JEDCO Challenge website](#) for continued updates on our finalists, our judge's panel and our growing prize package.

This event would not be possible without assistance from our Jefferson Parish businesses and organizations. We would like to thank the following for their sponsorship and support of the JEDCO Challenge: [First NBC Bank](#), [365 Connect](#), [Ardyn Thriffiley and Associates](#), [ARPR](#), [Atmos Energy](#), [Biz New Orleans](#), [Business Innovation Center at Churchill](#), [Carver](#), [Darden](#), [Koretzsky](#), [Tessier](#), [Finn](#), [Blossman & Areaux, LLC](#), [Cox Communications](#), [Gambel Communications](#), [Jefferson Chamber of Commerce](#), [LSBDC GNOR](#), [MMI Culinary Services](#), [M S Benbow & Associates](#), [Postlethwaite & Netterville](#), and [Sandler Training](#).

We would also like to thank our supporting partners: The Jefferson Chamber of Commerce, Idea Village, Elmwood Business Association, Goldman Sachs 10,000 Small Businesses, Greater New Orleans, Inc., Jefferson Parish, New Orleans BioInnovation Center, Propeller & 504ward.

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About JEDCO: The Jefferson Parish Economic Development Commission (JEDCO) is an independent, yet complementary arm of Jefferson Parish government with the main objective of attracting, growing and creating new business in our area. JEDCO's mission is to proactively influence the economy through the retention and creation of quality jobs, entrepreneurship and investment in Jefferson Parish. Follow JEDCO on Facebook at www.facebook.com/JeffersonParishEconomicDevelopment and Twitter at @JEDCO_News. www.jedco.org

About First NBC Bank:

First NBC Bank received a charter to begin operation from the Louisiana Office of Financial Institutions in May 2006. Through overwhelming support from the local community, the Bank's initial capital footings exceeded \$60 million, which set a record for the largest initial capital raised by a Louisiana chartered institution. There are 31 banking offices on the South and North Shores of the Greater New Orleans metropolitan area. First NBC Bank has been selected as one of the Best Places to Work six times in a row *New Orleans CityBusiness*.

The bank's mission is to deliver world-class service through developing long-term relationships with clients while providing a great place to work for its employees and demonstrating outstanding corporate citizenship within its communities, resulting in exceptional returns for its shareholders. <https://firstnbcbank.com/>

About New Orleans Entrepreneur Week: New Orleans Entrepreneur Week (NOEW), presented by IBERIABANK, is the annual business festival celebrating entrepreneurship, innovation, and advanced thinking in New Orleans. Produced by the Idea Village, NOEW engages a dynamic global community to support growing companies and elevate entrepreneurial successes through eight days of discussion, debate, education, competition, and celebration. This year, NOEW 2015 will take place March 20-27, 2015 and 10,000+ are expected to engage through over 70 events. www.NOEW.org

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