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Pitch Across Maryland makes Odenton stop

Seven organizations present business plans



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Neil Kleinberg often talks about his business with potential investors. All he needs is a slide show and an hour.

But he had to scale down his presentation Monday, when the Pitch Across Maryland bus came to Odenton to hear from entrepreneurs. There, he and entrepreneurs from six other businesses got two to four minutes to talk about their companies while being filmed. The video will be entered in a statewide competition for a chance to win funding and investors.

"It was a lovely experience and I had fun doing it," said Kleinberg, whose software company DeliVer LLC works within the mergers and acquisitions community. "I said everything I wanted to say and I didn't get cut off, so that was the good news."

This is the third year for Pitch Across Maryland, which travels around the state to meet with entrepreneurs and learn about their business ventures. This year's tour stops will end in Annapolis on Friday.

In about a week, edited versions of the videos will be posted. By the end of October, the top three with the most views can be selected as fan favorite.

Also, a panel of equity investors and entrepreneurs will identify eight companies to go on to TEDCO Maryland's entrepreneur expo in November, where they will be given at least 10 minutes to do their pitches. Winners from there go on to the InvestMaryland Challenge, where they can win cash awards up to \$100,000.

Since its inception, Pitch Across Maryland has reached 1,000 companies. This year's total is expected to be 170, founder and CEO Mike Binko said. The effort is the end result of discussions organizers had with entrepreneurs around the state about what their needs are.

What they had in common were the four C's -- celebration, capital, coaching and connections.

"The capital side is something we're not going to be solve, except maybe as individual investors or folks who can get behind these organizations and help them," Binko said. "What we could really have a difference on is two of those C's -- celebration and coaching. We wanted to develop some programs around that."

The Odenton Cyber Stop was held at the Chesapeake Innovation Center. There, organizers also filmed presentations that included ITnova LLC's personal app geared toward those with autism and **Alheimers**, SproutUp's services in the crowdfunding marketplace and CTCG, which manages firms' IT infrastructure.

Three seniors from South River High School's STEM program -- Ryan Bergamini, Anna Sappington and Caterina Wu -- gave a presentation on solar parking canopies and how they could reduce runoff going into the Chesapeake Bay. The other two businesses were ReXi Wireless and Efflux Systems.

"I got everything out that I wanted to say, it's just that I was a little nervous. But I got it all out," said Marie Harvey, managing director of CTCG. "(Pitching) is what I do all the time. I'm interviewing companies looking for partnerships and telling them what I do. So I just kept (my presentation) consistent. I've had practice."

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