



September 27, 2017

Thank you. I am Sam Hight, fourth generation auto dealer part of the Hight Family of Dealerships and Chair of the Main Street Skowhegan Business Enhancement Committee.

I tried to keep this short by jotting a few notes down... and now we have a speech and some history.

First and foremost, I would like to start by thanking the Skowhegan community and the Skowhegan business community for supporting this challenge. I stood here two years ago introducing the Main Street Skowhegan Savings Entrepreneur Challenge really not knowing how it would unfold. With your support and the participation of entrepreneurs, our challenge was a success.

Our winner, Amanda Clark of The Barkery, used the Skow Savings loan to purchase a commercial oven and refrigeration that allowed her to produce her products faster and at a higher margin – allowing her to expand her wholesale business from 8 to 40 accounts – and is currently looking at a regional distribution provider.

Runners up included Justin Richards and Virginia Jewell. Justin took the challenge as a shot in the arm and opened Downtowndelivery.me – a multi-restaurant online and mobile delivery service in Farmington. Ginny continues to grow her natural food business in town – she used the business plan lessons and financial guidance to what she says “get her on the right track.” Nancy Baxter of MeshEarth continues to promote, showcase, and celebrate central Maine through films like “Sox in the Country” and is participating again in this year’s challenge.

Again, all of the success of the challenge is due to the entrepreneurial energy of Skowhegan, its people, its businesses and our supporters. And the energy is impressive!

This year, will be even better. I cannot stress the importance of our supporters - \$10,000 again from the Savings Bank and another \$13,000 in goods and services from local business people and organizations. We again are partnering with SBDC, Maine’s Small Business Development Center, as we’re adding three new business plan seminars to the program. We are also working with Tracie Travers of Jobs for Maine Grads and their Junior Entrepreneur Challenge in Madison, Skowhegan, and Farmington. Mike Duguay, the Executive Director of the Entrepreneur Institute, at the Thomas College Harold Alfond Institute for Business



Innovation, has also jumped on board as a seasoned veteran of economic development for over 25 years.

I am extremely excited to report that we have **14** contestants signed up for the challenge, thus far. A diverse group of businesses, including, artisan cheese, flour tortilla production, a wellness center, an old time soda fountain, a community cultural center, a caterer, a food business incubator and teaching kitchen, sandwiches and beer, an alternative health co-op, and a craft distillery, to name a few.

It takes a lot of guts to be an entrepreneur. And as I continue to be humbled by the guts it takes to be an entrepreneur; the hard work, owning your own business – through its successes and failures, and being a doer, I am always reminded (thanks to my father) of Theodore Roosevelt’s speech titled “Citizenship in a Republic.” TR emphasized the importance of not only having brilliant minds, but dedicated, hard working, driven, high quality individuals – “having courage and resolution,” in order to have a successful Republic – or in our case, a successful entrepreneur-driven local business economy. And more specifically, he upholds the importance of the man (and woman of course, he gave this speech in 1910) in The Arena. And in this, TR supports, as I equally support, applaud, encourage, and understand what it takes to be in The Arena.... Its challenges and its rewards. He said:

It is not the critic who counts; not the man who points out how the strong man stumbles, or where the doer of deeds could have done them better. The credit belongs to the man who is actually in the arena, whose face is marred by dust and sweat and blood; who strives valiantly; who errs, who comes short again and again, because there is no effort without error and shortcoming; but who does actually strive to do the deeds; who knows great enthusiasms, the great devotions; who spends himself in a worthy cause; who at the best knows in the end the triumph of high achievement, and who at the worst, if he fails, at least fails while daring greatly, so that his place shall never be with those cold and timid souls who neither know victory nor defeat.

I encourage everyone to take that step into The Arena.

I cannot thank everyone enough. The Savings Bank, Main Street Skowhegan, our executive director, our board, our Business Enhancement Committee, our business supporters, our volunteers, our entrepreneurs, and the Skowhegan community as a whole. THANK YOU.