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Ben Franklin Technology Partners' \$50,000 Big Idea Business Plan Contest is Back!

State College, PA – The [Ben Franklin Venture Investment Forum](#) in partnership with the [Ben Franklin Technology Partners of Central and Northern PA](#) announced today that the BIG IDEA Business Plan Contest is back! A grand prize of \$50,000 will be awarded to one tech-based startup company to further develop and grow a business in the 32-county footprint served by the program in Pennsylvania.

It's easy to qualify for the contest. An applicant must:

- Be located in the 32 counties served by the program (See <http://www.cnp.benfranklin.org> for a full listing of eligible counties)
- Have a new, marketable business idea that includes a commercialization plan
- Have no significant sales if a product has already been developed
- Have less than 50 employees if a company has been formed
- Not have received previous Ben Franklin funding.

Preferred industry sectors include, but are not limited to, nanotechnology, green technologies, alternative energy, advanced manufacturing, advanced materials, medical devices, information technology and software.

Entrepreneurs can visit <http://www.cnp.benfranklin.org> and click on the contest button for a complete description of the rules, entry forms, and FAQs. The deadline for applications is February 29, 2012.

Jill Edwards, Executive Director of Ben Franklin's Venture Investment Forum, commented, "We are very pleased to once again be able to co-sponsor the BIG IDEA Business Plan Contest. Supporting entrepreneurs and helping them to develop their ideas into a viable business is at the very core of what the Ben Franklin Program has been about for nearly thirty years."

"In our eyes, the folks who participate in our contests are all winners in some capacity. They have the courage to let a panel of strangers evaluate and criticize their idea - and this is often the first step in turning that idea into a business," said Stephen Brawley/CEO of Ben Franklin Technology Partners/CNP.

About Ben Franklin Technology Partners

Ben Franklin Technology Partners CNP, an initiative of the Pennsylvania Department of Community and Economic Development and funded by the Ben Franklin Technology Development Authority, provides investment capital and business support services to emerging tech-based companies and small, existing manufacturers for the purpose of creating and retaining jobs in Pennsylvania. Contact the central office of Ben Franklin in University Park at (814) 863-4559 or see our website at www.cnp.benfranklin.org