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GPCC conference excites organizers

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The Great Plains Capital Conference's seventh year will draw some heavy hitters from the high-technology and venture capital worlds.

The conference is set for Sept. 16 at the Wichita Marriott.

Attending the area's only annual capital conference that links investors and entrepreneurs will be Microsoft executive Cliff Reeves, venture capitalist Laura Kilcrease and investor and author Rob Adams.

"We've continued each year to build GPCC," said Trish Brasted, CEO of Wichita Technology Corp., organizer of the conference. "We're finally raising awareness of what's going on in Kansas. This, by far, is going to be the best (conference)."

And that's not just because of who will be speaking. Brasted said she also expects, for the first time, some regional venture capital firms to attend.

She declined to name the firms.

"Even with the economy the way it is, we're hoping to have more qualified investors at the table," Brasted said.

The daylong event typically draws 50 to 75 investors, most of whom are angel, or early-stage, investors, she said.

The purpose of the event is to match promising area entrepreneurs in the technology or biosciences areas with people and firms that have the money to grow the companies.

Brasted said GPCC is expecting to select 10 to 11 firms to present their business plans to the investors. Presenting companies each have 12 minutes to pitch their companies to investors.

Applications to present are due July 30.

Besides the presentations, the conference will include a luncheon and speech by Adams, who teaches in the MBA program at the University of Texas' McCombs School of Business and is the director of Venture Labs and the Global Moot Corp Program.

Later in the day, Kilcrease, founder and managing director of Triton Ventures, a Texas venture capital fund, and Reeves, general manager of Microsoft's Emerging Business Team in California, will participate in a panel discussion.

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