



Posted on Thu, Jul. 16, 2009

Venture conference should see high interest

BY JERRY SIEBENMARK

The Wichita Eagle

A down economy shouldn't affect the area's only venture capital conference, its organizer said Wednesday.

Trish Brasted, CEO of Wichita Technology Corp., said that she expects more applications from entrepreneurs for this year's Great Plains Capital Conference. She also anticipates that attendance from angel investors will be equal to past years.

This year's conference, in which a handful of startup technology companies are chosen to pitch their business plans to investors, is scheduled for Sept. 10 at the Wichita Marriott, 9100 Corporate Hills Drive.

"We've already got applications in the door," Brasted said.

GPCC is accepting applications until July 31 from companies looking to present. She said it typically receives 50 applications for the annual event, which will be in its sixth year this year.

"From what I'm hearing I think we may have more applications this year than in prior years," Brasted said.

That's because startup technology companies — and investors — have been "sitting on the sidelines" since last fall, waiting to see what would happen to the economy.

"If my conference had been in April, I'm not sure who would be there," she said. "I'm not sure investors would even be there."

But now, she said, investors and entrepreneurs have a better feel for the economy and that it eventually will improve.

"I think we're getting past some of that," Brasted said.

Companies wanting to present are selected by a panel of judges who evaluate their applications based upon the company's product or service, management, market and marketing strategy, and financial summary.

Last year, 11 Kansas-based technology or bioscience companies presented at the conference.

Reach Jerry Siebenmark at 316-268-6576 or jsiebenmark@wichitaeagle.com.

© 2009 Wichita Eagle and wire service sources. All Rights Reserved. <http://www.kansas.com>