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Eden Prairie paver firm wins innovation prize

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Vast Enterprises of Eden Prairie won the top award in the second annual Minnesota Cup competition, a contest to find emerging entrepreneurial talent. The event is sponsored by the University of Minnesota, Wells Fargo, state executives and inventors.

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Vast Enterprises won \$25,000 in seed capital for a composite paver brick system made of 99 percent recycled materials, which the company claims is an economically and socially responsible alternative to traditional concrete or clay paver bricks.

The company also won a monthly review with the Wells Fargo Advisory Board, which includes bankers, a small business association representative, an accountant and an attorney, plus business support services provided by area firms.

The Minnesota Cup was launched in March 2005 to promote innovative business concepts in the state. Inventors, business owners and the public can submit their business ideas at www.breakthroughideas.org. More than 650 entrants submitted proposals for this year's competition.

The second-place winner was Zero Turn Radius Push Mower from Andover. Third place went to IDInsight from St. Paul. The second- and third-place winners won \$5,000 and \$2,500, respectively, and will receive business support services from contest sponsors.

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A special \$5,000 student entrepreneur prize went to students from the Carlson School of Management for U-Guide, a road map for college life that includes maps, coupons and guidance for new students.

PATRICK KENNEDY

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