

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Creating Jobs and Supporting Entrepreneurs Across Michigan *Entrepreneurial Internship Program Funded by MIIE Extended*

Midland, MI (November 13, 2009) – More jobs and more support are on the way, as the Michigan Initiative for Innovation and Entrepreneurship (MIIE) has extended grant support for the Entrepreneurial Internship Program (EIP) which began in January of this year. The program is proving effective in encouraging entrepreneurship and education by matching outstanding students with start-ups and incubators, and then providing financial support to help the entrepreneurs as well as the students who are gaining valuable business skills, and earning money at the same time. The extension will open opportunities for up to a dozen more additional companies and student interns for winter and spring opportunities. The application process begins by visiting the MidMichigan Innovation Center Web site at www.mmic.us, and looking under the Virtual Programs tab for details.

The Entrepreneurship Internship Program is a collaborative project between Central Michigan University (CMU), Michigan State University (MSU), Saginaw Valley State University (SVSU), the University of Michigan-Flint (UM-Flint), and the MidMichigan Innovation Center (MMIC). Students are matched with start-up companies, based on their background, goals and location preferences. Participating companies receive financial support and provide a diverse pool of internship opportunities drawn from throughout the region.

Says MSU Director of Research Facilitation and Dissemination, and project lead Loraine J. Hudson, “This is an outstanding way to increase the number of students who can receive experience in start-up companies, and it helps those start-up companies by giving them access to low-cost business and planning assistance. Our goal is to facilitate these matches and retain both the companies and the trained students here in Michigan.”

For Ralph and Deb Kettling, founders of SmallSpacesAppliances.com, the support they’ve gotten through the Entrepreneurial Internship Program and the insights of the partnering organizations has made a real difference in their start-up company. Their intern, Joe Chrysler, is a sophomore at Saginaw Valley State University studying computer science. Joe is bringing in new skills and perspectives, and moving SmallSpacesAppliances.com to a new level. His computer knowledge and work ethic are a good match. He has helped the Kettlings who developed a secure Web site that enables buyers to transact business directly with SmallSpacesAppliances.com by credit card, debit card, fax or phone orders. The seed of their business idea came after having had positive personal experiences in remodeling small spaces in

their boat and in a vacation home. This experience taught them that creative "out-of-the-box" thinking could truly enhance the small space living experience for those who own boats, RVs, yachts, cabins and cottages and those who own compact apartments and condos. Thanks to the support of the Entrepreneurial Internship Program, both Chrysler and the Kettlings are growing, excited, and doing business here in Michigan.

“Turning learning into real world,” is how Central Michigan University graduate student and MBA candidate Cason Thorsby describes his experience in the program. Thorsby has had the opportunity to work with a variety of start-ups, and develop new business service offerings while working at Central Michigan University-Research Corporation. The shift from theory and process into practical application in real world situations has helped Thorsby to grow, and think broadly and positively about his future and the future of Michigan.

Another intern, Rebecca Mansfield, a senior marketing major from Michigan State University just completed the program. She worked as part of the East Lansing Technical Innovation Center where she enjoyed connecting with presidents and CEOs of start-ups and gained first-hand knowledge of entrepreneurship. “It was a wonderful experience. The networking and new ideas gave me so much more experience. I’d recommend the program to any student wanting to see what entrepreneurship is all about,” Mansfield says.

At the heart of the collaboration is the MidMichigan Innovation Center. Chris Moultrup, Program Director at MMIC says, “I believe this program has proven to be very valuable and is providing a huge benefit to the participating companies, students and for Michigan. We are all being rewarded for the collaboration and success and are excited about continuing the program. I encourage interested students and start-ups to connect with us. We’re making good things happen!”

For more information on the program and getting involved, students and businesses may contact:

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About SmallSpacesAppliances.com / (989) 245-8971/ www.smallspacesappliances.com

SmallSpacesAppliances.com provides the finest products for enhancing living in Small Spaces. These products include Appliances, Compact Kitchen Appliances, Refrigerators, Grills, Water Softeners, Reverse Osmosis, RV Yachts, Luxury Yachts, Electric Cooktops, Microwave Ovens, Coffee Makers, LED Lighting, and LED Light bulbs for yachts, RVs, cabins, cottages and and apartments. SmallSpacesAppliances.com is owned and operated by a team that bring a unique combination of skills and experience in Information Technology and Design, as well as commercial experience in marketing and sales.

About MidMichigan Innovation Center / (989) 839-2333 / www.mmic.us

The *MidMichigan Innovation Center* is a private, non-profit organization created to provide entrepreneurs and start-up companies a supportive and collaborative environment. MMIC connects you with critical resources, valuable services, flexible facilities, and entrepreneurial training and education that will help you develop your business venture. As an MMIC partner,



you will receive the support needed to ensure your company's success.

Contacting Students Mentioned in the Release

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