

Online shopping tool wins Startup Labs Syracuse competition

By Kevin Tampone

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A company developing an online tool to predict household items its users need before they run out won the \$200,000 grand prize in the Startup Labs Syracuse competition.

Ithaca-based Rosie Applications Inc. will debut its service in May and is planning a national rollout next year. The company won a cash prize of \$150,000, plus \$50,000 in marketing and branding services from Eric Mower and Associates.

CenterState CEO announced the winner at its annual meeting Monday. About 1,100 people attended.

Startup Labs is the successor to CenterState's Creative Core Emerging Business Competition, which awarded more than \$1 million over six years to young companies in the region.

Rosie, named for the robotic maid from "The Jetsons" cartoon series, beat out a field of 97 applicants. Its Web-based service analyzes data to learn the shopping habits of consumers and alerts them when they're running low on common items, said Junho Kim, head of product at Rosie.

Users can then order the items, along with their other groceries, through the company's platform. The service also allows consumers to compare prices at different stores.

Customers placing an order through Rosie pay \$5.95, and participating retailers pay referral fees of 1 percent to 2 percent.

Five teams that were finalists in the Startup Labs competition all received \$30,000 in seed funding through the program and spent three weeks at the Syracuse Tech Garden working with mentors on their business concepts.

The other finalists were:

3 Full Circle Feed of Syracuse, which takes leftover food scraps from dining halls and processes them into dog treats.

3 SnagMobile of Delmar, which has developed a mobile app that allows consumers to order food and drinks at live events without leaving their seats.

3 Pretty Padded Room of New York City, which provides online therapy.

3 Yorango Inc. of Ithaca, which has developed software that automates the processing of applications from tenants for apartments. Judges chose the winner after hearing pitches from the firms at the Startup Labs Demo Day in February. A group of 10 private sponsors provided the funding for the program, which totaled \$350,000.

Syracuse is the first U.S. city to host Startup Labs. The organization partners with local groups around the world to run its program, which provides seed funding, mentorship and support to startups.

Cities in India, Argentina, Jordan, Malaysia, Taiwan and Turkey have hosted the program as well. Also at the annual meeting, CenterState CEO announced its Business of the Year award winners. They included Terakeet Corp., of Syracuse, in the category of companies with less than 50 employees; Tops Friendly Markets, of Williamsville, for companies with more than 50 employees; the Onondaga Historical Association in the nonprofit category; and Syracuse University in the community involvement category.