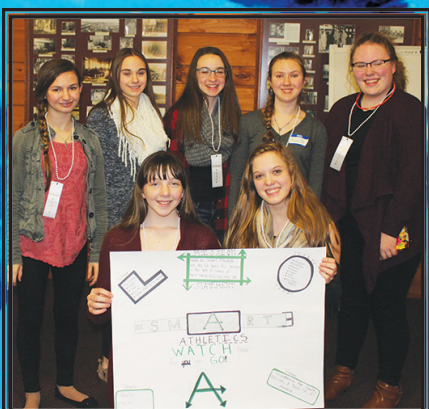
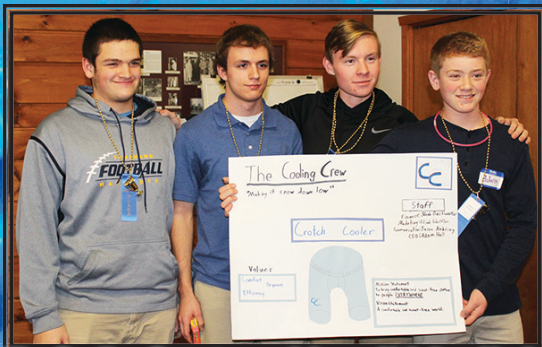




Fourteen teams created inventions and developed business ideas during a daylong "Shark Tank-type" challenge. -Tomahawk Leader Photos by Kathy Tobin



Smart Athletics deals with athletic watches with high tech applications. The business is run by, front, Taylor Repinski and Lexi Millard; back, Dellana Graeber, Grace Witulski, Maddie McCormick, Mya Dhaseleer and Allison Schmidt.



The Cooling Crew team of Jason Nehring, Noah Buckwalter, Elijah Scheffler and Adam Hall took first place in Region 1 for their croch cooler. They also won the slogan contest. Their invention is designed to offer sweat-free comfort.



The company Ecowear uses recycled pastic to make clothing, keeping the Earth a better place. Team members are Betty Fuszard, Taya Johnson, Jadyn Grice, Harmony Houpt and Savannah Chadwick.



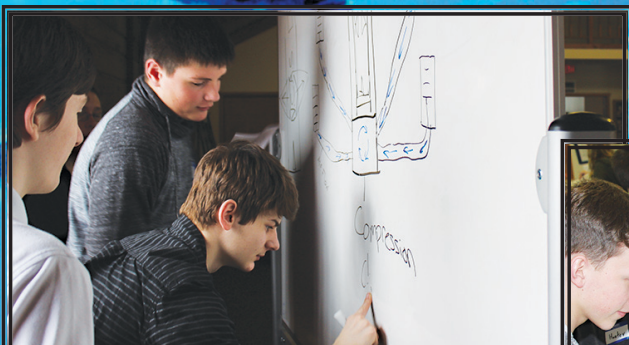
The Smart Jacket from Keep It Classy was developed by, front, Alyssa Klopatek and Molly Mott; back, Kelsie Rigney, Aubrey Fryar, Haley Wojciechowski and Addison Bartz.



An edible water bottle made of candy was developed by the Koamliren company, made up of Lily Jahn, Koko Isotani, Karen Bagin and Amanda Halverson.



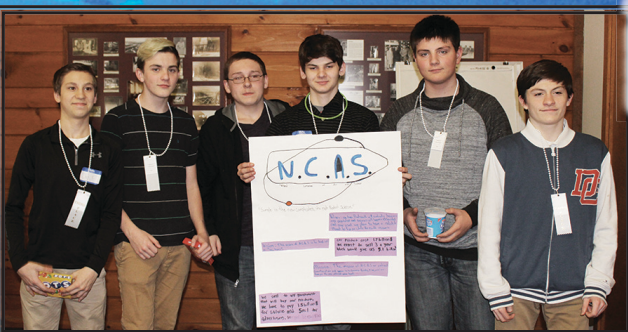
Amber Florczak, Sydney Barnett, Rya Brown and Aurora Barthels went on to take first place in Region 2 for their H2O Tech, high tech water bottle. They are joined by Steven Bench, founder of Badger Business Camps, Inc.



Above and below, members of N.C.A.S. work on a space travel business for when the Earth is overpopulated. Members are Chris Bushong, Garron Albrent, Jason Brouwers, Mitchell Halloway, Austin Leinen and Dakota Woehrl.



The day's activities also included quick challenges like this ping pong ball test. Team members include Drew Bolder, Tyler Beck, Nathan Gould and Payton Bunce.



A view from above of the teams at work.

# Shark Tank meets Price Is Right

Middle, high school students participate in 'business contest in game show setting'

By Kathy Tobin

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He pitches it as "Shark Tank meets Price Is Right."

It's the brainchild of Steve Bench, Madison, founder of Badger Business Camps, Inc., a business contest for students presented in a game show setting.

Tomahawk Middle School seventh graders and Tomahawk High School freshmen each spent a day at the Packaging Corporation of America's William Buedingen Center learning first-hand what it might be like to create a business after inventing a product.

In small groups, the kids were challenged to come up with a product solution to a problem, develop a business plan and then, in front of the entire class, pitch their idea, complete with slogan and logo.

"The idea is to get the kids out of the classroom into a hands-on activity where they take the theory and technical information they learn in school, putting it into practice, where they're in control and make all the decisions. They kind of get a taste of what it's like to start a company," Bench describes.

The process takes teamwork and creativity. It also requires public speaking.

"I see kids come out of their shell. I see kids afraid to try something like public speaking, try it and do an awesome job. I'm always surprised by their creativity and the innovation and how student are very good at thinking of products," Bench says.

"This is more fun than Shark Tank and it's without the mean, grumpy, rich people that are going to make you feel bad," he shares with the kids.

"If you can think of a remedy for a problem people are struggling with, people will pay you money for it," he tells the kids. "Perhaps there are products or services developed that could make life better for the people in Tomahawk and across the country."

As an example, Bench recalls one group of girls from another school who came up with Smart Jewelry. The idea was that if you are being followed or harassed or feel in danger, the earrings you're wearing can call for help. You tap your ear once to text a friend; you tap your ear twice to call 911. And, Bench noted the assailant or bully might not even know help has been summoned because tapping one's ear is not an unusual movement.

Brenda Bartz, president of Tomahawk Extended Area Partners in Education (TEAPIE), which helped sponsor the recent day in Tomahawk, said an exercise like this "is a great experience for kids to get a feel for how a company or organization works. They kind of do the basic positions of a CEO, marketing, finance, communications. It gives them the experience of teamwork. What I like best about it is you see the kids working together; they're communicating which kind of goes back to old school. You don't see a lot of cell phones out. And the project kind of forces them to work together as a team," Bartz observes.

It also can give them an idea – a mini-experience – of a career area they may want to pursue, Bartz says.

"The exciting part is just the ideas that come through," she adds. "... it just kind of blows your mind how ingenious some of them are."

One of the ideas from a TMS seventh grade group that won, she recalls, "was an alternative to replacing prescriptions for eye glasses. They came up with a chip that you simply put in your frame and your doctor just sends your prescription to the chip which floats over the eye," she says.

Another one was like a Fitbit, with the tracking device and all the information in the shoes that you wear, Bartz notes.

"Those are young minds. Sometimes you hear the words that our youth are lost. It's encouraging to see things like this, that there's so much creativity and energy out there," she states.