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Introducing the Inaugural Venture Madness Champion
Phoenix-based biotech company Pinnacle Transplant Technologies wins head-to-head, bracket style competition

PHOENIX, Ariz. (March 10, 2014) - After three rounds of live pitching at Talking Stick Resort on March 6th and 7th, Pinnacle Transplant Technologies emerged victorious and was crowned the 2014 Venture Madness Champion. In addition to the prestigious title, the Phoenix-based tissue bank took home a \$30,000 check, which will go directly toward hiring more employees and developing the company's Auxano DMB Putty product, which stimulates new bone growth.

"Venture Madness accomplished two major objectives," said Jonathan Ariano, chair of Invest Southwest. "First, we wanted to shine a spotlight on the Southwest's robust startup ecosystem. Second, we wanted to provide the companies with the experience and exposure that only an event like this can offer."

"More than anything, Venture Madness gave us exposure," added Gabriel Hyams, president and executive director of Pinnacle Transplant Technologies. "We haven't had a lot of community marketing or outreach because we've been developing the business for the last three years. The event allowed us to increase the awareness of who we are and what we do."

The unique, bracket-style startup competition, presented by Invest Southwest in partnership with the Arizona Commerce Authority, offered \$50,000 in total cash prizes, which was split amongst the top four ventures. After a tight race, Contatta, a collaborative email platform for businesses, took second place, earning a \$10,000 check, which the company will use to help bolster sales and marketing efforts, according to Pat Sullivan, CEO of Contatta. "The event was really, really fun and



challenging,” he added. “I appreciated the exposure and getting to see multiple presentations in a competitive environment.”

Rounding out the top four were ReplyBuy, a mobile platform that allows businesses to create custom SMS sales campaigns, and Clear Demand, a retail pricing software company. Each took home \$5,000. ReplyBuy CTO and Co-Founder Tony Saia felt it was uplifting to see how far the startup community in Arizona has come. “We don’t have to be in Silicon Valley or Austin now to have that type of exposure,” Saia said. When asked about his experience participating in Venture Madness, James Sills, president and CEO of Clear Demand, said “To have such an event right here in Arizona provides tremendous support to companies like Clear Demand. Venture Madness shows that Arizona is teaming with great ideas and the talent to execute on those ideas. It’s just exciting.”

Venture Madness began online in early February 2014 with 64 companies seeded in a head-to-head, bracket-style competition. After two online rounds, a judging panel, with the aid of public votes, chose a winner in each matchup and the 16 remaining companies advanced to the live-demo portion of the contest held March 5-7, 2014 at Talking Stick Resort in Scottsdale, Ariz. It’s here where the top 16 live pitched in front of a panel of judges, who ultimately determined that Pinnacle Transplant Technologies would be crowned the Venture Madness Champion.

About Invest Southwest: Invest Southwest is the premier organization for connecting investors with the best and brightest ventures in the region. In addition to providing valuable information on topics important to the investment community, Invest Southwest offers year-round opportunities for investors to connect with startups. Its annual signature event, Venture Madness, is a unique startup competition presented in partnership with the Arizona Commerce Authority. Venture Madness pits 64 thoroughly evaluated startups against one another in a bracket-style, head-to-head competition to crown the champion of champions. Visit <http://InvestSouthwest.org> for more information.

About the Arizona Commerce Authority: The Arizona Commerce Authority (ACA) is the state’s leading economic development organization with a streamlined mission to grow and strengthen Arizona’s economy. The ACA uses a three-pronged approach to advance the overall economy: recruit, grow, create – recruit out-of-state companies to expand their operations in Arizona; work with existing companies to grow their business in Arizona and beyond; and partner with entrepreneurs and companies large and small to create new jobs and businesses in targeted industries. Visit <http://AzCommerce.com> for more information.

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