



1 Port Way
Dayton, WA
509-382-2577
509-382-8993 fax

CONTACT:

Brad McMasters, Economic Development Coordinator
(509) 382-2577

brad@portofcolumbia.org

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Press Release

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STUDENTS ENCOURAGED TO BE ENTREPRENEURS THROUGH PRESENTATION & COMPETITION

Dayton, WA – As part of [Global Entrepreneurship Week](#) in November, Dayton School District students will learn about entrepreneurship and hopefully be inspired to put together their own business plans for a regional competition. On November 15th, [Brett Spooner](#), a Managing Partner of [Gravis Law, PLLC](#) in Richland, WA will present to both the middle and high school students about all aspects of being an entrepreneur. Spooner specializes in Business law and dedicates much of his time to the growth and expansion of small businesses and the entrepreneurial ecosystem in the Tri-Cities. He strives to provide innovative solutions for businesses faced with technological and legal challenges. Spooner is also a co-founder of the [FUZE](#) Coworking space in the Tri Cities. A self-described serial entrepreneur, Spooner is also a co-owner of [Solar Spirits Distillery](#).

Afterwards, there will be an additional presentation by [Joe Jacobs](#), the Regional Director of the [Washington Small Business Development Center](#) (SBDC) in Walla Walla. Jacobs will present about an upcoming business plan competition which this year which has expanded into Columbia County. The Pitch It! Competition is a collaborative effort between the SBDC, Whitman University, Walla Walla University and others, including the [Port of Columbia](#) in Dayton. The competition challenges the students to design and develop innovative business concepts, create a realistic business model for their entrepreneurial idea, and pitch their ideas. The preliminary competition in Walla Walla will take place in February at the Walla Walla Community College and the final competitions will take place at the GESA Powerhouse Theater in March. In between, there will be three workshops in Walla Walla and one in Dayton to offer assistance to participating students.

The Port of Columbia is a funding partner which helps our region afford an SBDC director who, in turn, offers a myriad of small business resources and support in Columbia County. Port employee, Brad McMasters who works as the Economic Development Coordinator, participated as a preliminary judge in last year's competition and was very impressed with the opportunities the competition offered the students. "So, the Port chose to help sponsor this year's competition in return for allowing Columbia County students to participate."

The Port will work with Bob Cummings, the [Dayton Middle and High School](#) Future Business Leaders of America (FBLA) instructor to encourage the students to participate and to offer them resources along the way. In addition, the Port will help with transportation to the workshops, which will more than likely take place on the Whitman campus.

Global Entrepreneurship Week, Nov. 14-18, is the world's largest celebration of the innovators and job creators who launch startups that bring ideas to life, drive economic growth, and expand human welfare. In 2015, Washington State offered more than 200 events in 39 counties and 2016 promises to be even bigger as communities throughout the state recognize the power of entrepreneurship, from elementary school age to senior citizens.

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