



EDD

ECONOMIC
DEVELOPMENT
DEPARTMENT

OUTDOOR RECREATION DIVISION

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:
October 7, 2022

Announcing the Outdoor Startup Winners of the 2022 Adventure Pitch to Take Home 15K in Cash Prizes

Winners were selected on the spot from 6 finalists that competed in a live pitch event sponsored by the Outdoor Recreation Division, CNM Ingenuity, and Outdoor New Mexico.

TAOS, N.M. - Hundreds gathered in Taos this Friday morning, October 7, at the Outdoor Economics Conference to watch six Adventure Pitch finalists compete for \$15,000 in cash prizes. The first-annual Adventure Pitch was launched by the Outdoor Recreation Division, CNM Ingenuity, and Outdoor New Mexico to connect outdoor industry entrepreneurs with capital, investors, and mentors.

This outdoor startup support project is one of many successful programs from the Outdoor Recreation Division (ORD) of the state Economic Development Department. The outdoor recreation economy contributed \$1.9 billion to the GDP in 2020. Since Gov. Michelle Lujan Grisham created ORD, it has invested over \$160,000 in business incubator and accelerator programs with plans to launch additional programs in 2023.

The Outdoor Recreation Division is proud to announce that Trufit received \$10,000 as the first-place winner of the live pitch. In second place, Earth Traveler Teardrop Trailers collected \$3,000 and \$2,000 went to third-place winner Base Medical to support their pitch ideas.

All six finalists earned complimentary attendance to the Outdoor Economics Conference, booth space at the conference expo, access to possible funders and outdoor industry experts, professional feedback from the panel of pitch judges, and networking opportunities with outdoor business owners, elected officials, and other outdoor industry leaders. Following the live pitch, startup participants also joined in one of several outdoor excursions in the Taos area that celebrate the local industry. The outdoor adventures included choices between hikes, white water rafting, mountain UTV rides, llama treks, and more.

The 2022 Adventure Pitch received 19 entries from some of New Mexico's most talented and creative outdoor companies. The competition was inspiring, diverse, and impressive and did not disappoint when the live-pitch event occurred. ORD looks forward to this annual event that will continue to showcase the capacity and capability of the state's outdoor recreation businesses.

"The Adventure Pitch is an innovative way to ensure we are continuing to build a more diversified economy for New Mexico," Economic Development Secretary Alicia J. Keyes

said. "We're excited to add more job opportunities, increase outdoor recreation income statewide, and expand upon the state's diverse culture through ventures like these. The winners of this pitch event represent why New Mexico is an ongoing national leader in the outdoor recreation economy."

The three outdoor Adventure Pitch winners are:

TruFit, CEO Adam White: TruFit is a Tijeras-based business whose goal is to share a new fitness experience for differently-abled athletes that is empowering, inspiring, and effective at helping everyone to be their best. Their mission is to help people with disabilities improve their health and wellness and become more independent and confident through innovative fitness programming designed specifically for the individual that is supported by a community dedicated to improving their quality of life. The TruFit app serves as the cornerstone, generating custom workouts and activities based on an individual's specific disabilities. TruFit aims to change the traditional fitness and health industries by creating a wellness community that is accessible to everyone, no matter what their fitness level. The TruFit adaptive fitness app provides solutions and suggestions to help individual exercise, coach individuals, or lead inclusive group classes.

Earth Traveler Teardrop Trailers, Co-Founder Laura Esteves: Santa Fe-based Earth Traveler Teardrop Trailers has created an innovative, ultra-light teardrop trailer that can be towed by most sizes and types of vehicles. By redesigning the teardrop shape and giving it a lightweight body, the Earth Traveler offers high aerodynamic characteristics and energy-saving benefits, perfect for the environmentally minded travelers who want to maintain a small carbon footprint. As the lightest in the market, the trailer will ideally be in great demand to be towed by conventional compact cars and EV (electrical vehicles). The market shift towards electric vehicles creates an opportunity in the RV marketplace for lightweight and aerodynamic vehicles. Rising fuel prices are also making combustion engine owners consider the Earth Traveler brand. The business is pursuing all the planning required to phase in accelerated production, moving to leveraging outside vendors of components.

Base Medical, CEO Teal Harbin: Base Medical is a woman-led training solutions company, based in Albuquerque and Durango, CO, disrupting the field of wilderness rescue education with an innovative approach that eliminates the current barriers of wilderness medicine and search and rescue (SAR) education. Their training solutions, wilderness medicine, and SAR education are accessible, affordable, and sustainable for rescue teams, outdoor organizations, and outdoor professionals worldwide by offering online, hybrid, and remote learning options. The learning methods on which the company was founded was in anticipation of the inevitable progression of wilderness medicine education to more advanced delivery systems and the inherent responsibility. Along the journey, Base Medical has gained valuable experience and insight that is now shaping program improvements and initiatives that will be set into motion as they blaze a new trail forward.

"The potential of New Mexico's outdoor industry was well demonstrated today," ORD Deputy Director Alyssa Renwick said. "New Mexico has outpaced the rest of the nation in job growth and income in the outdoor recreation industry since 2018 and we just witnessed some of the ingenuity that helps power the continued growth of our outdoor recreation economy."

The panel of distinguished judges included Managing Partner of Sun Mountain Capital Brian Birk, SBDC at UNM Taos Director Anwar Kaelin, Senior Associate of Kickstart Seed Fund Sydney Keddington, Crosslink Capital Associate Tanner Merrill, Director of Foster Innovation Exchange at Arrowhead Center Carlos Murguia, New Mexico Outdoor Recreation Division Deputy Director Alyssa Renwick, and Tramway Ventures Partner Katie Rice.

The annual Adventure Pitch invites startups based in New Mexico with high-growth potential and a core offering that touches outdoor recreation, the environment, and/or health and wellness to apply for an opportunity to pitch for cash prizes and a chance at connecting with an entrepreneurial network of outdoor-business experts and investors. The event is a catalyst project to continue growing the thriving New Mexico's outdoor economy.



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The Outdoor Recreation Division (ORD) works to ensure that all New Mexicans gain from the public health, environmental, and economic benefits of sustainable outdoor recreation. ORD works to achieve positive, measurable impacts within economic development, conservation, education, and public health through collaboration with New Mexican businesses, nonprofits, and partner state and federal agencies. Gov. Michelle Lujan Grisham signed New Mexico's ORD into law in April 2019. Since then, ORD has invested over \$11.74 million in outdoor access through its marquee grants, including the Outdoor Recreation Trails+ and Outdoor Equity Fund programs. These initiatives have supported more than 175 Tribes, local governments, and nonprofits to improve outdoor infrastructure and introduce almost 40,000 young New Mexicans to the outside world. The New Mexico outdoor industry is a powerhouse of meaningful job and wealth creation, employing over 25,000 people and contributing \$1.9 billion to state GDP.

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