

Young Belmont entrepreneur nabs Regions business honor

BY ERIN LAWLEY
NASHVILLE BUSINESS JOURNAL

At age 13, Andy Tabar started designing Web sites for fun – he never dreamed the pastime would turn into a profitable business.

Now 19, Tabar is the winner of the Outstanding Student Entrepreneur of the Year award for the businesses he founded while in high school, Andy Tabar & Associates and Nashville Creative. He was chosen from more than 50 students involved in Belmont University's entrepreneurship program to receive a \$5,000 scholarship from Regions Bank.

"I never even heard of the word 'entrepreneurship' until two years ago," says the Belmont freshman. "At first, it was my hobby, then it turned out that I was getting actual business out of this stuff."

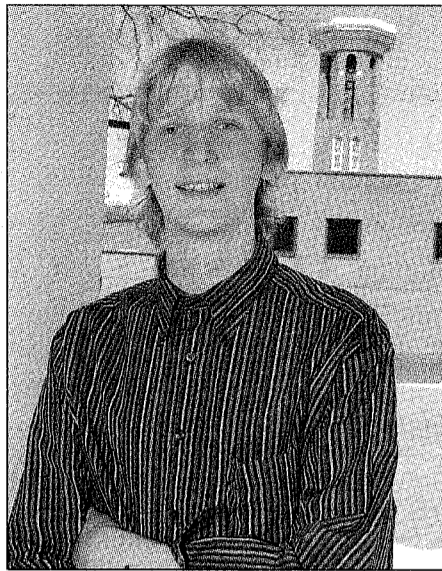
Tabar's main venture, Nashville Creative, offers marketing development, Internet communications, Web site development, Web site hosting and tech services. The business falls under his umbrella company, Andy Tabar & Associates, which was developed to encompass Nashville Creative and future ventures.

Nashville Creative became profitable several years ago, Tabar says, and its client list now numbers more than 50, featuring names such as music producer Rick Elias, known for work on the film "My Big Fat Greek Wedding" and former WB TV series "Dawson's Creek."

Becky Gann, program coordinator at Belmont's Center for Entrepreneurship, was one of the five judges on the award selection panel, which also included past winners and representatives from Regions Bank. Entrants' applications included descriptions of their business and target markets, financial reports, summaries of their sustainability and contribution to the community, as well as plans for growth.

Gann says Tabar's application was striking: "As a freshman, he's reached an impressive level and he still has much promise to come."

If business continues to grow, Tabar expects to add an employee and a few interns by next fall, he says. He works alone out of one of Belmont's business hatcheries, offices provided



Andy Tabar has other ventures planned.

by the center to help students develop their companies.

Jeff Cornwall, director of the center, says Tabar is the first freshman to receive a spot in the incubator space and the first one to win the entrepreneur award, which was started in 2004, the same year the entrepreneurship program started.

"This is the first time we've had a freshman with a significant enough business to go into that space," says Cornwall. "What I like is that Andy is continually thinking about how he can take this thing and grow and develop it and really make it into something sustainable."

The next venture for Tabar is "Club Nash," an online community similar to Citysearch or AOL Cityguide, that will provide a directory of local dining and entertainment venues and events, as well as networking opportunities similar to those on Myspace. However, Club Nash will have a much more local feel than these national sites, Tabar says. He hopes to launch the site by June.

After that, Tabar says, he's going to continue to follow the path that his businesses lead him down.

"I'm just going to keep running with business plans and, when I have an opportunity, I'm going to drop everything and run for it," says Tabar, who doesn't have a clear post-graduation career goal.

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Local small business groups seeing growth

BY D. CHRISTOPHER GARRETT
NASHVILLE BUSINESS JOURNAL

Local representatives from the U.S. Small Business Administration and the Service Corps of Retired Executives will attend National Small Business Week events April 9-15 in Washington, D.C. riding a wave of growth.

Helped by a robust economy and the region's economic development successes, Tennessee's SBA offices saw a 43 percent jump in 2005 loan activity, says Clint Smith, state district director. That momentum has carried over

to fiscal 2006.

"We're 34 percent ahead of where we were last year," he says.

The state SBA plans to hold a Nashville matchmaking event to boost government contracts in June.

SCORE, too, is on the march.

"Our activity continues to increase," says Edd Lancaster, marketing committee chairman for the local, 40-member SCORE chapter. "I think that's reflective of the growth that's occurring in our community."

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