



media release

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### 2009 Brian Fazio Business Creation Project Recipients Announced

MANKATO, Minn. (February 23, 2009) - Three Greater Mankato entrepreneurs were announced today as the recipients of the 2009 Brian Fazio Creation Project. The Brian Fazio Business Creation Project, named for community economic development advocate Brian Fazio, is a program of the Greater Mankato Business Accelerator, which connects start-up and growing businesses with the resources they need to succeed. Along with the \$5,000 in seed funding, the three recipients will be clients of the Business Accelerator's *Business Building program*, with access to advisors, along with space in the Technology Plus facility compliments of the City of Mankato.

This year's recipients are:

- Steve Doty, who created a space-saving household solution for appliances and cabinets
- AJ and Meredith Menden, who created Menden Inc. to develop and sell a unique extension ladder shelf
- Helen and David Tofte, who started Caditt LLC to manufacture, market and sell Spyke™, a hand-held kitchen tool that enables the contents to be easily poured out of solid-packed cans.

This year's Brian Fazio Creation Project competition attracted 25 entrepreneurial individuals or teams applicants. Finalists were selected in January and gave a business presentation to the selection committee in early February. Contributors to the Brian Fazio Business Creation Project are Abdo, Eick & Meyers, LLP, Alltel Wireless, City of Mankato, First National Bank of Minnesota, US Bank, Valley Bank and Wells Fargo.

#### About the Greater Mankato Business Accelerator

The Greater Mankato Business Accelerator is a program of the City of Mankato and Greater Mankato Growth Inc., the integrated region's economic development and chamber of commerce organization. The Greater Mankato Business Accelerator connects area start-ups and growing businesses with the resources they need by serving as a single access point for all of southern Minnesota's abundant business development services. Rather than going to multiple organizations, entrepreneurs can access the right resources at the right time, through a single source – the Greater Mankato Business Accelerator. Because the Business Accelerator program helps entrepreneurs efficiently navigate all the services available to them, they're able to spend more time building their business.

#### About Brian Fazio

Brian Fazio led area economic development efforts as the executive director of Greater Mankato Economic Development Corporation from 1998 until his unexpected passing in 2003. Brian gave selflessly to the community. He was a coach and referee for youth hockey and served on many committees and boards, including the MSU-CSET Industrial Advisory Board. He is remembered not only for his upbeat personality, but his diligent efforts to boost the local economy. His love for the community was reflected in his passion for promoting its distinctive assets – particularly higher education. Recognizing the unlimited potential of the area's 17,000+ students, he was an enthusiastic advocate for business/education partnerships and entrepreneurship.

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