



**March 3, 2007**

## **California entrepreneur receives The Ascent Award from Ball State**



An entrepreneur who started a California-based plastics recycling company in his garage received [The Ascent Award](#) March 3 from Ball State.

Michael Biddle was honored by Ball State's [Entrepreneurship Center](#) during the inaugural Ascent Award ceremonies at the Conrad hotel in downtown Indianapolis.

The award honors a businesses owner who started out with little more than a great idea mixed with grit and determination - the type of creativity, drive and passion the university's Entrepreneurship Center strives to instill in its students.

"I accept this for the people in my company, not for me because it takes a team to do what we're doing," Biddle said. "If you do something you love and you do something that makes a difference you will attract around you other people who will share your vision, and that is the secret to success."

Looking for a way to help improve the environment, Biddle built a recycling plant in his two-car garage, selling recycled plastic taken from junked electronics and automobiles. Now MBA Polymers Inc., based in Richmond, Calif., is the world's most advanced recycler of plastics used in durable goods.

The other finalists were Amilya Antonetti, who started a line of hypoallergenic cleaning products sold through her company SoapWorks, and Tom Szaky, who started TerraCycle of Trenton, N.J. The company produces a plant food derived from organic waste that is fed to worms; the resulting excrement is then liquefied and packaged in used soda bottles.

The three finalists were selected by undergraduate entrepreneurship students. The award recipient was then chosen by a group of Ball State entrepreneurship alumni.



The three entrepreneurs met with Ball State students prior to the event. Each indicated a preference to maintain a relationship with Ball State by creating programs that will allow students to continue learning from their vast experience, said [Larry Cox](#), Ball State's entrepreneurship center director.

"It would be impossible to overestimate the impact these three entrepreneurs had on our students," he said. "Each entrepreneurial journey - each of their ascents - was exceptional and inspiring. Our students were deeply challenged and extremely grateful for the experience."

For more information on the contest, go to [www.bsu.edu/entrepreneurship/ascent](http://www.bsu.edu/entrepreneurship/ascent).

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Entrepreneurship Center at Ball State University is proud to present an award program that honors entrepreneurs. The recipients of this award exemplify what we believe is the true meaning of the word "entrepreneur." They are individuals who tackle tough problems, work from the bottom up, and craft businesses that creatively solve the challenges of life. The spirit of entrepreneurship is not defined by the technology employed or the capital structure of the undertaking, but by the energy, grit and determination of the undertaking. Entrepreneurship is the story of an ascent. The character of the entrepreneur and the power of the venture are fully seen only in the recounting of the journey. We celebrate this spirit in The Ascent Awards.

The selection process begins with a nationwide search for entrepreneurs who embody the essence of Ball State's Entrepreneurship Center. These stories are compiled and presented to our senior entrepreneurship majors who vote on the three they feel are the most compelling. Ball State Entrepreneurship alumni make the final determination after viewing presentations of each of the three nominees and by talking to each one about the challenges and successes they have faced. The Ascent Award process culminates in a dinner honoring all three finalists where the winner is announced.