

Birmingham Business Journal - April 20, 2009
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Monday, April 20, 2009

UAB professor's firm wins latest Alabama Launchpad

Birmingham Business Journal - by [Jimmy DeButts](#) Staff

An entrepreneurial group led by a **University of Alabama at Birmingham** professor won the \$100,000 first prize in the latest Alabama Launchpad competition.

Innovative Composite Solutions won the annual entrepreneurial competition for its design and development of high-end thermoplastic composite components for various industries, including military and aerospace.

Innovative Composite is led by UAB School of Engineering professor Selvum Pillay. Its product is a lightweight, recyclable, heat-reversible and fiber-reinforced plastic that is a lighter and stronger alternative to metal.

Alabama Launchpad is a competition that offers winning startup firms seed money. Since 2006, Alabama Launchpad provided cash prizes to the top three finishers of its competitions. Alabama Launchpad past winners have gone on to raise almost \$3 million in "follow-on" money from investors.

The four-phase competition lasts several months. The teams develop and submit business plans. The final phase includes teams submitting a revised plan for review by a panel of judges.

A UAB-University of Alabama partnership, Spectrum PhenomX, took second place and the \$50,000 prize. Spectrum develops ways to measure how variant genes can change cellular activities that trigger specific disease processes.

Third place and \$25,000 went to Direct Injection Flat Head Engine Co., representing the University of Alabama. Direct Injection engines offer a patent-pending alternative to carburetors. Its technology gives small engine companies a way to increase the efficiency of their engines and address reduced emissions mandates.

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