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### Small business briefs

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#### RETAIL

##### WAL-MART HOSTS VENDOR EXPO

Local business owners will have the rare chance to pitch their products and services to the world's largest retailer when Wal-Mart and Sam's Club host a free business-to-business expo this week.

The one-day event will feature representatives from Wal-Mart's supplier development, purchasing and leasing and construction divisions. The event will include information and guidelines on becoming a Wal-Mart or Sam's Club vendor. Wal-Mart Stores bought more than \$5 billion worth of goods from more than 2,600 Florida suppliers last year.

The expo will be held Thursday from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. at the Sheraton Miami Mart, 711 NW 72nd Ave., Miami.

An RSVP is required at: [theresa.rogers@wal-mart.com](mailto:theresa.rogers@wal-mart.com). Include your name, phone number and the number of people attending.

#### START-UPS

##### FIU ANNOUNCES PLAN WINNERS

Four South Florida start-ups took home cash and glory during Florida International University's Entrepreneur Challenge Business **Plan** Competition.

The annual contest had two categories this year: The Investment Track -- open to **FIU** students and alumni -- and a social entrepreneurship category open to any business in South Florida.

Go Global Education, a website providing online global education programs to public and private charter schools, took top prize in the first category. The runner up was MovieTmedia, which provides on-demand television to hotels in the Caribbean.

The **winner** of the social entrepreneurship track was My Daily Cause, a website that aggregates charities and nonprofits and allows visitors to donate online in small increments. The runner-up was NoBo Interactive, an education and therapeutic toy company that aims to help autistic children develop social skills.

The **winner**s in each category took home \$10,000 in prize money while the runners-up received \$2,500 each.

For more information, including guidelines for next year's contest, visit: <http://challenge.fiu.edu>

## E-COMMERCE

### ONLINE SALES HELP DURING SLUMP

Despite the slumping economy, 70 percent of business owners involved in e-commerce said they expected online sales to stay steady or improve. A poll of 800 small business customers of Register.com (which makes its profits registering websites) found 53 percent would be investing in website design, 43 percent in search engine optimization and 41 percent in e-mail marketing.

The study also found that 55 percent of small business have more than one domain name registered for their business.

The company hopes to improve its business by getting yours. It launched a new section of its website dedicated to tips for going online at: [www.registerlearningcenter.com](http://www.registerlearningcenter.com)

-- JIM WYSS



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