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Windstream Announces \$40,000 Smart Tomorrow Contest for High School Students in Lexington, Lincoln and Sugar Land

Entrepreneurship Contest Challenges Students to Develop an Innovative Start-up Idea for a Chance to Win

LITTLE ROCK, Ark., Sept. 24, 2015 (GLOBE NEWSWIRE) -- Windstream (NASDAQ:WIN), a leading provider of advanced network communications, today announced the **Smart Tomorrow Start-up Challenge**, a \$40,000 entrepreneurship contest for high school students in Lincoln, NE, Lexington, KY and Sugar Land, TX. Divided into local and final rounds, the competition challenges students to design a start-up business offering a product or service that can improve our communities and the way we live.

"Entrepreneurship today knows no age limit, and young people are more inspired than ever when it comes to reimagining the way we live," said Sarah Day, Senior Vice President of Small Business and Consumer at Windstream. "As part of Windstream's commitment to technology and education, we wanted to give students a creative outlet and the opportunity to experience what it's like to walk in the shoes of an entrepreneur and bring a start-up to life."

High school students in Lincoln, Lexington and Sugar Land may enter the Smart Tomorrow contest individually or in teams of two. The contest is divided into two parts to determine local finalists and the overall winner. For the local round, students will provide an overview of their start-up idea using WordPress, a free, user-friendly website platform to explain the company's mission, how it operates, its founders and more.

One winner will be selected from Lincoln, Lexington and Sugar Land to advance to the finals, where they will be tasked with creating a short, 2-3 minute video as if they are pitching the business to a team of investors. All three videos will be hosted on inc.com for one week to allow visitors to vote for their favorite start-up idea. The results of the online vote will be considered alongside a vote from Windstream and an industry expert to determine the overall winner.

The winning student(s) will receive \$20,000 and an additional \$20,000 for their school's parent-teacher association. Further, the two runners-up will receive \$5,000 and matching donation of \$5,000 for their parent-teacher association.

Deadlines to Know:

- Entry forms are due by 11:59 pm CT on Wednesday, October 7, 2015
- WordPress sites must be complete and submitted by 11:59 pm CT on Wednesday, November 11, 2015
- For finalists, videos are due by 11:59 pm CT on Monday, January 11, 2016

For more information and contest materials students can visit www.windstream.com/startupchallenge. Questions can also be sent to SmartTomorrow@windstream.net.

About Windstream

Windstream, a FORTUNE 500 company, is a leading provider of advanced network communications and technology solutions, including cloud computing and managed services, to businesses nationwide. The company also offers broadband, phone and digital TV services to consumers primarily in rural areas. For more information, visit the company's online newsroom at news.windstream.com or follow on Twitter at [@WindstreamNews](https://twitter.com/WindstreamNews).

No purchase necessary. Open to students in grades 9 - 12 enrolled in and attending an eligible school in Lexington, Kentucky, Lincoln, Nebraska or Sugar Land, Texas. For a school to be eligible, school must be affiliated with an organization or separate entity (such as a PTO) with a bank account that can accept money on behalf of the school. A student should have a parent's or legal guardian's permission to participate. Students who attend home schools are not eligible. Challenge starts 12:01 a.m. CT 9/23/15, ends 11:59 p.m. CT 01/24/16. Registrations must be received by 11:59 p.m. CT 10/7/15. Void outside Lexington, Lincoln or Sugar Land and where prohibited. See Official Rules, available at a participating school's main office or at www.windstream.com/startupchallenge.

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