

# Mid-Iowa News

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## **Pappajohn helps entrepreneurs get leg up**

**By: Bob Zientara**

Starting a business requires some hand-holding.

And for entrepreneurs who launch their business "ships" in Ames, some important help comes from the Pappajohn Center for Entrepreneurship.

Located in the Iowa State University Research Park, the center aims its services in three directions:

- \* Developing businesses at the research park.
- \* Encouraging entrepreneurship on the ISU campus.
- \* Reaching out to offer education and business assistance in the Ames area and beyond.

The ISU center is one of five scattered around the state and named for Iowa venture capitalist John Pappajohn.

Greek-born and Iowa-bred, Pappajohn worked his way through college, founded his own insurance business and, 39 years after he opened his venture capital firm, has aided or presided over more than 100 business startups.

Looking to spread interest in entrepreneurship, Pappajohn created centers at ISU and four other Iowa learning institutions with a \$10 million gift in 1996 (part of more than \$25 million in donations he and his wife, Mary, have made).

Steve Carter, who directs the ISU center, said it offers business development help for new or would-be tenants at the research park, real-life research and/or business startup experiences for students, and bridges between private business and the universities array of research capabilities.

The 10-member staff includes, among others, Judi Eyles and Kay Palan, who are involved in student programs, such as an ISU entrepreneur club that meets twice monthly, and entrepreneurship research, and Mike Upah and Helena Poist, who work on business development.

Student, administrative and fundraising personnel also work for the office.

Statewide, the centers foster the exchange of information and best practice in a variety of ways. One of the most popular is the Iowa Business Plan contest, which gives cash awards to established Iowa business owners who've enjoyed success and can show how they did it.

Last year, more than 70 business plans were submitted. Winners earned \$50,000 in cash prizes.

More on Pappajohn centers

\* Pappajohn Center at Iowa State University: [www.isupjcenter.org/](http://www.isupjcenter.org/)

\* Other centers around Iowa: [www.pappajohn.com/entrepreneur/index.html](http://www.pappajohn.com/entrepreneur/index.html)

