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Flexiworld's wireless vision captures top prize

BY DAN COOK

Business Journal editor

Flexiworld Technologies, a Portland high-tech startup, won a first-place rating at one of the premier Northwest business competitions.

The company, founded by William Chang, was one of two first-place winners at the Early Stage Investment Forum (ESIF) held in Seattle March 28-29. Flexiworld also finished among the Top 10 in *The Business Journal's* recent Business Plan Competition.

More than 170 companies were competing for the array of prizes at stake in the Early Stage competition. Chang said Flexiworld made the initial cut when the field was reduced to 20 companies. Last week, 10 of those finalists competed on March 28 and 10 on March 29. Flexiworld was in the latter group. When the acered-

ited angel investors and venture capitalists at the conference cast their votes, Flexiworld, based in Vancouver, Wash., was declared the March 29 winner.

Flexiworld Technologies is a provider of pervasive wireless printing technologies, including software, intellectual property and embedded imaging solutions to the mobile device and printing industries.

Asked to put a value on the company's award, Chang said: "This means a lot to us. There are the prizes offered, of course, but more than that, we received a huge vote of confidence from people who invest in companies like ours."

Chang said Flexiworld struck deals with two angel investors this week and a third was planning to travel from Seattle to Portland to discuss an investment.

"The exposure certainly played a role in getting these investments," he said.

Companies competed on the basis of domain expertise and experience, the scope of the market opportunity, competitive positioning, compelling business model and unique technology. Nearly 200 accredited angel investors and venture capital firms participated in the two-day event.

Chang has 26 patents pending in the mobile pervasive computing and digital printing realms. In 1999, he was named Sharp Lab's "Inventor of the Year."

Flexiworld produces software that will enable a cell phone user to print out documents of nearly any size anywhere that a wireless-adapted printer exists.

"The big boys are investing tons of money in this technology right now," Chang said. "This thing's going to get bigger and a whole lot faster than you think." □



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William Chang's firm recently took first place at a prominent investor conference.