

TrailHead Adventure participates in “Shark Tank”-style Wisconsin TV program

By [Travis Nyhus](mailto:travis.nyhus@chronotype.com) travis.nyhus@chronotype.com Nov 16, 2022 Updated 40 min ago

TrailHead Adventure in Rice Lake was selected as part of “Project Pitch It” a “Shark Tank”-style television show for Wisconsin entrepreneurs.

The UTV rental business on Knapp Street in Rice lake was nominated by the Wisconsin Small Business Development Center, owner Dana heller said. “Project Pitch It” allows the state’s entrepreneurs to pitch their ideas to a panel of “business moguls” who ask questions, provide advice and challenge entrepreneurs to take their business to the next level.”

The Hellers quickly put together an introduction video of their business and were notified they’d moved to the next round of competition. After three auditions TrailHead Adventure was named a finalist, and on Nov. 2 the Hellers went to Milwaukee to record their pitch in a TV studio to a group of panelists, including Jerry Jendusa, Gale Klappa, David Gruber and Peg Ann. The episodes will be aired in every Wisconsin TV market beginning next March.



In front of the group of panelists the Hellers presented a pitch of their business and then answered questions. Dana Heller said some of the aspects they focused on were their business being at a trailhead of the Wild Rivers State Trail, the longest off-road trail in Wisconsin, its partnership with Polaris that provides new UTVs each year, how they boost the local economy bringing trail riders from neighboring states and communities to Rice Lake and that TrailHead Adventure is a family-run business. The business was started by Dana and Jennifer Heller, and their son Hunter and his girlfriend Emily Kay.

“Being family-owned is tough but at the same time its fulfilling,” Dana Heller said. “We’re able to meet all the people together and see them have fun.”

Each episode includes three contestants demonstrating their business idea to win weekly awards which include \$10,000 from Peg Ann and David Gruber, \$5,000 workshops and mentoring from Jerry Jendusa and UW-Milwaukee’s Lubar Entrepreneurship Center or \$1,500 and mentoring with We Energies leadership.

Dana Heller said being able to learn from experts in marketing will be helpful as TrailHead Adventure embarks on its third year in business.

“I like to think I know marketing but these guys are professionals,” he said. “They do this for a living. You can think you know what you’re doing but when it comes to the real deal those guys are going to help.”

TrailHead Adventure opened in May 2020 and Heller said its second year saw overall rides and multi-day rides increase. Looking ahead Heller hopes to see more weekday rentals and expand community and business group outings, and a prize from Project Pitch It can only help in getting the word out about TrailHead Adventure.

For more information on “Project Pitch It!” visit projectpitchit.com, and to learn about TrailHead Adventure, visit trailheadadventure.com