



The goal of this contest is to provide services to the region’s nature- based outdoor recreation by offering rewards to new and expanding businesses which submit solid business plans to provide vital goods and services to users of the bike trails, mountain bike trails, hiking trails, water trails, skiing trails, ATV trails, hunting, fishing, etc. in all of Venango County. Anyone looking to launch a new venture or expand an existing one that offers a service or product to the outdoor recreation industry is invited to participate.

[See the reverse side for contest rules.](#)

Contest Dates & Deadlines

Contest Kicks Off:	Thursday, February 19, 2026,
Concept Papers Due:	April 9, 2026, by 4:00 PM
Semi-Finalists Announced:	May 14, 2026
Business Plans Due:	August 6, 2026, by 4:00 PM
Presentations:	August 20, 2026
Winners Announced:	Friday, September 11, 2026 Time and location to be determined

Need some help? Free services here:



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Elevating Outdoor Recreation Business Contest Overview

The contest officially kicks off on Thursday, **February 19, 2026**. The Oil Region Alliance will host an informational session at the **Oil Region Venango Campus (Rhoades Center) in March**. All are welcome to attend.

How to Apply:

Submit a **concept paper** along with your application outlining your business idea by **April 9, 2026**. Downloadable forms and additional details are available at www.oilregion.org.

Send completed applications and concept papers either digitally or in hard copy to:

Jessica Gorman

Oil Region Alliance

217 Elm Street

Oil City, PA 16301

Email: jgorman@oilregion.org

Questions? Contact:

- Jessica Gorman at 814-677-3152 ext. 100
- Kim Harris at 814-677-3152 ext. 120 or kharris@oilregion.org

Contest Details:

- **Semi-Finalists** will be announced on **May 14, 2026**.
- **Semi-Finalists** will develop full business plans and **submit them by 4:00 PM on August 6, 2026**.
- Semi-Finalists will present their business plan to a panel of judges on **August 20, 2026**.
- **Winners** will be announced on **Friday, September 11, 2026** (time to be determined).

Prizes:

- **1st Place:** \$10,000
- **2nd Place:** \$5,000

Funds will be disbursed at the discretion of the Oil Region Alliance as outlined in the Winner's Agreement. *Receipts are required for reimbursement; funds cannot be pre-spent.*

Eligibility:

- Open to **new or expanding businesses** that provide essential goods and services for **nature-based outdoor recreationists**.
- Businesses must be **located in Venango County**.

Note: If the Selection Committee and/or Judges determine no entry meets the criteria, the Oil Region Alliance reserves the right to **withhold awarding prizes**.

Special thanks to **Venango County** for their partnership and support in funding this contest.

**All contestants must read and review the Contestant's Terms and Conditions. To be eligible for participation, contestants must agree in writing to the rules, regulations, terms, and conditions of the contest. In addition, winners must sign the Winner's Agreement form before any funds are awarded.*