

## Canby man wins his own \$1 million Ace Hardware store

by Bend\_Weekly\_News\_Sources

Desert Storm Veteran comes out on top in Dream Ace Contest, is awarded his own store as America's top aspiring entrepreneur with the business opportunity of a lifetime

Ace Hardware announced Thursday that Gower Talley of Canby, Oregon is the Grand Prize Winner of the Dream Ace Contest, awarding him the business opportunity of a lifetime – his very own Ace Hardware store in Houston valued at \$1 million. Following presentations by the two contest finalists, Talley and Frank Ali of Jackson, N.J., Ace retailers attending the annual Ace Hardware Convention in Las Vegas participated in a live vote to determine the winner.

Gower Talley of Canby, Oregon won his own \$1 million Ace Hardware store. “We are thrilled to welcome Gower into our Ace family of entrepreneurs,” said Ray Griffith, president and CEO of Ace Hardware Corp. “Each of our stores is independently owned and operated and the Dream Ace Contest has provided us the opportunity to shine a light on this fact as well as two qualities that are at the heart of Ace Hardware and our store owners – entrepreneurialism and helpfulness.”

The Dream Ace journey started for Talley seven days after he retired from the Oregon National Guard, when he found out he was a state finalist. Prior to the National Guard, where he served as marketing director, Talley spent sixteen years in the United States Army, which included service in Operation Desert Storm.

More than 5,400 aspiring entrepreneurs from across the country entered the Dream Ace Contest from January 1 through January 31, 2007. Throughout February, the state finalists traveled to New York City and Chicago to compete in a series of skill-based activities, including interviews and presentations with qualified Ace retailer judges, sales aptitude assessment, business and marketing plan and two-day retail “boot camp,” all of which helped narrow the field of contestants from 40 state finalists to 12 semi-finalists and then the two finalists, Talley and Ali.

The culmination of the Dream Ace Contest will be the grand opening of Talley's new store on June 29 and 30. The 15,500-square-foot store will be located at 8851 Spring Cypress Road in Spring, Texas. The \$1 million-valued business opportunity includes opening stock inventory, fixtures, décor and all the necessary

technology Talley will need to operate the store. Additionally, Talley will receive training and support from Ace, similar to the assistance the cooperative provides all its new retailers.

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