

MEDIA INFORMATION

Wednesday 16th March, 2016

For immediate release

Moray Game Jammers Train Their eyes on Glittering Prizes

Moray College UHI is set to host the third Moray Game Jam (MGJ) this weekend as teams of video and board gamers battle it out for a raft of career-enhancing prizes.

A record number of competitors are set to gather in Elgin to take part in the 48-hour-long gaming marathon, which begins this Friday (18th March) at 12.30pm and ends at 12.30pm on Sunday 20th March.

The event sees teams of video game and board gamers come together to create brand new games during the course of a single weekend.

Winning teams in both the computer games and the board games sections will be announced at 3pm on Sunday.

The triumphant team on the computer games side will be offered a six week summer placement with leading games developers, Hunted Cow Studios, who are based in Elgin.

The placement will help the team develop their game to a point at which it is ready to take to market. It will be published under the banner of the team's own newly-formed company or with the assistance of MGJ partners.

They will be paid a weekly stipend and receive mentoring and support in developing and bringing their game to market from MGJ partners, Hunted Cow Studios, Moray Business Gateway, ScreenHI, the XpoNorth network for screen and broadcast and Creative Scotland.

There will also be the opportunity for the team to publish their winning game – either with of Hunted Cow – or under their own label.

For the winning board game team, there is the opportunity to take their game to UK Games Expo in Birmingham in June in an all-expenses paid trip. This is the biggest UK for hobby games in the UK.

They will also receive the opportunity to have their game assessed by California-based Victory Point Games with the possibility that it might be made as a prototype.

The 2016 Moray Game Jam also includes a host of free gaming masterclasses and workshops.

Amanda Millen, director of XpoNorth's Screen and Broadcast network, ScreenHI, which is co-organising the event said: "We have been overwhelmed by the number of applicants this year.

"It's the third year we have put on this event and it just gets bigger and better, showing that video and traditional gaming is a real growth industry in the Highlands and Islands.

"This year, as well as reuniting with partners, Moray College UHI and successful Elgin-based games studio, Hunted Cow, we are delighted to have Creative Scotland and Moray Business Gateway on board as partners.

"We look forward to working with them all to develop the next generation of gamers from Moray. Both organisations have been incredibly supportive. Being able to offer the winning teams funding and all-important advice from business professionals is career gold-dust."

Morgan Petrie, Creative Industries Manager at Creative Scotland said: "We're delighted to be able to once again support Moray Game Jam to deliver this growing event.

"A full schedule of workshops and strong industry support offers scope to participate at all levels.

"The winning team have a fantastic development opportunity working with Hunted Cow. And for board game makers, there's the chance to attend the UK Board Game Expo in Birmingham."

The public are being asked to join in the fun at Moray College UHI this weekend. As well as taking advantage of the free masterclasses, on Sunday, while judges deliberate, people can take part in a mini-gaming playground at which participants will showcase their games.

The window for teams looking to compete in the Moray Game Jam has now closed but there will be workshops led by industry professionals on offer on Saturday 19th and Sunday 20th March.

Alan Emrich, from Victory Point Games in California, also a lecturer at The Art Institute of California in Orange County will give a keynote speech to open the event on Friday 18th March.

The workshops are free and will be open to Moray Game Jam competitors and members of the public. Young people aged 12 or under should be accompanied to the workshops by an adult.

The workshops will include Digital Sculpting, Blender – 3D modelling, hands on Unity, art concepts and story-telling for games, and more.

Moray Game Jam 2016 reunites the partnership between Moray College UHI, ScreenHI [the organisation that delivers XpoNorth Screen and Broadcast – feeding into main XpoNorth festival in June in Inverness] and Elgin-based games publisher Hunted Cow Studios. This year, Business Gateway Moray, is also a partner. Funding is provided by Creative Scotland.

For updates follow Moray Game Jam on Facebook and Twitter.

www.facebook.com/MorayGameJam/
<https://twitter.com/moraygamejam>

For more information, see <http://www.moraygamejam.com/workshops.html>

NOTES TO THE EDITOR

About ScreenHI

www.screenhi.co.uk

ScreenHI is the XpoNorth creative industries Screen and Broadcast network which works with trade bodies across the UK and beyond in the sphere of Screen and Broadcast. Funded by Highlands & Islands Enterprise and the European Development Fund, it provides unique job, training and networking opportunities and to encourage local economic activity within the screen and broadcast sectors.

About Hunted Cow Studios

www.huntedcow.com

Hunted Cow Studios is a leading game developer and publisher which was founded in 2003 with the goal of producing fun and accessible games, but with a layer of deeper and engaging gameplay for experienced players. Their most popular browser game is Fallen Sword which has attracted over four million players since its launch in 2006.

Andrew Mulholland - Co-Director, Hunted Cow Studios Ltd
Director at Hunted Cow Studios Ltd

Andrew Mulholland graduated from Abertay University in 2003 after studying Computer Games Technology and went on to form Hunted Cow Studios with Glenn Murphy. He has over 10 years' experience in the industry and has helped bring successful games such as Gothador and Fallen Sword to market.

About Moray College UHI

www.moray.uhi.ac.uk

Moray College UHI has been developing and expanding its range of courses since the inception of the University of the Highlands and Islands in 2011. The status of university provides greater opportunities for the college to develop its research activities and contacts with local industry. The new Moray Life Science Centre, known as the Alexander Graham Bell Centre, is a recent addition to Moray College UHI. This £6.5 million project funded by Highlands and Islands Enterprise, NHS Grampian, European Regional Development Fund and Moray College UHI will provide facilities for, and expertise in, life science research and education bringing together academia, research and business under one roof.

The college offers a broad range of courses covering many subject areas which is continually expanding, particularly within the Higher Education sector and prospective students can now study up to Masters and PHD level. The college also continues to offer courses from pre-employment training through all levels of Further Education.

This ensures that locally, prospective students can access education at any level to match requirements, abilities and qualifications. Many courses are offered on a flexible, part-time as well as a full-time basis to suit students' learning needs. Many students want to improve their qualifications or skills in order to gain employment or to improve their employment prospects. Others want to study for a qualification that they intend to use as a stepping stone to a higher qualification. Some will register for courses simply for leisure and interest. Moray College UHI can offer it all.

Alan Emrich of Victory Point Games

www.victorypointgames.com

Most great game ideas begin with an impassioned gamer thinking about a game and saying, “Wouldn’t it be cool if...?” Victory Point Games came about in much the same way. Working with aspiring and veteran designers, combined with a print on demand model, Victory Point Games takes on cutting edge game ideas that no one else dares to even look at.

Today, Victory Point Games has grown into a full-fledged team of talented game developers. Each of us brings our own thoughts and hard work to the table, producing a company that is among the most diligent, tight-knit, and unashamedly quirky in the board game industry. Working with gamers, for gamers, and as gamers ourselves, we couldn’t ask for a better way to be spending our time. We firmly believe that it is the people you get to work with that makes the game industry so great.

Business Gateway Moray

www.gateway.com

Business Gateway Moray is a gateway to expert local business advice and practical guidance. Whichever sector a business is in, or whatever stage it is at, one-to-one support, specialist advice, business skills workshops and networking events will help.

Creative Scotland

www.creativescotland.com

Creative Scotland is the public body that supports the arts, screen and creative industries across all parts of Scotland on behalf of everyone who lives, works or visits here. It enables people and organisations to work in and experience the arts, screen and creative industries in Scotland by helping others to develop great ideas and bring them to life. It distributes funding from the Scottish Government and The National Lottery.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Game Jams provide a great platform to design, develop, create and test a new game – all in 48 hours – a true challenge, offering an opportunity to connect and collaborate with like-minded people, experiment and innovate, whilst building portfolios for a growing industry.

A Game Jam is a competition to create a new video game – and in some cases a board game). It usually involves the coming together of groups of individuals with an interest in or experience of video gaming either through programming or design. Usually entering in teams, participants will not be aware of the theme until they arrive at the competition, the structure of which is common throughout the world. Teams meet on a Friday afternoon and spend 48 hours creating a new idea/ concept based on the theme of the specific games jam.

A game jam may be centred around a theme, which all games developed within the jam must adhere to. The theme is usually announced shortly before the event begins, in order to discourage participants from planning for the event beforehand and from using previously-

developed material. Themes are meant to place restrictions on developers, which encourages creativity.

For more information:

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