



## **Undergrad Takes 2<sup>nd</sup> Place in the Third Annual ACRA (American Collegiate Retailing Association) Undergraduate Student Retail Analysis Competition**

Joshua Early, a senior business student, won second place in the third annual ACRA undergraduate student retail analysis competition. Rocky Mountain Chocolate Factory Company sponsored the competition by providing valuable company data and resources. Students competed by selecting a new site for a Rocky Mountain Chocolate Factory franchise store and developing a business plan to support their site selection. Students used a GIS tool, SimplyMap, provided by Geographic Research for the competition. The information about the competition can be found at <http://www.acraretail.org/studentcompetition.html>, where three winning reports including Joshua Early's report are available to view.

Joshua Early stated..... "The pinnacle of creativity within the business field resides in the creation, justification, and completion of a viable business endeavor. While all the business disciplines strive to teach a student the boundaries within which to operate, a student can never truly transcend those boundaries with conventional discipline-bound curricula. As it were, this is why I have always jumped at any opportunity to select the unconventional assignment: one in which the parameters of success are not defined by objective measures because there simply is not a right answer, but only many well-justified ones. I came across such a project in Dr. Scott Fay's Retail Management class. There, I had the opportunity to give birth to a metaphorical child who needed sustenance, identity, and purpose no less than a biological one. Within four months, I had to create a franchise location report, which is just as harrowing an experience as creating a business plan. One must first determine the renown who, what, where, when, and why that has long been filed under "grade school" in the attic. Using careful conceptual and analytical skills, I had to focus on a locus of starting locations that theoretically and rationally would be viable franchise locations. Once the prime location was identified, I soon realized that I had been consumed by the project, and that I was no longer fathering a business idea/child, but I had become that child, and that I was orphaned on the streets of Miami. I had no credentials, and I somehow now needed to accumulate the facts and opinions of the leading authorities of the world to consummate a viable plan of attack to establish myself as a proper, successful entity. The parameters of the case competition demanded strong market analysis using SimplyMap, a market statistics, web-based program. Careful analysis of the individual market was then required to make sure the Four P's of marketing were satisfied. Only when sturdy and profitable could I again sit back and look at my creation, my child, my business construct, and watch it evolve and prosper. That is the theory at least. Many thanks to those who helped, and much luck to those who wish to endeavor on parenting their own business baby."