



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Calling All Game Designers!

The Chicago Toy and Game Fair (www.chitag.com) is hosting a design competition for Rio Grande Games. Jay Tummelson, owner of Rio Grande Games, will be sitting down privately with each finalist selected and reviewing their prototypes at the Chicago Toy and Game Fair.

Jay has committed to publishing at least one of the games presented to him. Jay will also provide each designer with his advice and expertise on improving their designs for publication.

Finalists will be selected from the following meetup group(s);

Chicago (www.chicagoboardgames.com)
Registration Deadline: 9/13

Milwaukee (<http://www.meetup.com/mmbgm/>)
Registration Deadline: 9/26

Minneapolis (<http://boardgames.meetup.com/316/>)
Registration Deadline: TBA

Indianapolis (<http://www.meetup.com/indygaming/>)
Registration Deadline: 9/12

St. Louis (<http://www.meetup.com/St-Louis-Board-Games/>)
Registration Deadline: 9/4

Norwalk, CT (<http://www.meetup.com/Fairfield-County-Board-Games/>)
Registration Deadline: 9/9

New York, NY (<http://www.meetup.com/nyc-boardgames/>)
Registration Deadline: Rules with component list and board/card layouts by September 17. September 30 to submit a physical working prototype.

Southern CA @ StrategiCon (www.strategicon.net)
Registration Deadline: 8/21

Memphis, TN @ GameCon (www.gameconmemphis.com)
Registration Deadline: 9/11

Orlando, FL (<http://www.orlandogaming.org/smf/index.php?page=51>)
Registration Deadline: 9/7

Portland, OR (<http://www.meetup.com/pdxgames/>)
Registration Deadline: 8/31

Additional locations may be added pending discussions with the local organizers.

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Registration:
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All participants need to show a functioning prototype to the group organizer at registration, to make sure the organizers are able to prepare adequately for the playtest events. Demonstrations via video and digital photo are acceptable. Final versions of the rules are not required for registration; changes may be made to the prototype or rules prior to the playtest events.

Individual event organizers may accept submissions by mail at their own discretion. If you are submitting a prototype by mail, you should not expect that the prototype will be returned to you following the judging event. Please do not send anything you can't replace.

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Playtest Events:
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There is no cost for submitting an entry. The individual event organizers may charge a small fee to participants (no greater than \$5) to help cover costs of securing a venue and organizing the event.

Semi-final events may be run at each location in the event of a high volume of entries.

The game's creators may be present at the playtesting event, but will be prohibited from playing their own game at the event as well as explaining or clarifying rules to any of the playtesters. We recommend having playtesting sessions of your own prior to the event to help clarify any rules issues, and having additional copies of the rules and game aids/quick references available for the contest.

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Judging:
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Individual sites may vary in their voting criteria. Local sites have the final say in how their judging is conducted. While organizers can contact us if they want an opinion, the authority for selecting a finalist remains completely at the local level.

Our initial guidelines for voting:

Players evaluating the prototypes will be required to play all prototypes and submit a vote sheet at the

end ranking each of the games (1, 2, 3, etc). Incomplete voting sheets will not be counted.

Each game's total ranking will be added up to determine who claims the finalist position.

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Finalists:

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Each finalist will receive free admission to the Chicago Toy and Game Fair and a 30 minute time slot with Jay Tummelson to present and discuss their prototype. Travel and expenses are not provided. Prototypes cannot be submitted by proxy or by absentee with written/video/voice description; the designer must be present to explain their designs.

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FAQ

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1. How "professional" does my prototype have to be?

Your prototype doesn't need to be pretty at all, though attention to detail can certainly help "sell" people on the experience. Remember, the goal is to get people to play and enjoy the game. You do not know who will be playing the game, and you might not want to plan around your ideal audience. Giving your game to a group of strangers, leaving them alone, and asking for feedback afterwards can give you some very good and useful information... and more accurately represents what a publisher will be thinking about when they are eyeing your product for licensing.

2. Do I have to show my prototype to the event organizer in person?

No, some digital photos will do. We mostly want to separate the "have something to play" from "don't have anything to play, but think I'll have it ready by the event" people. Since the organizer will be trying to round up people to play and judge your game and making space arrangements, they need to know exactly what they're working with. You can still make adjustments to your prototype up until the event, but you should be able to bring something to the table if you're going to register.

3. Can I submit multiple designs?

This will be at the discretion of the local organizer, and largely dependent on how many other designs need to be reviewed. Plan on submitting just one.

4. Should I bring an NDA to make sure nobody steals my designs?

Whether or not you get someone to sign one at your local event, we can say for certain that Jay will not sign an NDA. Most game manufacturers will not, as an NDA creates legal complications for them if they publish another game with some mechanical similarities. The same goes for copyrights and patents; if you've gotten them issued on your designs, expect to be refused. Further discussion on this point is available further along in this post for the curious.

5. Will this be an annual event?

The odds of this contest reoccurring increase with the success of the first event. The factors that make up success:

- a. Strong Community Involvement.
- b. Fair conduct at the events.
- c. Support for the organizers, who make this all possible.
- d. Commercial success of licensed titles

6. What is being done to prevent the local events from turning into "popularity contests", with friends just voting up designs?

I'll begin with the bottom line: There's not much point to voting up a poor design, as Jay will be the final arbiter. A design without merit will fail of its own accord.

Mechanically, the voting system requires participants to rank each game in order. This produces a score which will determine the finalist. Incomplete votes will not be counted. Also, designers cannot directly interact with anyone playing their game. This prevents them from influencing other players.

Locally, the organizers have authority over their events. They are all very good at what they do. They will do whatever they see as necessary to keep things running smoothly and fairly.

Socially, anyone that would rig a contest like this probably doesn't have that many friends that would want to help them out.

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Additional questions:
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If you have any questions regarding the contest, please submit them to contest@chitag.com. We'll respond with collected answers on this post.

Please do not contact Rio Grande Games with questions, as they will not be addressed. Individual contest event organizers have been instructed to forward questions that are not specific to their group on to contest@chitag.com.

We hope that you enjoy this contest event and that you will help develop your local gaming communities.

Nate Scheidler, Director of Community Marketing, ChiTAG

