



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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MAINE TECHNOLOGY INSTITUTE FUNDS \$55,785 IN 7 AWARDS TO MAINE COMPANIES

Awards support innovative technology projects in five sectors and seven counties

BRUNSWICK, MAINE – The Maine Technology Institute (MTI) approved seven new grant applications in August 2016, totaling \$55,785 in awards to entrepreneurs from across Maine to advance new product and process development in aquaculture and marine technology, forestry & agriculture, information technology, and precision manufacturing. This round of MTI awards leveraged \$105,093 of matching contributions from the award recipients.

Awards from this round include:

- Four (4) Tech Start Grants totaling \$16,655
- One (1) Business Accelerator Grant totaling \$9,140
- One (1) Seed Grant totaling \$25,000
- One (1) Phase 0 Grant totaling \$4,990

“The awards from this MTI funding round represent solid geographic diversity and a focus on innovation across some traditional natural resource-based and legacy industries in Maine such as agriculture, aquaculture, leather tanning, and shoe making,” said Brian Whitney, MTI’s President. “We are thrilled to play a role in growing and retaining jobs throughout Maine and across industry sectors.”

Summary of awards:

Tech Start Grants – Four companies received MTI Funding totaling \$16,655

The Maine Shoe Project
Northport

Award Amount \$3,490
Match Amount \$3,490

The project aims to reinvigorate the Maine shoe industry, bringing capital into the state through the manufacturing and marketing of custom fitted women's shoes. 3D Scanning Technology and CNC milling allows The Maine Shoe Project to make a personal last (form), for each customer. 70% of women have foot problems that make it difficult finding comfortable, fashionable shoes.

Sensory Cyber Systems
Orono

Award Amount \$5,000
Match Amount \$10,795

Sensory Cyber Systems, LLC, is committed to the development, construction, and distribution of technologies for clinical, biomedical, research, educational, engineering and various other business applications. Its Universal Color Mapper device is intended to be a low-cost color and light emitter and calibrator. The TechStart funds will be used to engage in customer discovery to assess which market has the greatest potential for the Universal Color Mapper and will lay the groundwork for additional funding leading to the final development, construction, and distribution of this innovative and universally applicable device.

Sensory Eyesight for Education (S.E.E.)
Old Orchard Beach

Award Amount \$3,165
Match Amount \$3,665

Sensory Eyesight for Education has designed a therapeutic medical device that will enable individuals with cortical visual impairment who are under the age of 22 to build new brain cells around old damaged brain tissue. There are over four million individuals that are affected by this low vision disability, and this medical device layers multi-therapeutic techniques together to provide, over time, a clear picture for those with cortical visual impairment to regain vision by looking at an appealing surface.

Tasman Leather Group
Hartland

Award Amount \$5,000
Match Amount \$9,262

Tasman Leather Group, LLC has developed several innovative processing methods to produce leather products that are in high demand from customers including the U.S. Military, LL Bean, New Balance, Timberland and others. This project will produce a business plan and technology development roadmap around these new processing methods to guide its Maine-based team through the evolution of its business model. Tasman's goal is to develop and commercialize innovative new products to expand its product offerings, secure its competitive position in the global marketplace, and improve the long term sustainability of its workforce.

TechStart Grants are available to entrepreneurs and companies across Maine who are seeking to develop their inventive ideas into new, innovative products or services. Grants are awarded monthly and may be used to support specific activities such as business plan development, intellectual property filings, market analysis, or technology transfer activities out of research institutions.

Business Accelerator Grants – One company received \$9,140 in funding

Sea & Reef Aquaculture
Franklin

Award Amount \$9,140
Match Amount \$35,740

Sea & Reef will use the Business Accelerator Grant to help increase sales. The proposed project includes the development of marketing materials, participation in a key tradeshow within the marine aquarium industry, and the shipping of sample fish to target customers to secure new

business. Furthermore, the company will add staff to further accelerate its sales and market penetration and to increase its annual revenue.

*Business Accelerator Grants are available to start-up/early stage companies that have been awarded MTI Development Loans (DLs) and to companies that have recently been chosen for a federal Small Business Innovation Research /Small Business Technology Transfer (SBIR/STTR) Phase I or Phase II grant and/or a Broad Agency Announcement (BAA) award. Funds are to be used to advance the new technology to market and to firmly establish or increase the scope and sustainability of the business enterprise. The grant is intended to increase the competitiveness of the company by providing funds directed at product/service commercialization, business and management team development, and company organization. The next application deadline for MTI's TechStart and Business Accelerator Grant programs is **October 4, 2016**. Applications are due by 5 PM.*

Seed Grant Awards – One company received MTI Funding totaling \$25,000

Raptor Maps, Inc.
Van Buren

Award Amount \$25,000
Match Amount \$37,141

The MTI Seed Grant will enable Raptor Maps to complete its RaptorSense™ analytics service to optimize the potato production system in Maine. Raptor Maps is a full-service analytics company that manufactures and operates purpose-built drones for agriculture. It combines remote sensing with field data (e.g., soil and tissue tests) on its cloud-based platform to deliver high-value insights. Raptor Maps fills a void in precision agriculture by working directly with clients to build its system around industry-specific needs. Fueled by the MTI Seed Grant, Raptor Maps foresees the expansion of its services in Maine.

*Seed Grants are offered three times a year to support the conversion of innovative research into new products, processes, and companies. Funded activities may include proof of concept work, prototype development, field trials, prototype testing, pilot studies, or technology transfer activities. MTI offers Seed Grants as direct investments in companies that are pioneering Maine's future through their technology innovations. The next Seed Grant application deadline is **December 6, 2016**.*

Phase 0 KickStarter – One company received MTI Funding totaling \$4,990

Alba-Technic
Winthrop

Award Amount \$4,990
Match Amount \$5,000

Head injuries from accidental falls is a significant and growing problem, specifically within the elderly population. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention stated that approximately 2.5 million emergency room visits, hospitalizations, or deaths were associated with traumatic brain injury. Accordingly, Alba-Technic, LLC is developing the SMARTY® protective headgear to mitigate fall-related head injuries. The project will use new advances in computer-aided modeling software and 3D printing to develop a scalable manufacturing method for prototype development and initial sales. Prototypes will be created in three different sizes and performance will be tested by UMaine prior to sales into the medical device market.

The Phase 0 KickStarter is a funding opportunity offered to individuals and companies seeking to submit SBIR/STTR Phase I Proposals to one of the 11 federal agencies participating in the program.

Awards of up to \$5,000 are offered to foster and support competitive federal proposal submissions from Maine applicants. Funds can be used for external direct costs associated with preparing an SBIR/STTR proposal, such as hiring grant writers, subject matter experts, other consultants or purchasing market research reports needed to inform your proposal. Phase 0 KickStarter applications are accepted on a rolling basis and at least 30 days in advance of solicitation due date.

For more information on MTI funding programs, please visit www.mainetechnology.org.

MTI is a publicly financed, private, nonprofit organization created by the Legislature in 1999 to stimulate research and development activity leading to the commercialization of new products, processes and services in the state's seven targeted technology sectors. MTI programs are either loans, equity investments, or grants designed to enhance the competitive position of those sectors and increase the likelihood that one or more of these sectors will support clusters of industrial activity and create quality jobs across Maine.