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MAINE TECHNOLOGY INSTITUTE FUNDS \$117,824 IN 11 AWARDS TO MAINE COMPANIES

Awards support innovative technology projects in seven technology sectors and five Maine counties

BRUNSWICK, MAINE – The Maine Technology Institute (MTI) approved eleven new grant applications in September 2016, totaling \$117,824 in awards to entrepreneurs from across Maine to advance new product and process development in aquaculture and marine technology, biotechnology, composite materials, precision manufacturing, forestry & agriculture, environmental technologies, and information technology. This round of MTI awards leveraged \$259,163 of matching contributions from the award recipients.

Awards from this round include:

- Three (3) Tech Start Grants totaling \$12,500
- Four (4) Business Accelerator Grants totaling \$89,474
- Four (4) Phase 0 Grants totaling \$15,850

“These investments illustrate the diversity of MTI-funded projects and range from monumental advancements in breast cancer detection, to functional improvements in thermal insulation and boomboxes, to modular hydroelectric systems and the development of kelp-based food additives,” said Brian Whitney, MTI’s President. “We are inspired by these inventors and doers and MTI is happy to play a role in furthering their innovations.”

Summary of awards:

Tech Start Grants – Three companies received MTI Funding totaling \$12,500

Introspective Systems
Portland

Award Amount \$4,500
Match Amount \$4,500

Introspective Systems develops solutions for complex adaptive systems on its xGraph platform. The xGraph platform is a technology used for scaling collaborative analytics for artificial intelligence, Internet of Things and science analysis applications. Many similar systems are offered in the defense sector. However, accessing this market is cumbersome due to Federal Acquisition Regulations and the inability to get information on possible teaming relationships, prior contracts, and program management contacts. This project "DOD Market Intelligence software" supports Introspective Systems' intention to purchase a Government Market intelligence product called Deltex. This software provides the company with year round market and opportunity intelligence so it can leverage government contracts to both further develop its technology platform and provide opportunities to organically grow the business.

Revolution Research
Orono

Award Amount \$3,000
Match Amount \$3,000

Revolution Research (RRI) is developing a fire proof thermal insulation foam board, Arbolate, made from biobased sources, as an alternative to existing flammable petroleum based foam boards currently on the market. Its technology developed through federal STTR Phase I funds is nearing maturity with fire proof and water proof features and will be ready for commercialization investigations and scale-up with the successful completion of its project. RRI seeks funding to protect its rights (intellectual property) and apply for two (2) separate provisional patents.

University of New England
Biddeford

Award Amount \$5,000
Match Amount \$14,000

As a heterogeneous disease, breast cancer can be divided into distinct subtypes. There are two major subsets of breast cancer - - estrogen receptor negative and estrogen positive. The estrogen receptor negative is a more aggressive subtype, more difficult to treat, has greater ethnic disparity concerns, worse prognosis, and almost twice the risk of mortality. UNE has identified a marker in the blood that allows it to detect estrogen negative breast cancer at its earliest stages. UNE intends to file intellectual property (patent conversion) of its prior United States provisional patent that focuses on this marker as a sensitive and reliable ethnic specific indicator for estrogen receptor negative breast cancer prognosis, disease progression and treatment outcome measurement; and would thus aid personalized medicine.

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 – Four companies received MTI Funding totaling \$89,474

DemerBox
Portland

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

DemerBox makes rugged, waterproof, Bluetooth boomboxes that are also storage cases. This project supports 1) consumer-requested design changes (addition of USB charging, consolidating and "polishing" components) and 2) an updated manufacturing process which will reduce costs while keeping core company functions in Maine. The result will be a better product available at

a lower cost, which will appeal to a wider range of customers and open up the reality of a wholesale program for retailers.

Introspective Systems
Portland

Award Amount \$14,994
Match Amount \$146,163

Introspective Systems LLC will utilize its grant to focus on its business strategy to secure additional equity funding. Introspective Systems is seeking additional new equity funding to finish the build out of its xGraph platform focused on Internet of Things capabilities. xGraph is a highly scalable distributed analytics platform currently being used in a distributed sensor network for the National Earthquake information. The equity funding at the culmination of this project supports Introspective Systems development of a full-fledged Internet of Things platform for edge intelligence needed in domains like the US electrical grid

Invisible Intelligence
Augusta

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

Invisible Intelligence, LLC will conduct research and development on its General Audio Recording Device ("GARD"), which captures all radio communications at general aviation airports, including radio traffic from aircraft and ground personnel. GARD records and stores communications that never before have been recorded, plays them back, and generates reports on airport usage. In the event of an aircraft safety incident or accident, investigators can use it to reconstruct event-related communication; review of communications captured by it also can be used in airport personnel safety training. This project will include research on this product's suitability for use at other ground facilities.

Wassail, LLC dba Maine Mead Works
Portland

Award Amount \$24,480
Match Amount \$24,480

Wassail, LLC dba Maine Mead Works has developed a continuous fermentation technology that enables the efficient production of mead and other alcoholic beverages. The MTI funded project enables the company to expand its R&D capabilities with key equipment and training in specific analytical techniques.

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 November 1, 2016. Applications are due by 5 PM.

Phase 0 Grants – Four companies received MTI Funding totaling \$15,850

Introspective Systems

Portland

Award Amount \$1,250

Match Amount \$1,250

This project provides additional market size reports and analysis supporting a federal SBIR commercialization plan submitted to the U.S. Department of Energy's Advanced Scientific Computing Research (ASCR) program. Introspective Systems xGraph platform is being used in big analytics markets like managing the Earthquake analysis systems for the US Geological Survey. This proposal will research and implement proposed extensions to Introspective's analytics platform to Petabyte or larger high volume and velocity data sets as found in the Department of Energy. The xGraph platform is a technology used for scaling collaborative analytics for artificial intelligence, Internet of Things and science analysis applications.

Seaborn

Portland

Award Amount \$4,800

Match Amount \$5,250

Seaborn, LLC (Seaborn) researches, promotes, and develops new products and processing methods for Maine seaweed. Although seaweed is generally recognized as a functional food and growing in popularity, little is known about the nutritional profiles of farmed sea vegetables. Seaborn is applying for a USDA SBIR grant to research the nutrient composition of four species of Maine seaweed in different forms - fresh and preserved. The goal of the project is to better understand the resource and its commercialization potential, and to develop recommendations for safe and effective daily use.

Surge Hydro

Belfast

Award Amount \$4,800

Match Amount \$5,000

Surge Hydro, LLC is developing a modular hydroelectric system to electrify non-powered dams. The "Clip-On Generating System" utilizes existing turbine technologies in an innovative system that minimizes capital costs and civil works, expedites permitting, and reduces operation and maintenance costs. To fund its research and development, Surge Hydro is applying for a Department of Energy (DOE) Office of Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy (EERE) grant, "HYDRONEXT: Innovative Technologies to Advance Non-powered Dams and Pumped-storage Hydropower Development" valued at up to \$225,000 to complete the design, test performance through modeling, and construct and test a scale model prototype.

VitaminSea

Buxton

Award Amount \$5,000

Match Amount \$5,000

VitaminSea's project will provide funding essential to the professional preparation and submission of a USDA SBIR Phase 1 grant application. The expected outcome is a submitted SBIR application. VitaminSea believes there are growth opportunities in the commercial food market for its kelp. As such, the SBIR grant will fund foundational research in order to develop a cost-effective, nutritional supplement/additive derived from locally-sourced kelp. Ultimately, VitaminSea plans to utilize information from this research to not only develop kelp-based food additives, but to support local suppliers and the Maine seaweed industry.

The Phase 0 Grant 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 direct costs associated with preparing an SBIR/STTR or BAA proposal, such as hiring grant writers, subject matter experts, other consultants or purchasing market research reports needed to inform its proposal.

Phase 0 Grant applications are accepted on a rolling basis and at least 30 days in advance of a federal 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.