



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **MAINE TECHNOLOGY INSTITUTE MAKES \$1,027,822 IN AWARDS TO 25 MAINE COMPANIES AND RESEARCH INSTITUTIONS**

***Awards support innovative technology projects in all seven of the state's targeted technology sectors and span ten Maine counties***

**BRUNSWICK, MAINE** – The Maine Technology Institute (MTI) has approved 25 awards across its various funding programs which total over \$1 million in awards and leverage over \$1.6 million in matching funding from the organizations. The investments will support innovative projects in 10 of Maine's 16 counties and in each of the state's targeted technology sectors: biotechnology, aquaculture and marine technology, composite materials technology, environmental technology, advanced technologies for forestry and agriculture, information technology, and precision manufacturing.

Awards from this round include:

- Two (2) Development Loans totaling \$604,490
- Seventeen (17) Seed Grants totaling \$368,607
- Four (4) TechStart Grants totaling \$19,725
- Two (2) Business Accelerator Grants totaling \$35,000

"These momentous investments will help support innovation and its transformation into new products, services and companies," said Brian Whitney, MTI's President. "The MTI Board of Directors is pleased to play a role in encouraging and stimulating these pioneering initiatives by our emerging and established for-profit companies, as well as our well-known non-profit research institutions in Maine, to allow them to grow and sustain jobs in our state."

## Summary of awards:

### Development Loan Awards – Two companies received MTI Funding totaling \$604,490

**WedgeRock**  
Limerick

Award Amount \$354,490  
Match Amount \$558,715

WedgeRock is a Maine Corporation created to reassemble talent that was stranded when MaxTorque moved from Limerick, Maine. Given the need for mechanically driven failsafe actuators, WedgeRock and its principals have developed a solution for large spring return actuators. Introduction of this disruptive technology will significantly improve failsafe performance across many industries. The company anticipates development will be completed in less than 24 months with annual revenue to exceed \$10 million.

**Spring Point Solutions**  
Portland

Award Amount \$250,000  
Match Amount \$312,906

This is related to projects started under previous MTI grants to enhance and commercialize a quality management tool called QM Wizard originally designed for integration with the company's Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) system, MotorBase. With the award, Spring Point will update its legacy platform, MotorBase, and provide greater integration with other Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP), Customer Relationship Management (CRM), and test-equipment systems used by its largest target customers.

Development Loans of up to \$500,000 are offered on a rolling basis to support the conversion of innovative research into new products, processes and companies. *Development Loan Applications are accepted on a rolling basis. Visit [www.mainetechnology.org](http://www.mainetechnology.org) for additional information about applying.*

### Seed Grant Awards – Seventeen companies received MTI Funding totaling \$368,607

**Tasman Leather Group, LLC**  
Hartland

Award Amount \$25,000  
Match Amount \$54,690

Tasman Leather Group has developed several innovative and unique processing methods to produce leather products that are in high demand from customers including the U.S. Military OEM's, LL Bean, New Balance, Sperry, and others. This Seed Grant will allow them to purchase, install and test a piece of equipment critical to preventing cross-contamination of chemicals used in the manufacturing process. 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 long term sustainability for its workforce.

**Gotham Biotech, LLC**  
New Gloucester

Award Amount \$15,665  
Match Amount \$15,665

Gotham Biotechnology, LLC is a small start-up company based in New Gloucester, Me. The goal of the project is to design and implement a non-invasive, direct antigen Lyme disease immunodiagnostic assay. The design is based on the idea that certain bacterial antigens are

processed and released into the urine of infected patients. Urine testing is non-invasive, and will allow for direct, early detection of Lyme disease.

**Mount Desert Island Biological Laboratory**  
Salisbury Cove

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

Peripheral neuropathy affects about 42.5 million Americans and can be caused by factors such as aging, hereditary diseases, antibiotics and chemotherapy. MDIBL has identified two chemical compounds (CL-82198 and DB04760) that have the potential to treat neuropathy. Because both compounds were identified in zebrafish, the next step is to assess their efficacy in mammals.

**bluShift Aerospace, Inc.**  
Brunswick

Award Amount \$25,000  
Match Amount \$38,909

bluShift is developing a low cost, bio-fuel based, carbon composite constructed launch platform, to be made in Maine, capable of deploying 50kg of cubesats to meet the increasing market backlog by private companies and institutions. MTI funding will enable bluShift to perform up to 20 additional, larger rocket engine tests in order to validate the biofuel performance versus theoretical calculations, confirm design assumptions and preliminary findings, as well as optimize fuel mix formulation.

**Maine Aquaculture Co-op**  
Tenants Harbor

Award Amount \$8,500  
Match Amount \$26,897

The Maine Aquaculture Co-op seeks to develop intermediary scallop aquaculture infrastructure to support the ear-hung method of growing scallops. Ear-hung scallop aquaculture is new in the U.S. but has been successfully practiced in Japan since the 1950s and involves hanging scallops on vertical lines in pairs. Through the use of lantern nets this project will build out infrastructure to support the ear hanging method of scallop aquaculture, diversifying income opportunities for Maine fishermen, maintaining our robust working waterfront and realizing economic opportunity for Maine.

**Dream Local Digital, LTD**  
Rockland

Award Amount \$24,839  
Match Amount \$22,965

Dream Local's ResultsBuilder™ Platform Development & Scalability project involves innovation of the company's infrastructure and the development of key functions that will fuel scale and increased revenue for the company, and take it from a company serving hundreds of customers simultaneously to one that can serve thousands of customers in that capacity efficiently and profitably.

**Friday Feedback, Inc.**  
South Portland

Award Amount \$18,925  
Match Amount \$19,000

Friday Feedback is employee engagement software for organizations who strive to make every employee successful at work. The software brings weekly check-ins, peer recognition and engagement surveys into one system, empowering leaders to understand and improve the organization.

**Arcadia Alliance, Inc.**  
Belfast

Award Amount \$25,000  
Match Amount \$26,500

Arcadia Alliance's project will research available resin, core and reinforcing fiber technology with the objective to develop and demonstrate suitable composite shipbuilding laminates. These laminates must meet the US Coast Guards requirements for K-Class vessels as it relates to structural properties, fire resistance, smoke and insulating values. Successfully completing this project with the US Coast Guard qualifying the use of composite for this class vessels will allow commercial ships to be constructed in composites, competing with steel and aluminum for the benefit of owners and operators who will enjoy lower fuel and maintenance cost and lower emissions.

**VisionMaster, Inc.**  
Portland

Award Amount \$25,000  
Match Amount \$66,025

VisionMaster proposes creating a revolutionary barcode scanning system that is several magnitudes faster than any currently available. Current barcode scanners require items to be individually scanned; VisionMaster's proposed system will scan all barcoded items in a shopping-basket in milliseconds. The proposed innovation will create true express retail check-out lanes; this innovation will revolutionize any situation where small barcoded items are handled in succession, such as warehousing, shipping and other logistics applications.

**EarthShift Global, LLC**  
Kittery

Award Amount \$25,000  
Match Amount \$31,900

EarthShift Global, with considerable experience in the development and practice of Life Cycle Assessment (LCA), proposes prototype software laying the groundwork for development of a full-featured next generation sustainability assessment tool. EarthShift's aim is to reduce the resources and knowledge needed to obtain useful LCA results for decision-making.

**Maine Cap N Stem, LLC**  
Gardiner

Award Amount \$21,350  
Match Amount \$30,912

Maine Cap N Stem, LLC of Gardiner (\$21,350). Maine Cap N Stem is developing ideal substrate/strain combinations for the highest yielding and fastest mushroom incubation times for farms all around New England and the rest of the country. The substrate 'blocks' are made up of a balance between hardwood sawdust (oak) and a variety of organic agricultural additives to boost nitrogen and protein levels, increasing fruit-body yields per block.

**Go Labs, Inc.**  
Belfast

Award Amount \$24,840  
Match Amount \$25,140

Low-density fiberboards (LDFs) are produced commercially in Europe for the exterior insulation board market, but are prohibitively expensive to ship to North America. European LDF products are also about 10% of the board by mass in a fossil fuel derived binding agent. GO Labs is developing a low-density fiberboard made entirely from wood products. This grant will enable GO Labs to take the next step in achieving that goal by funding the development of a manufacturing methodology for consistently producing fiberboard samples with densities between 100-200 kg/m<sup>3</sup>.

**DemerBox, LLC.**  
Portland

Award Amount \$25,000  
Match Amount \$26,700

DemerBox builds super premium rugged, reliable, great sounding Bluetooth portable speakers with dry internal storage, in Portland Maine. This grant will allow DemerBox to do a major revision to its current proprietary circuitry. It will be adding Digital Signal Processing (DSP), APT-X Bluetooth technology and a battery monitoring microprocessor. These additions will dramatically improve the audio quality of the product, and allow users to see how much battery life is left between charges.

**Foothills Fuels, Inc.**  
Portland

Award Amount \$8,710  
Match Amount \$20,766

Foothill fuels is a Maine-based start-up working to be the first manufacturer of a bio-renewable camping fuel. Using Seed Grant funds, Foothill will work with Maine Maritime Academy, Blaze Partners, and a coalition of outdoor recreation institutions to manufacture a prototype fuel and validate the prototype with core users and retailers.

**Bigelow Laboratory for Ocean Sciences**  
East Boothbay

Award Amount \$20,778  
Match Amount \$20,778

Bigelow proposes to develop and optimize a recently established method for cultivating sea green species in order to increase safe production of the emerging sea greens market in Maine. An investment into the technological methods for mechanization, seed stock development, and preservation are required for year-round cultivation.

**NBT Solutions, LLC**  
Portland

Award Amount \$25,000  
Match Amount \$25,650

NBT Solutions is seeking to expand the capabilities of its VETRO FiberMap™ broadband mapping and fiber management system to include automated design and costing tools. Internet Service Providers (ISPs), particularly in rural areas of the country, are increasingly converting their networks from legacy DSL (copper) and cable (coaxial) to high speed fiber. The VETRO FiberMap™ design tools will automate the design and costing process which will save the ISP a significant amount of time and money over traditional engineering techniques.

**PK Floats, Inc.**  
Lincoln

Award Amount \$25,000  
Match Amount \$26,300

Since 1954, the PK brand has long been known for quality aluminum seaplane floats. The company aims to continue this legacy by developing a new composite float. The PK1400 composite float will be a scaled down version of PK's proven metal float design. It will be sized for any Light Sport Aircraft (LSA) with a maximum gross weight of 1430 pounds. This composite float will create another highly marketable product for PK Floats.

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 April 18, 2017.*

## Tech Start Grants – Four companies received MTI funding totaling \$19,725

**Erica Schmitz dba Schmitz Studios**  
Portland

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

This grant supports business plan development and market research for Phase 1 of an information technology product for garment makers. The resulting draft Business Plan will include: 1) market analysis of end user needs; 2) exploration of technology options to meet those user needs; 3) definition of minimum viable product (MVP); 4) estimated cost to create MVP; and 5) determination of business feasibility given estimated cost and projected revenue of MVP. If business feasibility is established, we will submit a Seed Grant proposal and seek additional development funding as a result of this project.

**Harris Media Services, Inc.**  
Yarmouth

Award Amount \$4,850  
Match Amount \$5,065

Harris Marketing Services is applying for a TechStart grant to conduct market research for PlanItPDQ, an online task-management application that helps small and medium-sized businesses Plan, Direct, and Quantify the results of their marketing activities. HMS will use the funds to conduct research required to ready the application for development and rollout, including: ID costs and pain points of current methods, measure market size and need, document the competitive landscape, determine required features, develop the technical feature set, establish pricing, and build a business plan.

**Atlantic Cookie Company, LLC**  
Scarborough

Award Amount \$4,875  
Match Amount \$5,000

The Atlantic Cookie Company has invested in customized manufacturing equipment to produce the Shuckie®, its signature product. The equipment does not operate as specified and must be optimized to meet production volume and product costing requirements in order to create a profitable business. This project will create a comprehensive Business and Technology Development Plan to solve technical challenges with the equipment, apply for MTI Seed Grant funding and traditional financing to help build a sustainable business.

**SwitchDown, LLC**  
Durham

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

Multiway light switches, which are needed whenever a light is controlled from more than one switch, come with a troublesome user interface problem: they are not always in the up position when the light is on and vice versa. SwitchDown has designed and prototyped a synchronized light switch which automatically moves so that the switch position corresponds with the state of the light. Recently, SwitchDown founder Jon Hanson was accepted to the exclusive MIT Global Entrepreneurship Bootcamp, where he will be developing the business plan for launching the company. This TechStart grant will help offset the cost of this training.

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. *The next application deadline for MTI's TechStart grant program is April 4, 2017.*

## **Business Accelerator Grants – Two companies received MTI Funding totaling \$35,000**

**The Montalvo Corporation**  
Gorham

Award Amount \$15,000  
Match Amount \$225,000

The Montalvo Corporation will perform extensive customer discovery and business development efforts as part of their SBIR Phase I/II Commercialization efforts. Through a combination of market research and existing contacts they will seek out potential customers to conduct in-depth, in-person interviews to gain a deeper understanding of product-market fit, while developing commercialization partners. Additionally, the Accelerator Grant funds will be used to prepare their Phase II Application with the services of Trout Brook Enterprises and Andrew Schoenberg. They expect to conduct 50+ interviews, gain commitment from multiple commercialization partners, and gain the necessary feedback to improve our Phase II application.

**Davo Technologies, LLC**  
Portland

Award Amount \$20,000  
Match Amount \$42,300

DAVO will scale to verticals by a two pronged effort: Sponsoring Trade Shows and Digital Marketing. Trade shows for restaurants, hair salon and accounting & bookkeeping verticals will be attended and sponsored. Digital marketing campaign to be directed at these three verticals as well as two POS companies, Square and Clover which together have over one and one half million customers.

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 April 4, 2017. Applications are due by 5 PM.***

For more information on MTI funding programs, please visit [www.mainetechnology.org](http://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.*