



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **MAINE TECHNOLOGY INSTITUTE ISSUES \$694,777 IN AWARDS TO MAINE COMPANIES AND RESEARCH INSTITUTIONS**

***Awards support innovative technology projects and leverage nearly \$1 million in private sector matching funds***

**BRUNSWICK, MAINE** – The Maine Technology Institute (MTI) recently approved 31 awards from across its suite of funding programs amounting to \$694,777 in awards and leveraging \$960,815 in matching funds from the organizations. The investments will support innovative projects in nearly half of Maine’s 16 counties and in six of the state’s seven targeted technology sectors.

Awards from this round include:

- One (1) Development Loan totaling \$203,062
- Nineteen (19) Seed Grants totaling \$419,348
- Six (6) TechStart Grants totaling \$27,367
- One (1) Accelerator Grant totaling \$25,000
- Four (4) Phase 0 Grants totaling \$20,000

“These investments will help cost-share private sector innovation efforts in Maine,” said Brian Whitney, MTI’s President. “From basic business planning, prototype development and proof of concept work, to providing assistance in attracting federal R&D funding, to helping to commercialize and scale new products, these beneficial investments will help propel these innovations and companies forward to allow them to grow and sustain jobs in our state.”

## Summary of awards:

### Development Loan Award – One company received MTI Funding totaling \$203,062

**Field Phyto-Nutrients, LLC**  
Brunswick

Award Amount \$203,062  
Match Amount \$222,074

Field Phyto-Nutrients grows micro algae in its proprietary, low-cost, sterile system. The company then extracts docosahexaenoic acid, an omega-3 fatty acid, which it brands PhytoCortX™ Liquid, an essential component of the human diet and a valuable and sought-after nutritional supplement. The company will develop the optimal production conditions and product content parameters necessary to confirm the economic feasibility of a planned commercial scale plant in Maine.

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.

### Seed Grant Awards – Nineteen companies received MTI Funding totaling \$419,348

**Caron Engineering, Inc.**  
Wells

Award Amount \$24,980  
Match Amount \$24,980

Caron Engineering is developing a power sensor that takes advantage of more modern electrical architecture to deliver even greater measurement resolution to its end users' computer numeric control (CNC) machines. These sensors are the instruments that rest at the heart of the company's existing product suite. When delivered through this jointly funded project, this sensor will be one of Caron's key marketable components and will help the company stay ahead of its competition in the worldwide Precision Manufacturing market.

**Schmitz Studios, LLC**  
Portland

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

This Seed Grant supports development and testing of a prototype and high-fidelity Minimum Viable Product (MVP) of a tech-based garment design tool.

**Blue Barn, LLC (dba Bluet)**  
Jefferson

Award Amount \$25,000  
Match Amount \$25,064

Bluet is a world-class sparkling wine made from 100% Maine wild blueberries, debuting in 2015 with a champagne-method, traditionally-packaged sparkler. Under development is a new product: a charmat-method, screw cap-enclosed blueberry sparkler created to be high-volume, value-priced, and unique in its category, with national sales potential. Production specifications will be tested, evaluated and finalized to establish optimum carbonation and fill levels that maintain closure integrity without sacrificing quality and consumer acceptance.

**SpinDoc, Inc.**  
Augusta

Award Amount \$25,000  
Match Amount \$26,790

SpinDoc™ is a business-to-business (B2B) software as a service (SaaS) enterprise based in Maine.

SpinDoc™ will serve physician practices and health care organizations across the United States by streamlining office workflow and business processes. Physician offices have embraced Electronic Health Record (EHR) technology solutions over the last decade, yet practice leadership acknowledges that there are still gaps and inefficiencies. MTI funding will allow SpinDoc™ to develop the interoperability infrastructure design and integration methodology and install the SaaS prototype at its first client for product acceptance testing leading to commercialization.

**Benjamin Dwyer**  
Scarborough

Award Amount \$25,000  
Match Amount \$29,100

Funding will be utilized to support the research and development of enhanced composite aircraft floats. The proposed technology will increase performance of composite aircraft floats, allowing the aircraft to become airborne in decreased take-off distance, increasing usability of the aircraft, reducing accident risk due to misjudgment of take-off distance, and decreasing fuel consumption and engine wear.

**Occupational Medical Consulting, LLC**  
Leeds

Award Amount \$11,395  
Match Amount \$11,395

“Occupational Medical Consulting provides leading-edge health and wellness programs to companies of all sizes.” Its Wellbeing Wheel Project is designed to incorporate the functionality of its current process while refining and streamlining its innovative process to help improve the employee retention and engagement.

**Maine Shellfish Developers, LLC**  
Brunswick

Award Amount \$25,000  
Match Amount \$50,300

Maine Shellfish Developers (MSD) is creating a winter oyster nursery, allowing oyster farmers to jumpstart the growing season and potentially reducing the current growth cycle by half. This proposed investigation focuses on developing an inexpensive, alternative oyster feed that emulates oysters' natural diet.

**Aron Semle**  
Buxton

Award Amount \$4,800  
Match Amount \$9,150

Aron Semle has developed a prototype called “upBed.” upBed is a wearable sensor that detects when a patient with Alzheimer's is getting out of bed and alerts the caregiver via their smartphone to help prevent patient falls. A prototype is currently in trial at resident homes in Maine. Mr. Semle is using this Seed Grant to help take upBed from prototype to production.

**Atlantic Cookie Company, LLC**  
Scarborough

Award Amount \$16,665  
Match Amount \$16,750

The Atlantic Cookie Company will utilize MTI Seed Grant funding to improve and optimize the performance and production capacity of the Shuckie production line (aka "Shuckie-Bake-Oven"). The completion of manufacturing improvements and upgrades will allow the company to begin producing its signature product, the Shuckie, a shell shaped cookie with a "Quotie" and fish fact inside, for commercialization to seafood restaurants and coastal hotel and hospitality venues.

**The Montalvo Corporation**  
Gorham

Award Amount \$25,000  
Match Amount \$25,634

Montalvo is developing a disruptive web tension control technology for manufacturing on composite materials. The Modular Tensioning Cartridge (MTC) is designed for single tow composite manufacturing applications (i.e. carbon fiber, fiberglass). The project will focus on developing the control portion of the device, focusing on design and testing various control methods including motor drive control, loop control, and dancer control.

**American Rheinmetall Systems, LLC**  
Biddeford

Award Amount \$25,000  
Match Amount \$31,200

American Rheinmetall Systems (ARS) will develop a mechanical weapon mount adapter to allow new or modified weapons to be mounted to existing weapon mounts in the US Department of Defense (DoD) inventory. These adapters will allow use of precision fire control systems on legacy weapons. ARS will design, verify, prototype, and test qualification units.

**SteriZign Precision Technologies, LLC**  
Brunswick

Award Amount \$25,000  
Match Amount \$27,000

SteriZign Precision Technologies designs and manufactures perforated sterilization trays for complex reusable medical devices. Its clinically relevant trays address the needs of both device manufacturers and hospital end-users. The company has completed its first proprietary product, the SteriZign Signatur™ Universal Device Tray, and is now focusing on developing its Phase 2 low-profile trays for dual sterilization use. Seed Grant funding will help the company complete its tray development, validation testing, and FDA registration.

**Fiber Materials, Inc.**  
Biddeford

Award Amount \$25,000  
Match Amount \$36,940

Fiber Materials Inc. engineers composite material solutions for high temperature applications from rocket nozzles to heatshields for the Mars rover Curiosity. Recent development efforts have centered on Ceramic Matrix Composites (CMC). CMCs provide added fracture toughness and resistance to erosion and deformation. This project's goal is to develop and prove technology-enabling production of cost-effective Ceramic Matrix Composites (CMC) materials, opening the door for more industrial and commercial applications.

**Nearpeer Networks, Inc.**  
Portland

Award Amount \$25,000  
Match Amount \$39,363

The technology is a college student mobile app empowering students to learn about, connect, and communicate with peers to crowdsource social and academic support. This improves student success while unlocking a large market opportunity. The seed grant scope includes proof of concept; prototype design and creation; market validation; and a development plan.

**Nearpeer Networks, Inc.**  
Portland

Award Amount \$25,000  
Match Amount \$33,450

Again, this technology is a college student mobile app empowering students to learn about, connect, and communicate with peers to crowdsource social and academic support. The scope of work for this seed grant project includes setup, execution, and analysis of field trials (beta tests) at three university campuses during the product's limited availability phase for the purpose of beta testing "version 1." The expected outcome is validation of student adoption that supports broader rollout, rapid product improvements and accelerated product maturity.

**Open Ocean Oysters**  
South Portland

Award Amount \$25,000  
Match Amount \$128,822

Labor costs and difficulty securing sufficient aquaculture lease sites are two major impediments to scaling oyster farming in Maine. Open Ocean Oysters is utilizing Seed Grant funding to test its revolutionary oyster growing system. Its system utilizes state-of-the-art material handling methods to drastically reduce labor costs and size requirements of oyster growing leases. The expected outcome in this project is the ability to accelerate growth and vastly reduce labor needs in the nursery and grow-out phases of oyster farming.

**Anchorpak, LLC**  
Portland

Award Amount \$11,508  
Match Amount \$11,508

The Anchorpak is an ergonomically redesigned bag meant to be an improved tool for the carrying needs of today's active consumer. The bag's unique fit on the body results in less physical stress and muscle fatigue than any other crossbody bag, a finding no other product can make. The Seed Grant will fund product development, consumer field trials and a design patent to position the company as an alternative to the market's current status-quo, tolerated-but-not loved, utility bags.

**Eagre Games, Inc.**  
Orono

Award Amount \$25,000  
Match Amount \$70,000

Eagre Games' Reactive Narrative System (RNS) is being designed to allow users of interactive media and simulations for virtual reality (VR), games and a variety of immersive and narrative based projects to use emotionally based navigation to create numerous outcomes and experiences. It is non-violent, real time and is a new way for Eagre Games to tell stories that adapt to the user each time they interact with compelling content. MTI funding will help the company further refine this mechanic and get it to market.

**Rainstorm, Inc.**  
Orono

Award Amount \$25,000  
Match Amount \$30,075

SchoolFlex is a specialized website platform offered by RainStorm for K-12 school organizations. RainStorm will use the funding from this seed grant to create a streamlined deployment method and improve and expand the tools offered in the SchoolFlex plug-in suite. These improvements will enable RainStorm to scale the SchoolFlex platform and efficiently meet the demand of K-12 school systems nationwide.

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 August 22, 2017.*

## **TechStart Grants – Six companies received MTI funding totaling \$27,367**

**Benjamin Dwyer**  
Scarborough

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

TechStart funding will be used to conduct a market assessment and feasibility study of enhanced composite aircraft floats. The proposed technology will increase performance of composite aircraft floats, allowing the aircraft to become airborne in decreased take-off distance. This in turn increases usability of the aircraft, reduces accident risk due to misjudgment of take-off distance, and decreases fuel consumption and wear on the engine.

**Veebie, Inc.**  
Portland

Award Amount \$5,000  
Match Amount \$5,445

The food service industry is beginning to embrace technology in order to give consumers more convenience and choice. The next breakthrough will come from mobile self-service food kiosks, or "foodbots." Veebie is building a fleet of foodbots to serve fresh, healthy food to consumers, wherever they are. The scope of this project is to conduct market discovery and research. The company will use this data to create a business plan and design a functional prototype.

**Visible Logic, Inc.**  
Portland

Award Amount \$5,000  
Match Amount \$7,190

Branding Compass is a tool that helps business owners do the foundational work of branding through a do-it-yourself web-based application. An online workbook using guided questions helps a business owner define and refine their ideal customer, key differentiators and brand traits. Visible Logic's TechStart project will help the company conduct market research to gain data and clarity about its most likely customers.

**Energy Medicine and Psychology Systems, LLC**  
Portland

Award Amount \$4,400  
Match Amount \$5,700

Energy Medicine and Psychology Systems, LLC is awarded TechStart Grant funding to help secure intellectual property protection and to develop a small micro-current device(s) and supportive information technology for use in psychotherapy and acupuncture. Development of this device will offer means to reduce suffering in a large percentage of the population.

**University of Maine**  
Orono

Award Amount \$4,500  
Match Amount \$6,450

The salmon louse is a common parasite affecting the Atlantic salmon farming industry that causes global economic losses in excess of \$750 million per annum. Tarpaulin skirts that are currently used, while effective in preventing sea lice ingress, also prevent oxygen rich water

flowing into the pen. This project will examine an alternative barrier concept that overcomes the shortcomings of current industry practice.

**Farmer Brown Organics, LLC**  
Presque Isle

Award Amount \$4,467  
Match Amount \$5,935

Applicant will use TechStart Grant funding to assist with preparation and filing of a provisional patent application with the United States Patent Office in relation to its proprietary process for drying sugar beets while retaining maximum nutritional benefits for cattle, particularly dairy cattle.

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 August 8, 2017.*

### **Accelerator Grant – One company received MTI Funding totaling \$25,000**

**UniteGPS, LLC**  
Portland

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

UniteGPS (UGPS), based in Portland, Maine, is a technology company that designs and develops solutions related to detecting location. UGPS has designed a solution for tracking school buses called Crosswalk. Crosswalk is a fleet management solution that also provides real-time school bus location information to parents and students via web or mobile device. MTI funding will assist UGPS in its goals to expand product development to other aspects of the fleet management commerce space.

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 Accelerator grant program is August 8, 2017.*

### **Phase 0 Grants – Four companies received MTI Funding totaling \$20,000**

**MedRhythms, Inc.**  
Portland

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

Through a software-as-a-service digital medicine platform, MedRhythms' Stride personalizes recovery by leveraging neuroscience, deep learning, music, biomarker sensing, and other therapies to aid patients in gait rehabilitation. The company is seeking federal Small Business Innovation Research (SBIR) funds to broaden the capability of its patent-pending neurologic music therapy system to treat Parkinson's Disease.

**VisionMaster, Inc.**  
Portland

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

VisionMaster proposes a 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 batch-scan barcoded items in a shopping-basket in milliseconds. The innovation will create true express retail check-out lanes and will revolutionize any situation wherein barcoded items are handled in succession.

**Home Care Business Services**  
Falmouth

Award Amount \$5,000  
Match Amount \$10,500

Home Care Business Services is developing a cloud-based mobile application to be used in the hospital setting by patients, physicians, nurses and therapists to record, track & analyze, in real-time, Medicare outcome measures at each patient encounter. Currently electronic health records capture Medicare outcomes at discharge only which does not facilitate timely correction of deficits prior to discharge. The successful development of the technology will lead to US-wide commercialization of the product.

**Atlantic Corporation**  
Waterville

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

This Phase 0 grant proposal will provide funding essential to the professional preparation and submission of a National Science Foundation (NSF) SBIR Phase 1 grant application. Atlantic recognizes a significant opportunity to develop Maine's young aquaculture industry through the development of a seaweed-based supplement to improve production and general health while mitigating enteric methane emissions in ruminant livestock. The SBIR grant will fund critical foundational research to develop a cost-effective, nutritional supplement for livestock derived primarily from North Atlantic seaweeds.

Phase 0 Grants are offered to individuals and companies seeking to submit proposals for federal research and development grant funding through the SBIR/STTR program, Broad Agency Announcements, and other similar federal solicitations. 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 the federal grant proposal, such as hiring grant writers, subject matter experts, other consultants or purchasing market research reports needed to inform a proposal. *Phase 0 Grant 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](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.*