

For Immediate Release

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Ten teams will compete in the second round of the 2013 Alabama Launchpad Start-Up Competition

Birmingham, Ala., June 13 --The Economic Development Partnership of Alabama Foundation today announces that 10 teams have been selected to compete in the second round of the 2013 Alabama Launchpad Start-Up Competition.

Twenty-seven startups met the May 22 deadline to compete in the latest round of “Proof of Commercial Relevance” competition. A five-judge panel this week chose the 10 startups after reviewing submitted applications.

The teams are in the “pre-seed” phase and are competing for up to \$100,000 in award money. The competition, in its seventh year, is geared to promote, reward and increase the pipeline of high-growth, innovative ventures that have the potential to create and keep jobs in Alabama.

This is the first time that Alabama Launchpad is having back-to-back competitions for the “pre-seed” phase round. On May 3, Exscien Corp., Nutripilot and CarbonNanoTubes Engineered Surfaces were selected the first round Launchpad winners after a finale pitch event in Birmingham.

Greg Sheek, Launchpad Programs director, said the need for a second round was prompted because of strong demand seen in the first round of competition. That competition originally drew 22 teams to vie for a share up to \$100,000 in seed money. That was double the number of entrants seen in 2012.

“The profile and value of entrepreneurship is growing across the country, and it is certainly gaining momentum in Alabama,” Sheek said. “If we are going to grow our own jobs here in Alabama, then we have to offer support to meet demand.”

Sheek said he was pleased that the number of applicants continues to grow. He said this round of competition also drew more industry sectors such as aerospace, beverage, clean technology and consumer products.

Competitors that were selected to proceed are:

- **Alabama Chai:** Alabama Chai, beverage category, plans to sell great tasting micro-brewed organic tea beverages, prepared in the Chai method, to grocery stores, cafés, restaurants and other venues where ready-to-drink (RTD) products are sold. Team leader: Marshall Malone, based in Birmingham.
- **Bidsters:** Bidsters, internet and web services category, is an online interactive database in which construction industry businesses can display their information to get connected with others in the industry and communicate with them all in one place. Team Leader: Ben Bickerstaff, based in Tuscaloosa with a University of Alabama affiliation.

- **BLOX LLC:** Blox LLC, business services and product category, sells a way for owners, contractors and designers to make better buildings faster and with lower cost through the manufacture and integration of prefabricated building components in healthcare facilities. Team leader: Mike Waller, based in Birmingham.
- **e-Electricity:** e-Electricity, telecommunications category, is developing, wireless harvesting, allowing for mobile devices to recharge wirelessly, without the need to plug-in to a power outlet, which it said is a tremendous advantage for individuals to who are always “on the go” or traveling. Team leader: Sloan McCrary, based in Tuscaloosa with a University of Alabama affiliation.
- **FIT-ability:** Fit-ability, healthcare IT category, gives you the right type of workouts and motivational techniques for your personality and level of fitness and helps personal trainers get results faster with their clients by not having to take more time trying to understand or even experiment with different workouts and motivation techniques. Team leader: Andrea Walker, based in Birmingham.
- **Healthfundit:** Healthfundit, internet and web services category, is the only peer-reviewed, subscription-based crowd funding portal for health research and biotechnology at academic institutions. Healthfundit allows people to directly donate to medical research & follow their impact while offering institutions a service that increases funding and facilitates efficient commercialization of biotech. Team leader: Larry Lawal, based in Birmingham.
- **Heartlife Technology LLC:** Heartlife Technology LLC, healthcare services category, plans to put easy-to-use, inexpensive, reliable defibrillation technology in the homes and pockets of everyone at risk by replacing the most expensive components of an Automated External Defibrillator (AED) with smartphones. Team leader: Tommy Foote, based in Auburn with an Auburn University affiliation.
- **Respriva:** Respriva, biotechnology category, is using the Respriva vaccine, a low cost and effective vaccine that will minimize the swine industry’s losses due to bacterial pneumonia, a problem that currently costs the industry over \$300 million per year. Team leader: Robert Koski, based in Auburn with an Auburn University affiliation.
- **Surface Integrity LLC:** Surface Integrity LLC, medical devices and equipment category is a research and development (R&D) company that develops custom surfaces for a wide variety of industries and applications, including controlling the surface of degradable metal implants by surface treatments. Team leader: Michael Sealy, based in Hoover with a University of Alabama affiliation.
- **Vsim 360:** Vsim 360 works to develop its current technology into full 3D spherical video, creating a very unique technology product to record immersive 3D 360° experiences. The entire 3D 360° field of view and multidirectional audio are captured on-site and processed for interactive immersive viewing on consumer-level 3D head-mounted display technology, or gracefully degrading to tablets, smartphones, or laptops. Team leader: Corey Shum, based in Birmingham with a University of Alabama at Birmingham affiliation.

The Alabama Launchpad Competition, started as a pilot project seven years ago, is financed by business, the state of Alabama and seven universities.

Judges for this second round competition are once again comprised of entrepreneurs, investors and corporate stakeholders. The judges are:

- **Bob Shufflebarger**, chief operating officer of Atherotech
- **Jennifer Skjellum**, executive director of the Central Alabama Angel Network (CAAN)
- **John Coleman**, chief operating officer of Harbor Financial Services
- **Kasey Burleson**, chief financial officer of McLeod Software
- **Peggy Sammon** – chief executive officer of GeneCapture. Sammon is a previous Alabama Launchpad winner.

The 10 startups selected to compete will each present business plans by June 30 and will make their first pitch presentations before the judges on July 12. The competition continues through September, when a finale event on Sept. 26 will coincide with the third annual Alabama Launchpad Innovation and Entrepreneurship Conference at the Wynfrey Hotel in Hotel set for Sept. 26-27.

Bill Taylor, president of the Economic Development Partnership of Alabama, said Alabama Launchpad is aligned with the state's larger economic development plan, Accelerate Alabama that focuses on recruitment, retention and renewal.

For more information, please visit www.alabamalaunchpad.com.

About the Economic Development Partnership of Alabama: Now in its 22nd year, the non-profit Partnership represents the private sector's contribution to economic development in Alabama. Fully funded by 80 leading companies invested in the state's long-term economic success, EDPA provides leadership and services that recruit new businesses to the state, retain existing businesses and renew Alabama's economy by encouraging innovation both within existing industries and through the commercialization of new technologies. www.edpa.org

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