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GENIUS NY Round One Teams Wrap Program with Final Pitch Six New Teams Announced for Second Round

Round One teams pitch for follow-on investment at the sold-out Innovation Celebration

Syracuse – GENIUS NY, a business accelerator program at CenterState CEO’s Tech Garden, hosted a final pitch event for its round one teams. The Innovation Celebration event held at the CNY Biotech Accelerator in Syracuse brought together upstate investors, community leaders and program partners, and was sponsored by The Tech Garden, Upstate Venture Connect and Upstate Capital Association.

“The GENIUS NY competition is paving the way to help to ensure that forward-thinking UAS companies stay in Central New York, create jobs, and establish the region as a global hub for emerging technologies,” said Howard Zemsky, Empire State Development President, CEO & Commissioner.

Any investments the six first round teams are awarded during the final pitch will further advance the success they have already achieved. When the first round of the program ends later this month four of the six teams will remain in Syracuse to continue operations and growth.

“To date this program has achieved two important goals; provide the necessary resources for high-potential startups in the UAS sector to grow in Central New York and want to stay, and advance the region’s profile as an industry leader,” said Rob Simpson, president of CenterState CEO. “We know we have the ability to attract and drive new company growth in this sector and look forward to replicating this success in the program’s second round.”

During the event six new teams were announced as finalists for the second round of the program. They will move into The Tech Garden in January to begin competing for \$3 million in prizes. The companies, which are developing innovations in unmanned aircraft systems (UAS), were selected from a pool of more than 250 submissions. Of the six finalists one team is international, one team is woman co-founded and one team is from Central New York.

The six finalists selected for GENIUS NY 2.0 are:

Dropcopter (California) is an agriculture technology startup that has developed patent pending technology to allow farmers to pollinate orchards via drones. The recent decline of bee populations has raised pollination prices significantly, creating a compelling market for alternative technologies such as Dropcopter.

Fotokite (Switzerland) combines aerial and ground-based robotics with patented flight control algorithms to create a kite-like tethered drone system, which actively uses the tether to fly for 24-hours fully autonomously.

Precision Vision (New Mexico) creates image processing technology that makes real-time precision imaging an affordable reality. Precision imaging locates each pixel at a known 2D or 3D, referenced location in every image. The company has unique software and knowledge to provide low-cost, real-time precision imaging to open new markets.

Quantify (Michigan) is an IoT solution that simplifies and reduces the costs of parking and traffic studies through the unification of UAS, machine vision, and analytics by eliminating human error, mitigating safety risks, and centralizing harvested data. They are the first to market, and their solution aims to be the quintessential app for urban planners focused on smart city applications and sustainability.

TruWeather (Virginia) is building a service to improve the precision, accuracy and communication of weather intelligence specifically for the UAV enterprise. They will develop, commercialize and market the Unmanned Aerial Vehicle (UAV) Weather Risk Management Service for Beyond-Line-of-Sight (BLOS) UAV operations and offer it as a SaaS business.

UsPLM (Syracuse) provides a collaborative environment for all stakeholders to develop, test, deploy, and safely operate a single or a fleet of UAS. UsPLM can integrate UAS, Internet-of-Things (IoT) and Product Lifecycle Management (PLM) technologies, which is missing in the current UAS ecosystem.

Throughout the program, teams will engage with community leaders, mentors, and advisors from leading companies in Central New York while also participating in tourism activities in the region. The goal is to encourage all participants to establish roots here and continue to grow their business.

“We will take the lessons we learned from the first round of this program and apply them to this second round of the program to enhance the opportunity and support we can offer these companies,” said Rick Clonan, vice president of entrepreneurship and innovation at CenterState CEO. “I am really proud of the success of each of the first round teams and will continue to help connect them to the tools they need to grow while at the same time begin the process with the second round. As we do this we will create an even more robust ecosystem of targeted support for these companies.”

Each of the round two teams will begin the program focused on enhancing their business plan. All six teams will pitch their technologies at an event in April to a panel of judges and audience of more than 200 people. The teams will be competing for one of three grand prize investments - \$1 million, \$600,000 and \$400,000. The remaining three runner-up teams will each receive a \$250,000 investment.

Beyond the grand prize investments, participants will have access to some of the region's premier startup programming, including business planning, industry specific mentorship, and access to vetted service providers offering startup friendly terms. As part of this effort, participants will be integrated into the larger regional effort to grow unmanned aerial systems in Central New York and the Mohawk Valley and will have access to world-leading infrastructure and testing assets when they come online. Participants also receive stipends for operating capital and subsidized rent, and will also have opportunities to connect with investors for follow on funding.

“We’re thrilled to welcome the UAS teams to the region for a second round of GENIUS NY,” said Onondaga County Executive Joanie Mahoney. “We look forward to supporting these emerging

companies and helping them put down roots in Onondaga County so they can have a future in an industry in which the region is a global leader.”

“GENIUS NY has served as a catalyst for growth at Oneida County’s UAS Test Site at Griffiss International Airport by fostering new business innovation in the Central New York UAS Corridor,” said Oneida County Executive Anthony J. Picente Jr. “I’m sure this year’s round of finalists will continue in that tradition, and provide a huge benefit to the county and our partners at CenterState CEO as we work together to move the industry forward.”

“This program serves as an important component of our work to advance the research development and support of companies looking to grow in the UAS sector in this region,” said Major General Marke Gibson, CEO of the NUAIR Alliance. “We look forward to working with the six new teams and providing them access to some of the world’s most leading-edge testing facilities for UAS systems. Likewise, we will continue to support the growth of the round one companies and help them achieve the next level of success here in the region.”

To learn more about GENIUS NY visit www.geniusny.com or contact Jonathan Parry, Director of GENIUS NY at jparry@thetechgarden.com or by calling 315-345-2448.

About CenterState CEO

CenterState CEO is an independent and forward thinking economic development strategist, business leadership organization and chamber of commerce; dedicated to the success of its members and the prosperity of the region. We serve as an advocate and resource for smart business, catalyze and facilitate regional growth, and promote community prosperity through results-driven partnerships, planning and problem-solving. www.centerstateceo.com

About GENIUS NY

GENIUS NY, which is funded by Empire State Development and housed at CenterState CEO’s The Tech Garden in Syracuse, will invest more than \$3 million in six companies over the course of the year-long competition – making it the largest business accelerator competition for the UAS industry in the world. The advancement of the GENIUS NY program builds on the progress of *CNY Rising*, the region’s award-winning strategic plan to generate robust economic growth and community development. In addition to three grand prizes of up to \$1 million, \$600,000 and \$400,000, the program also offers company stipends, housing, resources, programming, and mentorship.

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