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FuzeHub Announces Second Set of 2018 Grant Awards to Support Innovation and Manufacturing Throughout New York State

In the second round of funding for 2018, close to \$300,000 is awarded to six projects, adding nearly 100 high-skilled jobs to the New York State workforce.

(Albany, NY – August 23, 2018) -- FuzeHub, a not-for-profit organization providing small to medium-sized manufacturing companies (SMEs) in New York State with guided access to a network of technical and business resources, recently awarded nearly \$300,000 to six companies through the Jeff Lawrence Innovation Fund.

The Innovation Fund, consisting of \$1 million annually for five years, supports a set of activities designed to spur technology development and commercialization across New York State. FuzeHub is administering this fund as part of its role as the Empire State Development (ESD)-designated statewide MEP center.

As part of the fund, FuzeHub offers two rounds of Manufacturing Grants funding each year. These grants are available to New York State not-for-profit organizations, including higher education institutions, which are proposing innovative projects to be undertaken with small and mid-sized manufacturers or early stage companies. Projects can include adoption of new technology to enhance a process and/or product, prototype development, design for manufacturing, proof-of-concept manufacturing, certain equipment purchases, manufacturing scale-up, and other projects to advance manufacturing capabilities. The fund is also used to provide assistance to early stage companies through an annual commercialization competition.

The second round of grant awardees for 2018 plan to add almost 100 new jobs to both established businesses and startup companies across New York State over the next two years. "The manufacturing grants continue to be a valuable resource for not-for-profit and industry collaborations and there is no shortage of quality applications coming into the program," noted Julianne Clouthier, industry engagement manager for FuzeHub. "The latest round of awardees continues to signify the tremendous amount of innovation that exists throughout New York State, and the impact of these awards will provide a pathway to increased jobs and business growth," she added.

FuzeHub is pleased to announce the seventh set of grantees:

Alfred University – Free Form Fibers LLC (Western) \$49,497

Free Form Fibers (FFF), working in partnership with Alfred University, seeks to develop a critical concept design for a strategic million fiber manufacturing facility in New York State. This will prepare FFF for investment and scale-up of their novel approach that uses laser chemical vapor deposition (LCVD) to grow a wide variety of value added fibers. Prof. Holly Shulman, from Alfred University, will serve as principal investigator, leading a design team of engineering students to interface with FFF to analyze facility needs to accommodate a completely new concept in fiber manufacturing. The team will specify the physical and technical parameters of laser banks, power, cooling, gas handling, and analytical equipment, with a goal of minimizing handling and optimizing process flow.

Clarkson University Shipley Center for Innovation – LC Drives (North Country) \$50,000

Clarkson University continues to be a driving force behind efforts to facilitate sustained economic growth throughout New York State. This project aims to further this mission by enhancing the North Country Business Incubator with the installation of a paint booth in Clarkson's Damon Hall. Damon Hall is one of three buildings that make up the North Country Business Incubator network. It has been renovated to house light manufacturing startups, including the flagship tenant LC Drives. This private company is developing unique manufacturing processes and they, like many manufacturers, require a paint booth to put their product into production. This paint booth will begin helping LC Drives the day it is installed, but it will also provide long term benefits to future manufacturing startups in the region including some that are already in the pipeline.

Rochester Institute of Technology – Empire Medicinals (Finger Lakes) \$49,961

RIT will study the use of how best to optimize fermentation growth parameters in the production of filamentous fungal mycelium, which are used by a Rochester based mushroom technology company, Empire Medicinals. In addition, RIT professor Thomas Trabold and his research team will study the potential of its commercial partner using excess whey, a common waste product in the yogurt industry, in a stirred tank reactor as a production resource for the commercial mushroom industry. RIT researchers also will conduct an economic assessment of whey and its scalability as a food waste upcycling and re-use alternative to wastewater treatment for the New York state dairy industry.

Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute – Tire Conversion Technologies, Inc. (Capital Region) \$49,326

Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute and Tire Conversion Technologies, Inc. (TCT) of Latham, NY are teaming up on a 12-month project to improve and implement a novel manufacturing process with US origins but only European execution, to date, that involves binder-less compression molding of 'crumb' rubber from recycled tires for solar, safety and environmental containment products. This technological advance could allow TCT to reduce product cost by 50%, generate unique IP, undercut foreign and domestic competition, push deeper penetration into domestic and international markets, and enter into markets currently out of reach due to price. If successful, expected economic impact within three years includes a 230% increase in sales volume, 20 new employees, up to \$320K in capital expenditures, and opening up a second facility in NY State.

RPI Center for Automation Technologies & Systems – Tidy Tots (Capital Region) \$47,697

This project introduces technology and automation to manufacture an innovative product – reusable Tidy Tots diapers – that is currently manufactured with a labor-intensive process. This new production process will enable the company to meet market demand. The company contracts its labor from the Schenectady ARC, which provides vocational opportunities for adults with developmental disabilities.

Success of this project will not only have a tremendous economic impact for the company, but will dramatically increase the number of jobs available to the clients of Schenectady ARC.

University at Buffalo Center of Excellence in Materials Informatics – S Howes LLC (Western) \$50,000

University at Buffalo's Center for Materials Informatics (CMI) has partnered with S Howes LLC, a 160-year-old manufacturer of process equipment. The company has continuously operated in the same location in Silver Creek, NY since 1856. The Innovation Grant will enable S Howes to improve upon an existing thermal conveyor design to better compete with older technologies and add up to 5 new high-quality jobs over the next three years.

For more information about the Jeff Lawrence Innovation Fund, visit <https://fuzehub.com/innovation-fund/> or contact Julianne Clouthier, Industry Engagement Manager at julianne@fuzehub.com.

About Jeff Lawrence

During his more than 20 years at the Center for Economic Growth, the Manufacturing Extension Partnership (MEP) affiliate in the Capital Region where he served as executive vice president and MEP Center Director, Jeff Lawrence directed programs of direct assistance to manufacturers and technology companies to increase their competitiveness. He is remembered for being an invaluable and generous mentor to many in the area's business community and a tireless advocate for manufacturing innovation throughout New York.

About FuzeHub

FuzeHub is a not-for-profit organization that connects New York's small and mid-sized manufacturing companies to the resources, programs and expertise they need for technology commercialization, innovation, and business growth. Through our custom assessment, matching, and referral platform, we help companies navigate New York's robust network of industry experts at Manufacturing Extension Partners centers, universities, economic development organizations, and other providers. FuzeHub is the statewide New York Manufacturing Extension Partnership Program (MEP) center, supported by Empire State Development's Division of Science, Technology & Innovation.

For more information on FuzeHub, visit www.fuzehub.com.

About Empire State Development's Division of Science, Technology and Innovation (NYSTAR)

Empire State Development's Division of Science, Technology and Innovation (NYSTAR) mission is to advance technology innovation and commercialization in New York State. NYSTAR's programs are designed to enable new and existing businesses to become more competitive through the use of innovative technologies, and emphasize the importance of working with industry to leverage the state's technology strengths. Through funded programs that support world-class technology research at colleges and universities, NYSTAR works to promote a robust network of industry-university partnerships throughout the state. It administers the New York Manufacturing Extension Partnership, which provides direct technology assistance to small and medium size manufacturers.

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