

Clean Energy Trust Selects Finalists for 2017 Investment

Eight finalist startups announced for \$1 million investment opportunity for high-potential, Midwestern cleantech entrepreneurs.

CHICAGO, ILLINOIS, UNITED STATES, March 2, 2017 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Clean Energy Trust (CET) has selected 8 cleantech startups from across the Midwest to participate as finalists in the annual [CET Challenge investment program](#). The 2017 investments and the new cohort of Clean Energy Trust [Portfolio Companies](#) will be announced at the CET Challenge event in Chicago on May 9, 2017. Up to \$1M in funding will be distributed in investment awards ranging from \$50 - \$500,000 - making this one of the largest cleantech funding events in the country.



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As a former mentor with CET, I have seen firsthand the huge impact the Challenge and the CET team have had on their finalists. Now as CEO of a startup, we are thrilled to be selected to participate.”

Charlie Murray, CEO of Switched Source LLC, a 2017 finalist.

Eight finalist companies were selected from over 70 applications throughout the region. A robust due diligence process utilizing expert, external evaluators supported the initial selection of finalists. Finalists will receive an estimated \$15,000 worth of services, support and mentorship to prepare for the final investment showcase.

The final full-day pitch event will bring together over 400 industry leaders, entrepreneurs, investors and media in Chicago. CET’s appointed Investment Committee of cleantech industry experts and investors will determine the ultimate investment awards. The event is open to the public, and [early-bird tickets](#) are on sale now.

“As a former mentor with CET, I’ve been able to see firsthand the huge impact both the clean energy challenge program and the Clean Energy Trust team have had on their finalists. Now as CEO of a startup, me and my team are thrilled to be able to take advantage of this unique opportunity.” said Charlie Murray, CEO of Switched Source LLC, one of this year’s selected finalist startups.

“Every year, the CET Challenge strengthens the environment for Midwest cleantech startups by providing a platform for funding and exposure that is essential to commercialize early stage technology” said Erik G. Birkerts, CEO of Clean Energy Trust. “Moreover, for those companies that receive investment, the CET Challenge marks the beginning of a long-term partnership with Clean Energy Trust in which we work hard on their behalf to ensure market adoption and success.”

What began in 2010 as a simple business plan competition to jumpstart the local ecosystem with cash prizes totaling \$140,000 has now grown into the most competitive and high profile investment opportunity for cleantech startups in the Midwest. Since the first competition, startups have received \$4M in funding, raised an additional \$96M in follow on funding, and created over 300 new jobs.



Meet the 2017 CET Challenge Class:

Aker – AgTech – Chicago, IL

Aker is an in-season crop monitoring and analytics platform for large farms. Aker enables proactive field observation to alert of adverse environmental conditions impacting crop health. Aker collects and analyze high-resolution aerial images and other field indications.

Applied Particle Technology – Air Filtration – St. Louis, MO

APT is developing world's first intelligent air sterilization system. APT's patented technology is based on photoionization enhanced electronic air purification system which can remove and inactivate all airborne pollutants, including pathogens, noxious fumes, ultrafine particles, and combustion emissions in a single integrated step. This technology has applications in automotive emissions, standby power generation, HVAC systems, aerospace, and industrial systems.

Idle Smart – Advanced Transportation – Kansas City, Kansas

Idle Smart provides fleet efficiency and real-time remote vehicle management solutions to Class 8 fleets in the US and Canada. They reduce vehicle idle time by at least 50% and provide fleets the ability to remotely manage vehicle and in cabin technology to maintain vehicle uptime.

Lotic Labs – Finance / Natural Resources – Chicago, IL

Lotic Labs develops financial products and risk management solutions for industrial and natural resource-intensive businesses facing the threat of volatile environmental conditions. The first product set is focused on helping water and wastewater utilities manage financial stresses due to droughts, extended wet periods, and unplanned maintenance.

PowerTech Water – Water Tech – Lexington, KY

PowerTech Water has developed a disruptive technology platform form to clean and purify the water we rely on for our everyday lives. The platform is based on inverted capacitive deionization technology that more effectively and reversibly removes salts, corrosive minerals, and toxic metals without the need for costly membranes, high pressure pumps, chemicals, or any consumables. The end result is up to a 60% reduction in water treatment costs.

Sun Buckets – Renewable Energy – Champaign, IL

Sun Buckets are portable, stored solar energy cookstoves that allow users to cook without fire, fuel, or emissions. Sun Buckets offers the 700 million energy impoverished households the opportunity to save some of the \$100 billion they spend annually on cooking fuels. This technology helps maintain local cooking traditions by emulating the temperature of fire and allowing users to cook where and when they wish, even when the sun is not shining.

SurClean, Inc – Efficiency Technologies – Wixom, MI

SurClean manufactures laser coating removal and surface preparation machine tools. Leveraging the laser ablation process, SurClean systems remove surface coatings, debris and oxides in the most precise, safe, energy efficient, cost effective and environmentally friendly way available today.

Switched Source LLC – MicroGrids – Chicago, IL

Switched Source has developed a suite of solutions that offer a new level of control over energy supply, enhancing the last mile of electricity delivery. This technology leverages the existing distribution infrastructure to provide a more efficient and reliable electrical grid. With this operational flexibility comes an unparalleled ability to tie more distributed renewable energy resources into the distribution system.

Tickets are now on sale for the 7th Annual CET Challenge at <https://2017-clean-energy-trust-challenge.eventbrite.com>. The full day competition will take place on Tuesday May 9, 2017 at Venue SIX10 at the Spertus Institute, 610 S Michigan Avenue, Chicago.

About Clean Energy Trust: Clean Energy Trust partners with innovators to bring scientific and technological advancements to market that change how the world generates, consumes and reuses energy and natural resources. We pursue an integrated mix of programs to identify, fund and support promising new technologies at critical, early stages. To learn more visit www.cleanenergytrust.org

Emily Achler
Clean Energy Trust
8476879367
email us here

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