

Company Awarded Funding by National Science Foundation

Spherical Block, LLC receives Phase II award for innovative masonry.

ALFRED, NEW YORK, USA, September 26, 2017 /EINPresswire.com/ -- A start-up company has developed a [concrete](#) block system for making arches and domes that are affordable, energy efficient, hurricane and tornado proof, fire safe and sustainable for a much longer time period than current construction methods. Spherical Block, LLC was awarded its third grant by the National Science Foundation (NSF) for \$750,000 to introduce this [masonry](#) system to the market.

“We are taking ancient technology and updating it for the 21st century” says company president and founder, Peter Roberts. “This masonry system can be used to make roofs, including arches, domes, flying buttresses and more.” The company was previously awarded a Phase I grant and a Phase IB grant for approximately \$200,000 to test molds and improve the strength of the blocks.

This third NSF award will result in the block being allowed to enter the US and global market in two years. The work includes building new molds for the improved block, making block from these molds and building a test structure using these blocks for evaluation by the International Code Council – Evaluation Services (ICC-ES). ICC writes the International Building Code. The

company is working with Southern Tier Concrete Products Corporation, where the test building will be made as a sales model. The internationally acclaimed design firm Studied Impact is already working on the [architecture](#). This building will showcase several of the features made possible with this innovative masonry system; including domes, arches, flying buttresses and groined vault arches. Customers will be able to see and enter the building to experience what it would be like to live in one



Inside large garage



Attractive garage, inexpensive and roomy

and learn about the many benefits the building has economically and ecologically.

Spherical's concrete block designs are made by the same equipment that produces regular concrete block and use the same materials as regular block. The company's molds are used on the block machines to make Spherical Block. The blocks are designed so that they can be assembled and reinforced with rebar. The company has been awarded two US patents and has more patents pending. Uses for this block include residential housing, commercial buildings, bridges, safe rooms (for tornadoes, hurricanes, and other severe weather), arched bridges, underwater structures (including coral reef incubators), landscaping applications, retaining walls, rainwater storage tanks, septic tanks, and much more. Most of the world builds primarily with masonry so the company anticipates a large demand for product internationally.

Southern Tier Concrete Products, Inc., is a family run business now in its 4th generation and 71st year, located in Alfred, NY. STCP began its operations making cinder blocks during the boom of building and development in the late 1940's. Today STCP makes more than 100 different types of concrete blocks and retaining wall products. "STCP is excited to be working with Spherical Block and Robert Ferry in the continued development and showcase of new concrete building block technologies" said Owen Johnston, the company's Chief Operating Officer.

Studied Impact Design will provide architectural services for the Phase II work and assist with designing this technology into contemporary architecture. Robert Ferry will be demonstrating the versatility of the block systems to create residential and commercial buildings. There is much to build in the aftermath of this hurricane season. Texas, Florida, Puerto Rico, St. Martin, and many of the islands in the Caribbean have been devastated. There are plans for many large storm proof buildings in hurricane ravaged cities. "This technology builds them better and cheaper. And just as important, no major equipment is needed to assemble large buildings with these systems, buildings can be built with the resources these places have" Roberts says. Roberts has built several structures on his own property already. Spherical Block began this work in April, 2017 and expect work to be completed in 2019 at which point they can sell product for buildings around the world.

About the NSF's Small Business Programs

America's Seed Fund powered by NSF awards nearly \$190 million annually to startups and small businesses, transforming scientific discovery into products and services with commercial and societal impact. Startups working across almost all areas of science and technology can receive up to \$1.5 million in non-dilutive funds to support research and development (R&D), helping de-risk technology for commercial success. America's Seed Fund is congressionally mandated through the Small Business Innovation Research (SBIR) program. The NSF is an independent federal agency with a budget of about \$7.5 billion that supports fundamental research and education across all fields of science and engineering. For more information, visit www.seedfund.nsf.gov

Peter Roberts



Roomy and comfortable, very inexpensive. fire and hurricane safe.

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