

Clean Energy Trust Launches 2018 Cleantech Investment Program

501vc™ Investment Program Offers Valuable Opportunity for Cleantech Startups in the Midwest

CHICAGO , ILLINOIS, UNITED STATES, November 29, 2017 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Clean Energy Trust, a non-profit that supports early-stage cleantech startups with direct investment, mentorship and venture development services, announced today that applications are now open for the [2018 501vc™ Investment Program](#).



Entrepreneurs and researchers are invited to submit their cleantech startups for the opportunity to join Clean Energy Trust's growing investment portfolio.

“Now entering our eighth year, Clean Energy Trust’s mission and purpose has never been more clear,” stated Erik G. Birkerts CEO of Clean Energy Trust. “The organization exists to support emerging cleantech entrepreneurs and startups in the Midwest, help build vibrant businesses that are profitable, create jobs and improve the environment.”



Clean Energy Trust's early investment in Go Electric had a huge impact. Working with Clean Energy Trust absolutely set us up to raise our Series A and continue earning market validation.”

Lisa Laughner, CEO of Go Electric

This year marks the fourth year in a row Clean Energy Trust is committed to investing a total of \$1M to high-potential cleantech startups based in the Midwest. Entrepreneurs and researchers are invited to submit their cleantech startups for the opportunity to join Clean Energy Trust's growing investment portfolio. The 2018 investments and the new cohort of [Clean Energy Trust Portfolio Companies](#) will be announced at the Co_Invest Cleantech event in Chicago on May 23, 2018.

OPPORTUNITY FOR ENTREPRENEURS

Early-stage cleantech entrepreneurs in the Midwest face unique challenges, but by applying to be a part of Clean Energy Trust's portfolio, entrepreneurs can significantly increase their odds for success.

Since 2014 Clean Energy Trust invested \$3.8 million in 23 companies. Some interesting metrics have been collected along the way:

- 48% of portfolio companies received their first investment from Clean Energy Trust;
- Portfolio companies have gone forward to raise \$53 million in follow-on funding post our initial investment;
- 39% of our portfolio companies are based on university intellectual property;
- 68% have female or minority founders;
- 30% have 1st or 2nd generation immigrant founders;

- 68% are generating revenues, with 22% recognizing greater than \$1 million in annual sales and all remain in business

“We were just coming out of the chute when we first met Clean Energy Trust in 2014. We were totally under the radar,” recalled Lisa Laughner, CEO of GoElectric. “Working with Clean Energy Trust absolutely set us up to raise our Series A and continue earning market validation.”

CHANGES TO THE INVESTMENT PROGRAM AND EVENT

Clean Energy Trust pursued a strategic redesign and rebranding of the original Clean Energy Trust Challenge program. What began in 2011 as a business plan competition in which winning teams received grants from Clean Energy Trust, the Challenge evolved into a more serious investment platform. Beginning in 2014 Clean Energy Trust transitioned from awarding grants to making equity investments in the winning teams. A concerted effort was made to strengthen the evaluation processes and assemble an accomplished [Investment Committee](#) to ensure prudent investments.

“The changes reflect a shift away from a ‘pitch competition’ format towards a more professional investment process” noted Erik G. Birkerts, CEO of Clean Energy Trust. “We want to show that serious, returns-driven impact investing can be done for cleantech in the Midwest.”

As such, investment activities will now be known as the Clean Energy Trust 501vc™ Investment Program, reflecting the fact that Clean Energy Trust’s unique model marries the attributes of a not-for-profit organization with those of venture capital firm.

The 501vc™ Investment Program will culminate on May 23, 2018 at Co_Invest Cleantech, the new name for Clean Energy Trust’s annual event, in which we will unveil the new 2018 investments. Co_Invest Cleantech will still feature presentations by startups, ample Q&A with the startup teams (including enhanced audience participation), thought-provoking keynote speakers, and terrific networking.

INVESTMENT CRITERIA

The 2018 Clean Energy Trust investment opportunity is available for all early-stage cleantech startups based in the Midwest.

Early-stage is defined as an established startup entity Pre-Seed Stage through Series A. Cleantech is defined as companies falling within the following sectors: materials, renewable energy, storage, water, materials, agriculture, smart buildings / IoT, and mobility / transportation.

In addition to falling within one of these sectors, we are looking for companies that address at least one of the following impacts:

- Reduce greenhouse gas emissions
- Use natural resources more effectively
- Promote environmental sustainability
- Address the effects of climate change

Applications are open now and will be accepted through January 12, 2018. Find more information and apply online at: <http://cleanenergytrust.org/programs/501vc-investment-program/>. The final Co_Invest Cleantech event will take place in Chicago on May 23, 2018.

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 make direct investments, provide mentorship, offer venture development services and work to strengthen the Midwest innovation ecosystem. To learn more visit www.cleanenergytrust.org.

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