BRIDG Selected as Semifinalist for Inaugural National Science Foundation Regional Innovation Engines Competition

The NeoCity Semiconductor Technology Accelerator proposal is one of 34 semifinalists listed to encourage teaming, diversity and regional growth.

KISSIMMEE, FLORIDA, USA, June 16, 2023 /EINPresswire.com/ -- The U.S. National Science Foundation announced its list of semifinalists for the first-ever NSF Regional Innovation Engines (NSF Engines) competition, and the NeoCity Semiconductor Technology Accelerator proposal was one of 34 proposals selected to be led by BRIDG, a not-for-profit, public-private partnership specializing in advanced system integration and packaging based at NeoCity in Osceola County, Florida.

> The NSF grant would enable the BRIDG team to generate workforce development programs, training curriculum, and provide educational improvements, uplifting our community like never before."
>
> *Jim Vandevere, President of BRIDG*

"We are excited to be selected as one of the semifinalists and the only microelectronic semiconductor manufacturing-focused engine," stated Jim Vandevere, president of BRIDG. "The NSF grant would provide a conduit to the Central Florida community, establishing a workforce development program, training curriculum, and educational improvements that advance diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility to all citizens, uplifting our community like never before."

Launched by NSF's new Directorate for Technology, Innovation and Partnerships (TIP) and authorized by the "CHIPS and Science Act," the NSF Engines program uniquely harnesses the nation's science and technology research and development enterprise and regional-level resources. NSF Engines aspire to catalyze robust partnerships to positively impact the economy within a geographic region, address societal challenges, advance national competitiveness, and create local, high-wage jobs across the country. Anticipated to be transformational for the nation, the competition

spans nearly all key technology areas and societal and economic challenges highlighted in the "CHIPS and Science Act" to ensure that the U.S. remains globally competitive in key technology areas for decades to come.

"Each of these NSF Engines semifinalists represents an emerging hub of innovation and lends their talents and resources to form the fabric of NSF's vision to create opportunities everywhere and enable innovation anywhere," said NSF Director Sethuraman Panchanathan. "These teams will spring ideas, talent, pathways and resources to create vibrant innovation ecosystems all across our nation."

The proposal is joined by partners from Osceola County, Florida High Tech Corridor, imec, Orlando Economic Partnership, University of Central Florida, University of Florida, Valencia College, and CareerSource Central Florida.

“ICAMR dba BRIDG is proud of our partners and the collective effort to stand up an advanced packaging hub in NeoCity. We are focused on capitalizing on multiple fronts to provide the materials and tools supporting NeoCity’s ecosystem,” stated Vandevere.

“This is a testament to the power of partnerships and our region’s collaborative spirit,” said Tim Giuliani, president and CEO of the Orlando Economic Partnership. “It only happens through a decade-long collective effort by regional partners centered around a vision to transform the Orlando region’s innovation ecosystem and create a future where high wage jobs are accessible to everyone.”

“Imec is looking forward to helping build the NeoCity ecosystem with our deep knowledge in advanced 3D packaging and to upskilling the local workforce to fulfill future roles within the supply chain,” said Max Mirgoli, executive vice president of worldwide strategic partnerships at imec.

"Valencia College is a fully supportive partner in the NSF Engines program and we are excited to be among the semifinalists. Getting this award would be a significant investment in our community and the semiconductor initiative in NeoCity," said Joe Battista, vice president for workforce, career, and professional education at Valencia College.

“We are extremely proud that NSF selected our team as a finalist for the Regional Innovation Engines competition,” stated Dr. Grace Bochenek, director of School of Modeling, Simulation and Training at the University of Central Florida. “Our innovative team approach includes research and technology, industry, workforce, and economic development. The strength of our team provides us with a unique perspective and the history to engage government, academia, and industry to create a culture for experiential learning, producing the next generation workforce that embraces and advances new technologies and solves multidisciplinary problems. The University of Central Florida's approach to building digital twin technology as an integrated system of system will fuel the semiconductor testbed and other industries to drive outcomes

that meet our nation's biggest challenges.”

"I envision advanced packaging, the theme of our engine project, rising from Central Florida but making a profound impact on the entire state of Florida, the Southeast, and the whole nation,” stated Dr. Y.K. Yoon, professor in the department of electrical and computer engineering at the University of Florida. “With the unwavering dedication to innovation, the team is set to become a global leader in the field."

NSF is continuing to review proposals through their merit review process and anticipates announcing the final list of NSF Engines awards this fall with each awardee initially receiving about $15 million for the first two years. Each NSF Engine could receive up to $160 million over 10 years; actual amounts will be subject to a given NSF Engine's status and overall progress, as assessed annually. Semifinalists not selected to receive an NSF Engine award may be considered for an NSF Engine Development Award of up to $1 million over two years to help build their initial ecosystems, cultivate the necessary partnerships, and potentially compete for additional funding, including through future NSF Engines competitions.

“We sincerely hope to be able to work with NSF to grow our regional model together, sharing our learnings and results with other regions and manufacturing sectors to help rebuild our nation’s manufacturing industrial base,” stated Vandevere.

Details along with a map of the NSF Engines semifinalists are available on the NSF website.

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About the team:

BRIDG
www.GoBRIDG.com

NeoCity
www.NeoCityFL.com

Osceola County
www.osceola.org

CareerSource Central Florida
www.CareerSourceCentralFlorida.com

Florida High Tech Corridor
floridahightech.com

imec

www.imec-int.com/en/usa

Orlando Economic Partnership
InvestOrlando.org

University of Central Florida School of Modeling, Simulation, and Training (SMST)
www.ucf.edu/modeling-simulation

University of Florida ECE
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