FriendliAI Closes $20M Seed Extension Round to Accelerate AI Inference Platform Growth

Capstone Partners, Sierra Ventures, KDB, and KB Securities invest in FriendliAI’s high-performance GPU inference solution

REDWOOD CITY, CA, UNITED STATES, August 28, 2025 /EINPresswire.com/ -- FriendliAI, a rapidly growing AI inference platform company, today announced that it has closed a $20 million seed extension round. The round was led by Capstone Partners, with participation from new investors from Sierra Ventures, Alumni Ventures, KDB, and follow-on investment from KB Securities.
The funding comes at a time of explosive growth in the AI inference market, where FriendliAI has established itself as a key player by delivering high-performance, cost-effective inference solutions for enterprises deploying AI at scale.

"The AI inference market is exploding as more organizations move from AI experimentation to production deployment," said Byung-Gon Chun, CEO and founder of FriendliAI. "The funding validates our approach and positions us to capture the massive opportunity ahead. We're excited to partner with Capstone Partners, and our new investors, to scale our platform and deliver even greater value to our customers."

The company's breakthrough technology has gained significant traction in the market by delivering up to 90% GPU cost savings while delivering the fastest LLM inference performance on the market. This combination of cost efficiency and speed has positioned FriendliAI as a compelling solution for enterprises seeking to optimize their AI infrastructure investments.

FriendliAI's platform optimizes AI inference workloads by addressing the critical challenges faced when deploying AI at scale: prohibitively high infrastructure costs; slow inference speeds that impact the user experience; and the complexity of managing large language (LLM) models in production environments. With IBM research indicating that LLMs spend approximately 90% of their operational time in inference mode, FriendliAI's optimization technology directly targets the most resource-intensive aspect of AI deployment.

"FriendliAI has demonstrated exceptional technical innovation in the AI inference space," said Eun-gang Song, Partner at Capstone Partners. "Their platform's ability to deliver superior performance, while reducing costs, makes them an ideal partner for enterprises scaling their AI operations. We're thrilled to lead this round."

FriendliAI will use the funding to expand its sales and marketing teams to accelerate customer acquisition and to scale operations to support new customers. The company also plans to invest in product development, platform enhancements, and new partnerships with key technology providers.
"FriendliAI represents exactly the kind of infrastructure innovation that's needed to support the next wave of AI adoption," said Ben Yu, Partner at Sierra Ventures. "Their continued growth demonstrates the strong market demand for efficient, scalable AI inference solutions."

The announcement follows FriendliAI's recent partnership with LG AI Research, making FriendliAI the only provider of API access to LG’s EXAONE 4.0 foundation model for developers and enterprises worldwide. FriendliAI’s technology has also already proven its value with customers like Scatter Lab, a leading character AI chatbot company in Korea, which achieved a significant reduction in infrastructure costs by leveraging FriendliAI's platform to run their popular Zeta LLM service. In addition, Upstage, a fast-growing AI company best known for its cutting-edge Solar foundation model, relies on FriendliAI’s platform to deliver state-of-the-art inference performance.

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About FriendliAI
FriendliAI is a leading AI inference platform company that helps enterprises deploy and scale AI models efficiently and cost-effectively. The company's innovative platform delivers superior performance while reducing infrastructure costs, making it easier for organizations to move from AI experimentation to production deployment. As the only provider supporting over 430,000 models on Hugging Face, FriendliAI offers unmatched model coverage for developers. Acess Friendli Inference through FriendliAI's Dedicated Endpoints, Serverless Endpoints, and Container solutions.

About Capstone Partners
Capstone Partners is a leading venture capital firm specializing in early-stage investments in innovative startups. Founded in 2008, the firm has 23 funds, 504 billion KRW in assets under management, and 186 active portfolio companies, Capstone Partners has established itself as a first mover in Korea's venture capital ecosystem. The firm's notable early-stage investments include unicorn companies Zigbang, Fadu, and Karrot.

About Sierra Ventures
Sierra Ventures is an early-stage venture capital firm focused on Enterprise and Frontier Technologies, with over $2 billion in assets under management. Founded in 1982, the firm has a strong track record of supporting founders from seed stage through global scaling, emphasizing a hands-on, collaborative approach. They invest in companies across various sectors, including AI/ML, big data, cloud, fintech, health tech, and more.

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