

6TH ANNUAL ACCELERATE MICHIGAN WINNERS ANNOUNCED

One of North America's Largest Business Competitions

Awards More Than \$1 Million in Cash and Prizes

DETROIT – Nov. 6, 2015 – After two days of presentations at the Westin Book Cadillac Hotel in downtown Detroit, the winners of the 6th annual Accelerate Michigan Innovation Competition have been announced. At stake was more than \$1 million in cash prizes plus awards of services, staffing and software.

“We congratulate all participants this year for demonstrating a highly competitive entrepreneurial spirit”

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At an event attended by investors, entrepreneurs, funders and experts in the innovation sector from across the globe, this year's Accelerate Michigan winners are considered to be among Michigan's most promising companies to watch.

The \$500,000 grand prize went to Banza – a food innovation company changing the way people look at pasta. The second place prize of \$100,000 was awarded to Genomenon, a life sciences company focused on personalized medicine with simplified genome interpretation software.

Other sector-specific prizes of \$25,000 include:

- Product and Service – LawnGuru
- Information Technology – Workit Health
- Alternative Energy – ArborLight
- Advanced Materials – Akervall Technologies
- Life Science – QTEK
- Next Generation Manufacturing – Micro-LAM
- Medical Device – FlexDex
- Advanced Transportation – PicoSpray
- People's Choice – Neuvokas (\$10,000 prize)

In addition to the business competition, Accelerate Michigan hosted a business venture idea contest for student-led teams from throughout the state of Michigan. Students were judged on content, structure, delivery and creativity and were eligible to win \$15,000 in prizes to help launch their venture. This year, CARt was awarded first place for creating a platform to provide reliable transportation for low-income, transportation poor individuals to get to and from supermarkets for fresh, healthy food options.

“The caliber of businesses, ideas and technologies at this year's competition highlights how Accelerate Michigan has evolved over the last 5 years,” said Dave Blaszkiewicz, President and CEO of Invest Detroit. “This year's competition was great and truly encouraging as the competitors were keenly focused on contributing to Michigan's innovation economy and culture. All of the participants are to be congratulated for demonstrating a highly competitive entrepreneurial spirit.”

In addition to the 54 semifinalists at the 6th annual competition, this year's event focused on offering Michigan entrepreneurs tools to succeed in the evolving tech economy, including a keynote address from Bill Taylor, co-founder and founding editor of Fast Company.

To date, Accelerate Michigan companies as a whole have raised more than \$550 million in follow-on funding and created more than 1,000 jobs in Michigan.

“Showcasing the top 50 tech companies in the state each year, and drawing in a large number of equity investors makes us proud to support the entrepreneurial ecosystem here in the state and revel in its outcomes,” said Fredrick Molnar, Vice President of Entrepreneurship and Innovation at the Michigan Economic Development Corporation. “For the sixth year in a row, we’ve brought together the best and brightest in business and innovation. We look forward to seeing the participating companies continue to grow and do wonderful things for our state.”

About Accelerate Michigan and its Partner Organizations

The Accelerate Michigan Innovation Competition (AMIC) is an international business competition celebrating its sixth year of connecting later-stage entrepreneurial companies with national and international investors. The competition showcases the best and brightest businesses to the investment community in order to foster engagement and economic growth. Made possible by grants from the New Economy Initiative and the Michigan Economic Development Corporation’s 21st Century Jobs Fund as well as a significant amount of corporate and community support, AMIC has had an immediate and positive impact on the state’s economy, bolstering and advancing Michigan’s entrepreneurial eco-system. For more information and November 4-6 event registration, please visit <http://acceleratemichigan.org/>.

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