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CITY OF HARTFORD AND CONNECTICUT SCIENCE CENTER
ANNOUNCE RECIPIENT OF 2012 HARTFORD INNOVATION AWARD
$21,730 in Grant funds promotes entrepreneurs in the fields of
Technology, Science & Invention

HARTFORD (July 12, 2012) – The City of Hartford and the Connecticut Science Center are proud to announce that Aztech Engineers has been selected to receive $15,000 in grant funding and Open Wire Lab has been selected to receive $6,730 in grant funding through the Hartford Business Development Grant for Innovative Entrepreneurs. This fund is designed to help entrepreneurs move forward with projects in the areas of applied science, technology, and innovation.

Aztech Engineers Inc. will use the funds to further advance and develop their Convection Enhanced Closed Loop Geothermal Heat Pump. This patented improvement adds convection to the heat exchange process with the ground to improve the heat exchange rate. Funds will be spent on well drilling, materials and equipment rental. Open Wire Lab will use the funds to produce electronic kits that can be used to integrate digital interactive components into projects, such as changes in light and sound, generated by motion, temperature change, sound or luminosity. Funds will be spent on raw materials; photographic, and equipment.

"We are delighted to receive this funding. This is just the boost needed to get this innovation off the ground and further developed." said Dean Azzam, President of Aztech Engineers. "We expect that this grant will lead to further interest and investment in the Convection Enhanced Closed Loop Geothermal Heat Pump.”

“We are very grateful to the City of Hartford. Their grants program effectively support innovation and the development of new technologies.” said Balam Soto, Co-Owner of Open Wire Lab. “This support will help us to finish developing our innovative electronic kits and have them on the market by late summer.”

The 2012 awards program is funded by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) and administered by the Connecticut Science Center. The awards were made available to eligible entrepreneurs innovating in the city of Hartford.

The grant program is the result of a partnership between the City and the Connecticut Science Center to stimulate and recognize innovation as a present and future economic driver for the city. Throughout Hartford’s history entrepreneurs – Samuel Colt, Colonial Albert Pope, William Mason, Horace Wells, Christopher Spencer and Elisha Root - have been critical to its economic vibrancy and vitality.

The program also complements the City’s support for job creation in the arts through a nationally-recognized grants program administered by the Greater Hartford Arts Council. "Hartford's creative economy depends on the City's persistent commitment to small businesses and innovators in science and technology as well as the arts," said Hartford Mayor Pedro Segarra. "This initiative with the Connecticut Science Center gives us another tool to encourage and celebrate innovative and groundbreaking new ideas in science and technology. Creativity and innovation are proud parts of our city's past and will be crucial in better defining the future of Connecticut's Capital City."
The partnership leverages a robust program at the new Science Center that has already served more than 10,000 Hartford school children through structured field trips at no charge, and strengthened the capabilities of dozens of the city’s professional educators and science teachers since opening in 2009. “The Connecticut Science Center is pleased to work with the City of Hartford to celebrate and nurture the work of innovators in our midst,” said Matt Fleury, President and CEO. “We congratulate both recipients for their innovative application of green technology to expand their business. The award of these grants further promotes Hartford as an incubator for entrepreneurial activity and innovation.”

For questions or additional information about the grant selection process, please contact Lionel Rigler, Senior Project Manager at RIGLL001@hartford.gov or 860-757-9277.

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**About the Connecticut Science Center** The LEED-Gold certified Connecticut Science Center, located in downtown Hartford, sparks creative imagination and an appreciation for science by immersing visitors in fun and educational hands-on, minds-on interactive experiences while maintaining an environmentally conscious presence. Visitors experience over 150 exhibits in ten galleries and a range of topics, including space and earth sciences, physical sciences, biology, the Connecticut River watershed, alternative energy sources, Connecticut inventors and innovations, a children’s gallery, and much more. Other features include four educational labs, a 200-seat 3D digital theater, function room, gift store and café, and ongoing events and lectures for all ages. The Science Center is a non-profit organization dedicated to enhancing science education throughout the state of Connecticut and New England, providing learning opportunities for students and adults of all ages, and engaging the community in scientific exploration. More information: [www.CTScienceCenter.org](http://www.CTScienceCenter.org) or 860.SCIENCE.

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