Grant money for four innovation projects awarded by WSU

Wichita State University's Center for Innovation and Enterprise Engagement (CIEE) has awarded development grants to four regional innovation projects.

The technologies were selected by the center's board of directors after a rigorous competition and evaluation by technical experts.

Innovations were chosen because of their unique ideas, potential for commercialization and likely impact on the region's economy and workforce. Grants range in value from $20,000 to $50,000 for year-long product and process development.

Last September, CIEE won a $2 million federal economic development grant to accelerate the transfer of cutting-edge technologies within Wichita State and the surrounding community. The grant is part of the Obama administration's $37 million Jobs and Innovation Challenge that awarded WSU and 19 other applicants.

Wichita State is using the grant to focus on bringing innovative advanced manufacturing products and processes from the laboratory to the factory floor.

Enterprises receiving innovation development funding include:

- Fairmount Technologies, for development of a parametric study of stretch roll forming processes using experiments and finite element analysis. "Parametric Study of Stretch Roll Forming Processes using Experiments and Finite Element Analysis" is projected to create 10 to 15 full-time positions. The project will use faculty, staff and students from WSU to understand the reasons for the dishing or blow-in observed on the flange of parts formed by stretch roll forming.
- Mid-Continent Composites, for accelerated fabrication of a full-scale prototype of a unique Light Sport Aircraft. "Master Tooling for Model 206E 'Escape' Prototype Aircraft" could provide seven new jobs and accelerate the fabrications of the full-scale prototype of a unique Light Sport Aircraft.
- Ocianna International, for development and expansion of mooring/anchoring technologies for maritime applications in off-shore wind and wave generators, Oil and Natural Gas exploration/production facilities, and universal water-based off-shore construction. The company will engage WSU faculty and students for engineering aspects, computational fluid dynamics analysis, and market research. Ocianna International expects to generate more than 50 full-time jobs in Kansas over the next three years.

A faculty member receiving innovation funding is:

- Ramazan Asmatulu, for development of nanocomposite spheres for application of self-healing composite materials for wind turbine blades. "Nanocomposite Spheres for Self-healing of Composite Wind Turbine Blades" is projected to bring 25 new jobs in five years and 250 new jobs in the next 10 years. The research goal of this project is to develop an effective methodology to prevent the crack formation and propagation in the composite wind turbine blades using nanoscale inclusions and self-healing technology. One undergraduate student and one graduate student from Wichita State will get hands-on experience with this research project.

The CIEE will continue to accept competitive solicitation for technology development and business counseling grants to innovators through June 9. Interested parties should contact the center at innovation@wichita.edu to receive additional information or download a proposal submission packet at www.wichita.edu/ciee.

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