



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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PITTSBURGH DOWNTOWN PARTNERSHIP ANNOUNCES SECOND ROUND OF FUNDING FOR INNOVATIVE NEW BUSINESS TO TEST PRODUCTS IN DOWNTOWN

ENTREPRENEURS SOUGHT TO DEMONSTRATE PRODUCTS AND UNIQUE SOLUTIONS

Downtown Pittsburgh, PA – The Pittsburgh Downtown Partnership has announced the second round of funding for BetaBurgh, an initiative begun in early 2016 that invests in innovative ideas from the startup, nonprofit, entrepreneur, and small business communities in Pittsburgh. BetaBurgh exists to incite unique solutions, projects, and implementable ideas from local entrepreneurs and innovators that can be used to activate public spaces in Downtown. The Request for Proposals encourages local businesses and entrepreneurs to test new ideas or iterations of their current projects and programs in the public realm, which in turn connects them with potential customers and patrons. Applicants are asked to activate a Downtown space, anything from engaging pedestrians through interactive tools, programs, devices, or technology, or by implementing a new, creative physical infrastructure in the space itself that will also advance their business concept or demonstrate new technology or products.

BetaBurgh will award grants of up to \$10,000 to local and regional entrepreneurs and early-stage businesses to use their products for implementable ideas that activate public spaces in Downtown Pittsburgh. Successful demonstrations will engage with and enhance the experiences of the broader Downtown community of more than 120,000 daytime workers, millions of annual visitors, and over 12,000 residents by providing amenities and engaging audiences in public spaces with new and innovative products and ideas developed in Pittsburgh.

Two information sessions will be held, the first on Wednesday, December 7, 2016 and the second on Wednesday, January 4, 2017 both at 5:30 p.m. at the Pittsburgh Downtown Partnership office, 925 Liberty Avenue, 4th Floor, 15222. The RFP is available online at www.BetaBurgh.com. Proposals must be submitted online at BetaBurgh.com and are due by 4:00 p.m. on Friday, January 20, 2017.

“Supporting innovation is extremely important in today’s economy and we are thrilled to provide this investment to grow and develop local businesses” said Jeremy Waldrup, President and CEO of the Pittsburgh Downtown Partnership. “If round one was any indicator, Pittsburgh has an amazingly diverse set of entrepreneurs and we look forward to giving them a venue Downtown to promote and further their business.”

BetaBurgh is a program of the Pittsburgh Downtown Partnership and has been financially supported by the BNY Mellon Foundation of Southwestern Pennsylvania with technical assistance provided by Innovation Works, AlphaLab and AlphaLab Gear, the Urban Redevelopment Authority, and Ascender.

“We were blown away by the level of interest and caliber of innovative ideas that emerged from the first round of BetaBurgh,” said Kenya Boswell, President, BNY Mellon Foundation of Southwestern Pennsylvania. “By supporting this initiative, the Foundation can actively invest in bringing fresh, engaging products and solutions to Downtown Pittsburgh.”

Four installations occurred in the summer and fall of 2016 featuring the initial BetaBurgh participants, including a life-sized gaming system by Digital Dream Labs. This Pittsburgh-based startup adapted their handheld interactive children’s gaming system into a large kiosk that floated to multiple locations throughout Downtown.

“Betaburgh allowed us to bring our super-sized Puzzlets to life this summer, activating areas of Downtown Pittsburgh and introducing plenty of new people to our playful learning platform,” said Matt Stewart, co-founder Digital Dream Labs. “Participating in the program had a great side-effect when speaking to retail partners, who have been looking for an interactive way to introduce Puzzlets to their customers. The super-sized Puzzlets have served as a first prototype for this, and provided some great teachable moments for us in our thought process.”

Other 2016 Round I Award Recipients:

The Aquaponics Project – Wanting to find a sustainable solution to urban agriculture and food accessibility, this university student-led team constructed a two-story farm in a retrofitted shipping container in the Gateway T Station parklet.

CEEMI – Short for Collaborative Experiential Electronic Musical Instrument can turn any Wi-Fi compatible mobile device into a musical instrument and turned strangers in multiple Downtown public spaces into an orchestra during CEEMI for Lunch: A Musical Luncheon.

LA Kids – This experiential education program for Pittsburgh Public School students in grades 6 through 12 constructed a space ship themed art installation that worked as a solar power charging station for mobile devices.

More information about these projects and the program can be found at www.BetaBurgh.com.

About the Pittsburgh Downtown Partnership

Pittsburgh Downtown Partnership (PDP) is a dynamic, nonprofit organization comprised of business and community leaders, property owners, civic organizations, foundations and residents who provide energy, vision and advocacy for Downtown Pittsburgh. Working collaboratively with its partners, the PDP strives to create a positive Downtown experience for residents, workers and visitors alike. The PDP's strategic initiatives include clean and safe services, transportation, and economic development and advocacy. For more information, visit www.DowntownPittsburgh.com, follow us on Twitter at <http://twitter.com/downtownpitt> and “like” us on Facebook.

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