



GREATER MADISON
CHAMBER of COMMERCE

NEWS

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Chamber Announces Pressure Chamber Finalists *Five local startups to compete Aug. 21 to pitch top investors in Silicon Valley*

MADISON – Today the Greater Madison Chamber of Commerce announced the five finalists competing in this year’s Pressure Chamber startup pitch event, which will take place Aug. 21 at the Overture Center during the Forward Festival, an eight-day celebration of entrepreneurship and innovation in Madison. In its three years, participating Pressure Chamber companies have gone on to raise more than \$105 million from investors.

Pressure Chamber is a “Shark Tank”-style contest in which emerging companies will pitch in front of a panel of regional investors, business executives and a live audience. The winning company is decided based on a combination of judges’ scoring and audience votes.

The 2017 Pressure Chamber finalists are:

- **Cardigan** – The business card of the future, an app that enables you to more easily access, update and share your business card information with your connections.
- **Curate** – Scans public meeting data using artificial intelligence (AI) to identify cutting-edge marketing intelligence for construction firms and vendors, including early, reliable information about new manufacturing facilities, wastewater plant upgrades and renovations to city hall.
- **DotCom Therapy** – Answers the shortage of speech-language pathologists by providing therapy services to children across the country and around the world through live videoconferencing.
- **SimpleMachines** – Combines big-data analytics, AI and unstructured data processing into one chip and software framework to develop next-generation programmable chips for the AI era initially targeting the multi-billion data center industry.
- **ThirdSpace** – Software to help solve core business problems around employee engagement, onboarding and capturing workplace knowledge, all while delivering “Epic culture.”

“With talented startups like these dedicated to solving global challenges, the future of Greater Madison business looks very bright,” said Chamber President Zach Brandon. “These companies are great examples of the innovation and entrepreneurial spirit that are flourishing in our region, and we are excited to see what they have in store at Pressure Chamber.”

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In addition to receiving the coveted “golden suitcase,” the winning company will also receive an all-expenses paid spot on the Chamber’s exclusive Madison-area startup delegation to San Francisco this October for meetings with top Silicon Valley investment firms. In its first three years, each Pressure Chamber winner – Fishidy, bluDiagnostics and POLCO – has credited the initiative for helping their company close successful funding rounds. Additionally, Pressure Chamber has been recognized by both the International Economic Development Council and Steve Case’s Rise of the Rest Summit as an entrepreneurship and economic development best practice.

Pressure Chamber returns this year as part of neXXpo, a showcase of some of Greater Madison’s most exciting companies that includes attendee voting for the second annual Most Innovative Company (MIC) award. To register for these events, visit <http://greatermadisonchamber.com/programs-events/nexxpo/>

Pressure Chamber is presented by Michael Best & Friedrich, with support from the State of Wisconsin Investment Board, Wisconsin Alumni Research Foundation, Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation, American Family Ventures, Baird Capital, 4490 Ventures, HealthX Ventures, Lindsay Stone & Briggs, Rock River Capital Partners and Wisconsin Investment Partners.

Pressure Chamber finalists are available for interviews upon request.

For more information about Forward Fest, please visit <http://www.forwardfest.org/>

About the Greater Madison Chamber of Commerce:

The Greater Madison Chamber of Commerce is the voice of business with nearly 1,300 organizations – ranging from one-person shops to corporations with more than 10,000 employees – working to bring the Greater Madison area to its full potential. The Greater Madison region is a leader in innovation. From cutting-edge technologies to distinctive retail shops to inventive services and products, our members vary greatly but are united by the region’s entrepreneurial spirit. More information can be found at greatermadisonchamber.com.

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