

Local startup companies worth watching

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Northern Colorado is on a roll in creating new innovation-based companies propelled by our world-class research university and highly skilled work force.

The Rocky Mountain Innovation Initiative, or RMI2, has recently added some exciting new companies in its incubation program, which provides startups with facilities and support during their formative years. Some recent highlights:

Czero, an engineering startup that develops innovative energy-saving technologies, recently tested the first prototype of its unique hydraulic hybrid drive on a retrofitted class 6 heavy-duty truck.

This project is a collaborative effort with CSU. A team of graduate students will visit India this summer to investigate applications for the technology.

Czero received a \$67,500 grant from the Governor's Energy Office last month.

GenieCo, a maker of enterprise resource planning software for specialty businesses, released its first product, equineGenie, last month. It has received rave reviews and has already logged more than \$100k in orders.

A notable customer is the renowned CSU Equine Sciences Program. They have adopted the product to manage operations and also tapped founder Bob Valentine to teach their equine business course.

GenieCo has ramped up to 11 employees and anticipates significant revenue growth. Additional products are slated for September release.

Sprig Toys is set to launch production of its imaginative new line of toys for preschoolers this month. The eco-friendly "kid-powered" Adventure Vehicle series will be introduced worldwide in major retail outlets and specialty stores this fall.

Sprig closed on a multimillion-dollar round of venture capital financing earlier this year and has grown to nine employees. It is already at work creating next spring's new product line and in discussion with another startup to provide local manufacturing.

Clear Path Labs' flagship product, a geospatial asset management system, has been adopted by National Geographic and branded as their MetaLens tool. NG has made available a visualization of the recent tornado damage in Windsor using this product (www.metalens.org/ngmapspro/products).

CPL is working with several other local startups on additional business generating projects.

Advanced Regenerative Therapies, founded by CSU veterinary medicine researchers, has begun production of its innovative stem-cell treatment for cartilage and ligament injuries. Several veterinary clinics are among their current customers.

Firefly Medical recently completed the first manufacturing prototype of its revolutionary Infusion Management System for hospitals and clinics. It has also secured additional private investment capital resulting from our recent Ventures Club event.

VanDyne SuperTurbo, the newest RMI2 company, is attracting automotive industry attention with its patented engine efficiency technology. It is collaborating with CSU for an initial testing facility and in discussion with another local startup for engineering support.

These companies are currently located in three temporary downtown facilities generously made available to RMI2 by the city of Fort Collins. Watch for more stories about our homegrown local startups as they energize the economy and, hopefully, change the world.

Mark Forsyth is CEO of the Rocky Mountain Innovation Initiative (www.rmi2.org), dedicated to promoting innovation and entrepreneurship in Northern Colorado.