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Winners Announced for “StartUP Bristol” Business Plan Competition

(July 20, 2017) – In a process that began in April, three lucky business “StartUPs” have received grant money from the City of Bristol totaling \$100,000 to make their dream jobs come true as a result of Bristol’s business plan competition named StartUP Bristol. Movia Robotics was selected by the StartUP Bristol Task Force to win the top grant of \$50,000 to be used to establish their headquarters in Bristol. Adam von Gootkin, Chief Executive Officer of Movia, presented along with four other finalists to receive the top award.

Movia Robotics uses robots and interactive software to teach children with autism behavioral, life and academic skills. With years of research, patented technology, intellectual property, and a highly successful pilot program in select school systems, the company is poised to initiate a “go-to” market strategy in the third quarter of 2017.

A \$30,000 grant was offered to Farmington River Holdings, LLC managed by Christopher Throwe. The company offers small team communications solutions through wearable radio devices. These are typically headset or body-mounted units. The final grant of \$20,000 was offered to North East Food Truck Festivals of New England conceived by Matthew Bradley Soulier. North East Food Truck Festivals of New England is a production company working with local and state municipalities in hosting events of all sizes throughout New England.

“We couldn’t be more pleased with the new businesses that were given the opportunity to receive grants this year. StartUP Bristol is an innovative program that attracts entrepreneurs who may not have originally considered Bristol as a place to locate their businesses,” said Bristol Mayor Ken Cockayne. “This signifies our continuing commitment to expanding the City’s economic development efforts to attract new businesses and encouraging existing businesses to grow.”

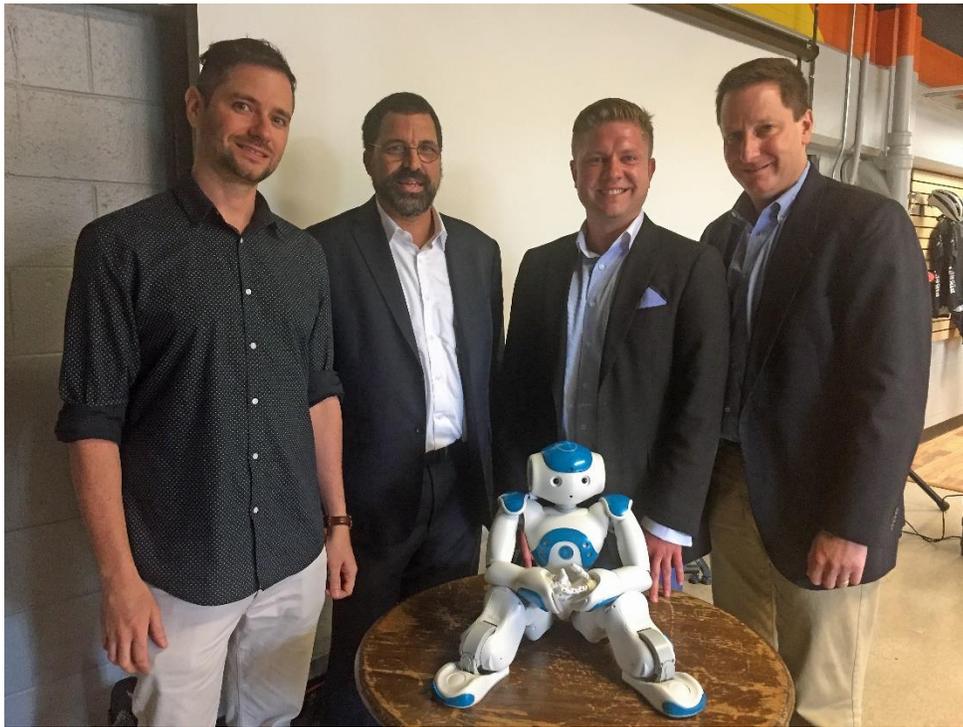
Eligibility requirements to apply included being a business currently operating in Bristol or operating outside of Bristol but willing to expand to Bristol following an award. Businesses may also be in the concept stage with no formal operations, but must commit to locating in Bristol following presentation of the award and legal business formation.

“It was tough for the committee to narrow the selection down to just three awards. We had over 30 applications and there were many great ideas and business concepts,” StartUP Bristol Task Force Chairperson Eric St. Pierre. “This is truly a program that makes dreams happen for new StartUP owners but also illustrates Bristol’s business-friendly attitude and the City’s willingness to make new businesses successful here.”

Bristol Development Authority Executive Director Justin Malley said that the businesses will not receive the grant award until they actually open up offices and retain City business licenses in Bristol. The StartUP Bristol Task Force is a volunteer committee composed of current business owners, City leaders, and others. Of the 30 applications submitted, the Task Force pared those entries down to 11 companies that were then invited to submit full business plans and other company information. Finalists gave live presentations at the new home of Biker's Edge, 99 Main Street in Bristol mid-July to the StartUP Bristol Committee as well as a crowd of lenders, local officials, and others that support economic development in the region.

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***About the Bristol Development Authority.** The Bristol Development Authority (BDA) works to improve the physical, economic, and social environment of the Bristol community by serving as the primary governmental organization dedicated to promoting commercial development, to preserving and improving the City's housing stock, and to securing and administering the resources required to carry out these goals. The BDA is overseen by an appointed nine-member Board of Commissioners which governs economic and community development policies for the City. For more information, log onto www.bristolallheart.com or by email to bda@bristolct.gov.*



Pictured above is Movia Robotics senior management team with "WOZ". (Left to Right) Peter Kowalczyk, Chief Financial Officer, Timothy Gifford, Chief Technical Officer, Adam von Gootkin, Chief Executive Officer and Rob Paranti, Vice-President, Product Development.