

## **Energy Mentor Network to give Tennessee entrepreneurs advantage in global energy marketplace**

*Proven mentorship program connects entrepreneurs with mentors and expertise*

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**KNOXVILLE, Tenn.** – Today, the Tennessee Advanced Energy Business Council (TAEBEC) announced the launch of the [Energy Mentor Network](#), a proven mentorship program specifically for energy entrepreneurs and startups in Tennessee. Applications are now open for mentors and startups to participate in the Energy Mentor Network.

The network, run by TAEBEC in partnership with Launch Tennessee, was announced during TAEBEC's annual "Opportunities in Energy" event, which showcased the state's lucrative advanced energy industry and recent achievements in the field.

The goal of the Energy Mentor Network is to foster the growth of Tennessee advanced energy technologies and startups by connecting entrepreneurs with mentors and industry specific expertise. The Network pairs mentors with promising new companies through a structured program involving panel presentations and mentoring sessions, using a video-conference service to engage and connect mentors and entrepreneurs across the State.

"Tennessee is uniquely positioned to be a mecca of energy entrepreneurs and businesses," said Matt Kisber, President of TAEBEC and President & CEO of his own company, Silicon Ranch Corporation. "The Energy Mentor Network is yet another tool Tennessee can leverage to gain for our state more than its fair share of the \$1.3 trillion global advanced energy market."

Tennessee has emerged as a leader in the advanced energy industry with nearly 325,000 Tennesseans employed in the sector and more than 17,000 business entities that contribute \$33.4 billion to the State GDP. The state is also home to three unique assets that enable energy industry leadership and innovation—Oak Ridge National Laboratory, University of Tennessee and Tennessee Valley Authority.

"Mentorship is critical to developing Tennessee's advanced energy ecosystem because it gives entrepreneurs a leg-up in a marketplace where Tennessee has a distinct advantage," said Jill Van Beke, Director of Entrepreneurship & Innovation, Launch Tennessee. This is the second mentor network under Launch Tennessee's umbrella. The organization piloted the program with Life Science Tennessee in 2014 and has plans to add additional industries to the network.

The purpose of the program is to develop quality startups. After completing the program, startups will have an investable pitch deck, a rock solid business model and a plan to establish more traction. These tools will position Tennessee's entrepreneurs to raise capital, request other funds like SBIR grants, and scale their company.

The Energy Network already has more than a dozen mentors signed up for the program with expertise in energy systems, clean tech, intellectual property, business and finance strategy. Mentors reviewed the first pool of applications in November and began mentoring this month.

The Energy Mentor Network is modeled after [CONNECT San Diego](#)'s 30+ year old Springboard program. Each company or entrepreneur is matched with a team of C-level executives who have deep experience in growing and scaling companies. This mentoring team is led by the Entrepreneur-in-Residence (EIR) that coaches and guides their company through The Energy Mentor Network's program for a period of 3-9 months.

Applications are now open for mentors and startups to participate in the Energy Mentor Network. For more information and to apply, visit:

<http://www.tnadvancedenergy.com/energy-mentor-network/apply/>

### **About Tennessee Advanced Energy Business Council**

The Tennessee Advanced Energy Business Council (TAEBEC) champions advanced energy as a job creation and economic development strategy. It educates public officials and business leaders about the value and job creation potential of Tennessee's advanced energy assets, establishes strategic partnerships to connect assets with opportunities, and informs policy that expands and strengthens the industry. For more information, visit [www.tnadvancedenergy.com](http://www.tnadvancedenergy.com).

### **About Launch Tennessee**

Launch Tennessee is a public-private partnership focused on supporting the development of high-growth companies in the state of Tennessee with the ultimate goal of making Tennessee the No. 1 state in the Southeast for entrepreneurs to start and grow a company. Launch Tennessee focuses on four key areas: entrepreneurship, commercialization, capital and outreach. For more information, visit <http://launchtn.org/>.

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