

autoXLR8R

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Inaugural AutoXLR8R Program Set for Takeoff in Spring Hill Featuring 10 New Technologies

Mike Nichols to lead the group as Program Director

Spring Hill, Tenn. – Following months of anticipation, the first-of-its-kind autoXLR8R will begin next week under the leadership of Program Director, Mike Nichols. Ten companies were invited to begin this 13-week journey, starting in Spring Hill, Tennessee, and eventually taking them throughout the Southeast.

AutoXLR8R is an intensive program focused on identifying, commercializing and funding high-potential automotive technologies. Entrepreneurs and innovators will have the opportunity to connect with automotive manufacturing and technology commercialization experts, business advisors and investors.

Founder and co-founder of over a dozen companies, Program Director Mike Nichols will bring both entrepreneurial and automotive expertise to the autoXLR8R program.

"Computers and smartphones are changing rapidly; becoming more powerful daily. The device revolution has been made possible by the collective innovative power of individuals with the talent, passion and commitment to make them better," said Nichols. "AutoXLR8R is founded on the basis of asking 'Why can't we do the same with these other machines we love just as much?' We're helping innovators turn their ideas into highly investible companies that will make a real impact in the automotive industry."

Nichols' startup credits include Director of Operations for 2009 TechCrunch 50 finalist Mota Motors, where he led product and operations teams for strategic partners like Autotrader.com and eBay motors. He then conceived and co-founded ControlBox, which now powers Autotrader.com's Privacy Shield™, after which he co-founded St. Louis-based RollSale (TechStars Boulder 2012) to streamline the used-car trade-in process.

Housed at the former General Motors/Saturn corporate offices, participants will benefit from local expertise. "The accelerator embodies the creativity that Saturn brought to the automotive industry 20 plus years ago," said Jack Sisk, Program Manager. Sisk served as a leader of the supplier quality and supplier development team with General Motors/Saturn for 26 years.

"Saturn was an organization of entrepreneurial pioneers who forged new ways of thinking into how to manufacture products and how to develop new business models. It was an inspirational organization with creative genius. Enabling a synergistic culture was a trademark of Saturn's. I can't think of a better place to launch such a project," said Sisk.

In its inaugural year, the ten technologies selected include everything from a new electronic vehicle charging device to advanced algorithms for improving innovation processes.

Participants will embark on a commercialization strategy "Tech Tour" to the southeast's top research institutions and universities including Oak Ridge National Laboratory (ORNL) and Clemson University's International Center for Automotive Research (CU-ICAR) made possible through a regional Automotive Accelerator Alliance.

Along the way, founders will receive one-on-one mentorship from seasoned auto industry executives as well as from other accomplished entrepreneurs including former president and CEO of Mercedes-Benz U.S.

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International, Bill Taylor; Tech 20/20 Director of the Center for Entrepreneurial Growth, Shawn Carson; ORNL Director of Industrial and Economic Development Partnerships, Tom Rogers; President of the Tennessee Automotive Manufacturers Association, Tom Brewer; President of the Alabama Automotive Manufacturers Association, Ron Davis; CU-ICAR Director of International Business Development Suzanne Dickerson and many more.

“We can offer start-up companies a greater chance of success by working together as a region, leveraging our assets and exposing these companies to the best our industry has to offer,” said Dan Marcum, Executive Director of autoXLR8R.

Companies participating will be provided office space and \$20,000 in exchange for equity. The program will continue through August 8 culminating in a final week of pitch presentations to investors.

About autoXLR8R

AutoXLR8R is a 13-week automotive accelerator program developed by the Southern Middle Tennessee Entrepreneur Centers (SMTEC). The program’s mission is to identify, commercialize and fund promising new technologies applicable to the automotive industry.

For more information, visit autoXLR8R.com or contact Cammie Fitzgerald at 931-455-0155.

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