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AUTOXLR8R 2014 ACCEPTING APPLICATIONS

13-Week Accelerator Program is Committed to Advancing Promising New Automotive Technologies

SPRING HILL, Tenn. – The autoXLR8R program, a unique accelerator program focused on automotive technologies, is accepting applications for its 2014 class now through April 4. The 13-week entrepreneurial boot camp is a mentor-driven program that will offer approximately 10 companies the opportunity to connect with automotive manufacturing and technology commercialization experts, as well as investors, for an immersion-style experience designed to help propel new innovations to market.

The main goal of the autoXLR8R program is to identify, commercialize and fund high-potential technologies applicable to the automotive industry. This year's camp begins May 19 and will run through August 15, culminating during the final week with pitch presentations to potential investors on Demo Day (August 12).

The inaugural autoXLR8R program was universally viewed as a tremendous success with 10 companies honing and refining their cutting-edge technologies last summer. Last year's participants also earned a better appreciation for how to communicate with and pitch to prospective investors – a key component of any entrepreneurial accelerator.

“The autoXLR8R really forced us to take the technology out of the lab and get in front of customers to receive market validation,” said Michael Weber, CEO of Graphenics and 2013 autoXLR8R participant. “You have to be able to meet your customers and your investors at the appropriate level, and the networking and mentorship that was provided by the autoXLR8R allowed us to do that.”

Last year's cohort received additional “hands-on” training with trips to the University of Alabama's College of Engineering and Clemson University's International Center for Automotive Research for mentorship opportunities. They also were able to consult with automotive technology professionals at the Volkswagen, Nissan and General Motors plants in Tennessee. This summer's class will be provided with a similar experience as interaction with industry experts and other mentors remains an essential part of autoXLR8R's approach.

“The primary goal of the autoXLR8R program is to identify the most promising new technologies and provide them with the resources they will need in order to succeed,” said Dan Marcum, autoXLR8R Executive Director.

Marcum also serves as the Executive Director of the Southern Middle Tennessee Entrepreneur Centers (SMTEC), which manages the autoXLR8R program. Marcum has a proven track record of identifying successful new technologies and bringing them to market.

Industry partners like Nissan, General Motors, Mercedes and Eastman Chemical provided remarkable support of last year's autoXLR8R, and will continue to serve as mentors to autoXLR8R.

“General Motors is committed to programs like autoXLR8R because we know that the technologies developed and commercialized in this forum are vital to the automotive industry's longevity,” said Roger Fender, Logistics Manager for General Motors' powertrain facility in Spring Hill, Tenn. “With the ever-changing needs of our customers, we're pleased to be a part of a program that fast tracks the best ideas for today's vehicles.”

The participation of the region's automotive manufacturing associations ensure that each company gains access to a diverse network of automotive suppliers across the southeast.

“Several of TAMA’s members are eager to serve as mentors to the autoXLR8R companies,” said Tom Brewer, President of the Tennessee Automotive Manufacturers Association. “In addition to relating their own experience and expertise, they get a behind-the-scenes look at technologies that might be applicable in their plants or compatible with their business models. It is an opportunity for local suppliers as much as it is for the autoXLR8R companies.”

The autoXLR8R program also receives support from Eastman Chemical Company, a global specialty chemical company.

“Transportation is a key industry served by Eastman Chemical Company, representing approximately 15 percent of our annual sales revenue,” said Jeff Needham, Strategic Technology Director at Eastman Chemical Company. “autoXLR8R is perfectly aligned with our goals to strengthen our portfolio of innovative products for the transportation industry and build stronger connections to new products and solutions emerging from entrepreneurial start-up companies.”

The autoXLR8R program benefits from the support of an extensive network of research institutions, top engineering schools and automotive manufacturers and suppliers. The network includes:

- University of Tennessee, College of Engineering
- The Center for Advanced Vehicular Systems at Mississippi State University
- Vanderbilt University, College of Engineering
- Oak Ridge National Laboratory
- Clemson University International Center for Automotive Research
- University of Alabama, College of Engineering
- LaunchTN
- The Tennessee Automotive Manufacturers Association (TAMA)
- The Alabama Automotive Manufacturers Association (AAMA)
- The Mississippi Automotive Manufacturers Association (MAMA)
- The Georgia Automotive Manufacturers Association (GAMA)
- Original Equipment Suppliers Association
- Southern Automotive Women’s Forum

Entrepreneurial teams from the region’s top universities are expected to compete for placement in the camp, though any entrepreneur, start-up or existing company with an innovative technology related to the automotive industry is encouraged to apply.

Once companies have been selected, mentors from the autoXLR8R network will be engaged based on the specific needs of each company. Participants will also network with a number of guest speakers and investors throughout the summer program.

Participants will travel to autoXLR8R’s headquarters at the Northfield Workforce Development Conference Center in Spring Hill, Tenn., to begin the 13-week program. Northfield is located in the heart of Tennessee’s automotive industry.

Initial equity investments up to \$25,000 will be available to applicants accepted into the 2014 autoXLR8R cohort. Additionally, investors will be engaged throughout the program and will consider offering the most promising companies additional bridge financing up to \$100,000 at the end of the 13-week program.

Applications are now being accepted online at autoXLR8R.com. Important dates include:

February 3 Applications opened

April 4 Applications closed
April 21 Company notification
May 19 autoXLR8R 2.0 begins in Spring Hill, Tennessee
August 12 autoXLR8R Demo Day

About autoXLR8R

autoXLR8R is a 13-week accelerator program dedicated to advancing promising new technologies applicable to the automobile industry. The program is located in Spring Hill, Tenn. – the heart of the Southern Automotive Industry.

About the Southern Middle Tennessee Entrepreneur Centers

Southern Middle Tennessee Entrepreneur Centers (SMTEC) is one of nine Regional Entrepreneurial Accelerators that have been established throughout Tennessee to assist entrepreneurs. SMTEC provides mentoring, education and training, strategic and technical support, and assistance identifying sources of capital.

For more information visit autoXLR8R.com or contact Tara Barnett at tara@autoxlr8r.com.

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