

The State of Delaware's first EDGE Grant awardees stand with Gov. John Carney and Division of Small Business Director Damian DeStefano following the announcement of all the winners.



Ten Delaware small businesses announced as first-ever EDGE Grant awardees

» Ten Delaware small businesses were recognized Wednesday as the awardees of the first-ever EDGE Grants from the state Division of Small Business.

Gov. John Carney and Division Director Damian DeStefano announced the companies at an event at the Carvel State Office Building in Wilmington. The grant recipients, located across the state, represent a variety of industries, including agribusiness, medical devices, food services and apparel. They include woman-owned, minority-owned and veteran-owned businesses.

"Delaware is fortunate to have a vibrant small business community comprised of 25,000 companies that employ more than half of all Delaware workers," Gov. Carney said. "Through these grants the State of Delaware is helping to support small business owners who take risks to realize their dreams of building companies from the ground up."

EDGE Grants provide a 3-to-1 match for each dollar an eligible business invests on qualified expenses that improve the company's long-term chances of success.

The state is awarding a total of 10 grants. Five in the STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Math) class totaling \$500,000 and five in the Entrepreneur class tallying \$248,000. The businesses are putting up almost \$375,000 in matching funds.

"These grants will assist these creative, driven entrepreneurs get the capital support they need to reach their full potential," said Secretary of State Jeff Bullock. "They will help the companies grow and level the playing field as they compete against larger, more established businesses."

The innovative program launched in May and had more than 140 companies apply. Eight finalists were selected in the STEM class and eight in the Entrepreneur class. Five winners in each category were chosen after public presentations before a panel of judges on Aug. 13 and 14 at Del Tech in Dover.

"It was challenging to narrow a field filled with so many great applicants," said DeStefano. "Over two days our team of judges listened carefully to the presentations, asked thoughtful questions and offered valuable insights and comments."

The recipients are:

STEM class

Avkin (New Castle)

This woman-owned business develops medical simulation equipment to train healthcare professionals. It will use the grant to accelerate its efforts to market its products to hospital systems across the U.S.

EZY Venture (Harrington)

This woman-owned business processes industrial hemp and extracts CBD oil. It will use its grant to purchase the equipment it needs to extract and process the oil at scale, helping it to meet the growing demand for this product.

Napigen (Wilmington)

The company is developing a hybrid, non-GMO variety of wheat which may help ease the world's shortage of the grain. It will use the grant for achieving two milestones critical for launching seed production.

Neurothera (Newark)

The company uses light (photobio-modulation) to treat diseases and injuries

affecting the brain. It will use the grant to complete a preliminary study to investigate the technology as a possible treatment for Parkinson's disease.

W7 Energy (Wilmington)

This spin-out company from the University of Delaware is using a new class of hydroxide exchange membranes to power zero-emission fuel cell electric vehicles. It will use the grant to rent larger laboratory space and market to potential new customers.

Entrepreneur Class

BBD MidAtlantic (Greenville)

This woman-owned business operates a successful blow out-bar in Greenville called Blo Blow Dry Bar. It will use the grant to move to a larger space which will enable it to expand its staff and serve more customers.

entreDonovan Wholesale (Wilmington)

This women-owned company uses 3D technology and digital pattern making to produce custom-made women's apparel

for the workplace. It will use the grant to pursue its national growth strategy.

Grey Fox Capital (Wilmington)

This veteran-owned firm manages a fund which raises money to invest in real estate projects in Opportunity Zones in Delaware. It will use the grant for market analysis, marketing and legal fees.

Impact Graphix and Signs (Seaford)

This woman-owned business installs commercial signs and awnings in southern Delaware and on the Eastern Shore of Maryland. It will use the grant to purchase a second bucket truck to better meet demand for the company's services.

Tomeka's Homestyle Eatery (Dover)

This minority- and woman-owned business plans to open a home-style, soul food restaurant in downtown Dover. The owner already sells her food at the city's weekly farmers market. She will use the grant to help build a commercial kitchen in the downtown building she plans to use for her restaurant.

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October 28, 2019 marked 50 years since the landmark discovery of a little known, yet widely used material that today serves as a core component for many everyday products including a wide array developed and produced by W. L. Gore & Associates. Expanded polytetrafluoroethylene (ePTFE) is a revolutionary material central to products with high societal value including implantable medical devices such as sutures and vascular grafts. Other diverse products include protective apparel, data transmission cables aboard the International Space Station, automotive fuel cells, guitar strings and mobile phone vents. While widely known for its use in the highly recognized GORE-TEX Brand waterproof yet breathable apparel, the first such apparel of its kind, ePTFE is vital to thousands of other products produced daily for consumer, industrial and medical applications worldwide.