

Startups jump into social innovation

TECHNOLOGY

Theme of 2017 Techstock is about building community



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Metro | Calgary

For 17 years, Techstock has been one of the best showcases for innovation in Calgary's start up and technology scene.

This year the theme is social innovation, which has become a hot topic among young innovators. In fact, the number of companies at this year's Techstock is nearly double the amount of exhibitors usually featured.

"Calgary is burgeoning with young, innovation oriented companies," said Innovate Calgary president Peter Garrett. "It really takes a village to raise one of these companies, and the more we come together as a community to support them and help them build their business, the better."

The event is a partnership between Innovate Calgary and Beakerhead, and usually draws out a few hundred people.

The 59 companies registered to exhibit are focused around the idea of social innovation in a variety of different areas, from health and wellness to energy and agriculture. The event is a chance to meet potential investors, employees and customers.

But it's not just rows and rows of companies.

The speaker panel will feature industry professionals who will explore how social innovation can positively transform the world for future generations. They'll also share advice and insight on navigating business, funding, brand and storytelling as a social enterprise.

Attendees can contribute to the conversation by asking questions, and also attending artist Laura Wells' live painting booth.

Wells will be painting on themes of sustainability, economy and community — and attendees can share their thoughts to inspire what goes on the canvas.

The event takes place Sept. 14 at Innovate Calgary, and is free to register. More at innovatecalgary.com.



Social innovation companies featured this year will tackle on issues like water recycling and cleaner processes to mine oil. AP

PARTICIPANTS

Startups to watch

Techstock 2017 will feature a wide range of innovative companies. Here are just a few.

1. APPLIED RENEWABLE TECHNOLOGIES INC

ART's innovative renewable technology is focused on converting cellulosic biomass (hay, sawdust, corn stalk, wheat stalk, etc.) directly into carbon neutral liquid fuel. The clean green end product has two to three times the heating value of biomass with multiple usages.

2. BOOMERANG BAGS

YYC Boomerang Bags works to reduce the use of plastic bags by engaging local communities in the making of Boomerang Bags — a free, fun, sustainable alternative to plastic bags.

3. DEEPWATER FARMS

Aquaponics technology allows plants to grow in water instead of soil, and nutrients are derived from fish waste, as opposed

to inorganic chemical solutions that are used in hydroponics and traditional methods.

4. NEURVANA HEALTH

Neurvana Health is a neurofeedback and health centre. Neurofeedback is direct training of brain function, by which the brain learns to function more efficiently. By applying electrodes to a participant's scalp, we are able to see their brain activity in real time by using brain mapping technology.

5. PX3 BRAIN SCIENCE

Specializing in research-based solutions that promote brain health and brain safety. Developed in Calgary, PX3 has patented a new customized breathing device that is scientifically proven to increase oxygen uptake to the brain in real time.