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The Water Council announces spring 2020 Tech Challenge results

Corporate sponsors A. O. Smith, Badger Meter and Zurn Industries award \$25,000 to innovation winners from a field of 20 applications located in seven countries

MILWAUKEE, Wis. (June 24, 2020) – The Water Council today announced the results and winners of its third-round Tech Challenge competition, selected by corporate sponsors A. O. Smith, Badger Meter and Zurn Industries, a Rexnord company.

Launched in 2017 and held twice annually, [Tech Challenge](#) is an open innovation contest designed to connect program sponsors to those with novel solutions for emerging freshwater technologies with a high potential for commercialization. The spring 2020 challenge, which ran from April 2 to May 3, sought water technology solutions for energy harvesting and leak detection.

“With our focus on building local, regional and global relationships in the water technology sector, the strength of our market reach continues to benefit programs like Tech Challenge,” said Karen Frost, vice president of economic development, The Water Council. “Now in our third year of the program, it’s been rewarding to see both our outreach and quality of applicants accelerate. For this challenge, we attracted 20 high-quality applications submitted from seven countries, efficiently generating diverse R&D pathways for our corporate sponsors to pursue.”

Evaluated and selected by the Tech Challenge sponsors, the following finalists each garnered awards of \$10,000 each:

- [Pydro](#) – Based in Rostock, Germany and winner of the energy harvesting challenge category, Pydro’s solutions contribute to a sustainable water supply by providing more visibility into the operation of smart water networks with self-powered monitoring and control solutions. The company’s mission is to create better visibility, reduce costs and equip its customers to best manage their water resource challenges.
- [Smart Flow](#) – Based in Dublin, Ireland and winner of the leak detection challenge category, Smart Flow’s real-time water monitoring and leak detection system provides instant alerts and notifications to any system issues, such as excessive water usage and leaks, along with automatic and remote water shutoff via a user’s mobile app or dashboard. The company’s mission is to develop the best technologies for homes and businesses that support sustainable water management for a sustainable future.

In addition to the Challenge winners, two runners-up in each category were awarded \$2,500 and five finalists have been invited to meet with the program sponsors to further explore potential business opportunities.

“Badger Meter’s participation in the Tech Challenge program continues to help us identify and connect with upstart technologies that would have most likely remained under our radar,” said Dan Fellers, manager of Research and Development, Badger Meter. “The global diversity of the entrants is a testament to the vast reach of The Water Council.”

Acknowledging the program’s results, “It’s been great to see the global breadth of The Tech Challenge applicants. We saw promising innovations being developed around the world,” said Glen Trickle, director of engineering, Zurn Industries, LLC, a Rexnord company.

“A. O. Smith is proud to continue our support of innovators, researchers and promising startup businesses in the ever-expanding field of water technology,” said Dr. Robert Heideman, senior vice president and corporate technology officer, A. O. Smith Corporation. “A. O. Smith was built on the premise of innovation. As a 146-year-old company, we’re excited to be able to share our many experiences and potentially help bring proposed ideas to life through The Water Council’s Tech Challenge program.”

Companies can get involved with the program by becoming a Tech Challenge sponsor and in turn will be able to select challenge topics, access and evaluate submissions, judge and interview applicants, and select winners with an opportunity to augment deal flow.

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About The Water Council

Headquartered in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, next to the world’s largest freshwater system and home to one of the most influential freshwater technology hubs in the world, The Water Council (TWC) is recognized as a global center for advancing water technologies and stewardship. At its heart, TWC is a non-profit, membership organization that connects, convenes and showcases the hub comprised of more than 238 water technology businesses and the diverse water leadership network of 200 members it is linked to from around the world. While TWC’s mission is centered on driving economic development, attracting and connecting world-class talent and supporting water-focused technology innovation, its larger goal is to help secure freshwater resources for the world by driving solutions to the numerous industries that need and use a large amount of water. Learn more by visiting thewatercouncil.com.

About A. O. Smith Corporation

A. O. Smith Corporation, with headquarters in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, is a global leader applying innovative technology and energy-efficient solutions to products manufactured and marketed worldwide. Listed on the New York Stock Exchange (NYSE), the company is one of the world’s leading manufacturers of residential and commercial water heating equipment and boilers, as well as a manufacturer of water treatment and air purification products. For more information, visit www.aosmith.com.

About Badger Meter

Badger Meter is a leading innovator, manufacturer and marketer of flow measurement and control products, serving water and gas utilities, municipalities and industrial customers worldwide. Measuring a variety of liquids — from water to oil and lubricants in commercial processes — products from Badger Meter are known for accuracy, durability and the ability to provide valuable and timely measurement information. For more information, visit www.badgermeter.com.

About Zurn Industries

Zurn Industries, LLC, a Rexnord company, is a recognized leader in commercial, municipal, healthcare and industrial markets. Zurn offers the largest breadth of engineered water solutions, including a wide spectrum of sustainable plumbing products. Zurn delivers total building solutions for new construction and retrofit applications that enhance any building's environment. For more information, visit Zurn.com or RexnordCorp.com.