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RISE Announces Five Winners of the 2020 Coastal Community Resilience Challenges

Five entrepreneurs will receive funding for innovative resilience-building solutions

Norfolk, Virginia - RISE today announced five winners of the 2020 RISE Coastal Community Resilience Challenges. The winners are small businesses that will each receive up to \$250,000 to advance and demonstrate cutting-edge products that help coastal communities adapt to the impacts of sea level rise and flooding. RISE will work with the five teams to pilot their approaches in a “living laboratory” environment across the Hampton Roads region in coastal Virginia, with the goal of building economically viable businesses and solutions that are scalable to other communities.

The winning solution-builders will receive a combination of a grant to setup in Hampton Roads and a revenue-based loan to scale their products and services. “Revenue-based financing allows us to support our entrepreneurs by aligning our incentives with theirs - as their solutions become successful, so do we,” **said Dr. Paul Robinson, RISE Executive Director**. “These loans enable us to provide funding to our entrepreneurs and generate revenue only when they do, and that can be very appealing to small businesses in contrast to conventional loans and equity investment.”

The five winning businesses will join a like-minded cohort of six teams from the RISE inaugural 2018 Challenge which are already working in Hampton Roads.

“Once again, RISE demonstrates the value of their unique model in providing economic development opportunities as solutions for Virginia to adapt and protect our coastal communities,” **said Rear Admiral Ann Phillips, Special Assistant to Governor Northam for Coastal Adaptation and Protection**. “On behalf of the Northam Administration, congratulations to RISE and to these five entrepreneurs who continue to expand resilience innovations for the Commonwealth.”

In addition to funding, businesses get access to other resources from the RISE Resilience Innovation Hub and Testbed. “Through these competitions, and the establishment of a resilience hub in Hampton Roads, Virginia, the region has become a real-world living laboratory for companies, where the products and services we need to adapt to the impacts of climate change

can be demonstrated locally and applied globally,” **said Robinson**. “We provide essential support to nurture these entrepreneurs, from financial assistance to facilitating access to demonstration spaces, data, and mentors.”

RISE offers a “one-stop-shop” that allows solution-builders to move from designs to market effectively. The organization identifies resilience problems, sources solutions, facilitates deployment and validation, builds enterprise readiness and provides catalytic funding.

“We are in the early stages of disruption in the coastal resilience and adaptation field, where new approaches can significantly change project costs and successful outcomes on the ground,” **said Dr. Katerina Oskarsson, RISE Chief Strategy Officer**. “The resilience sector is ripe for innovation and poised to create lasting business opportunity due to the need in coastal Virginia, nationally, and globally. By offering a full-value chain approach, we can accelerate this process and help communities tackle the threats of climate change while creating jobs and bolstering local economies.”

Meet the Winners:

[NatrX](#) enables builders, architects, and ecologists to incorporate nature directly into infrastructure. With RISE help, Natrx will advance and launch its Mobile Manufacturing Units, an innovative digital production technology to efficiently produce nature-based, custom shoreline protection structures to reduce flooding and overall project costs while enhancing ecological outcomes.

[Re:Public](#) provides a map-based risk communication and decision support platform for non-mapping professionals to rapidly understand, track, and communicate real-time risk, collaborate within customizable user groups using personalized maps and notes, quantify impacts to infrastructure and population, and evaluate the cost-benefit of mitigation options. With RISE help, Re:Public will refine and finalize the product for launch.

[StormSensor](#) is a smart cities startup helping to build the sewers and storm systems of the future. With RISE help, StormSensor will pilot new features to provide communities with real-time tidal and storm analysis and alerts of critical events (such as tidal backflow), performance of their stormwater systems, and predictive analytics. The solution will decrease operational costs and help prioritize retrofits and capital improvements.

[Virginia PACE Authority](#) (VPA) provides an innovative financing solution, C-PACER, that unlocks private capital for flood mitigation and resilience improvements to commercial, industrial, non-profit and multifamily properties. With RISE help, VPA will expand its reach and pilot an open-market platform to accelerate and streamline a match-making between funders and resilience projects.

[WeatherCheck](#) leverages artificial intelligence to continuously monitor properties for severe weather-related damages and loss, facilitating a faster claim resolution and next-generation risk analysis for insurance carriers, mortgage companies, and property owners. With RISE help,

WeatherCheck will expand its product to include pluvial and fluvial flood threat and pilot a U.S. first implementation of an all-peril address specific alert system.

RISE will continue to provide more opportunities for small businesses in the coastal adaptation and resilience field. RISE is accepting applications to its Urban Mobility Resilience Challenge until June 1st which is looking for entrepreneurs to create a next generation traffic app that offers drivers real-time re-routing guidance to avoid high water during flooding events. For more information on this and the next competition cycle, visit www.riseresilience.org.

About RISE

[RISE](#) is a non-profit with a mission to accelerate innovation and business growth around solutions to coastal communities' resilience challenges. RISE provides businesses resources to develop, test and scale the next generation resilience solutions for coastal communities.

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