



This is the BEST START Digest published monthly by the Energetics Technology Center (ETC) Inc. BEST START provides the crucial support businesses need to bring their visionary technologies to the warfighter. Whether refining smart grid technologies, enhancing renewable energy applications, or creating resilient solutions for power generation, BEST START partners with Minnesota companies to move technology forward. This digest aids in this mission.

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## Partners

ETC would like to welcome its newest partners in support of energy technology development.

Company	Project
<a href="#">Maxwell Labs Inc.</a>	Photonic Cooling
<a href="#">SYNCRIS</a>	Microgrid Inverter with Model Predictive Control
<a href="#">BWR Innovations, LLC</a>	Hydrogen Fuel Cell
<a href="#">Ascentek, LLC</a>	Sodium Ion Battery
<a href="#">Aza Power Systems</a>	Ammonia Power Combustion
<a href="#">LEMA, Inc.</a>	Dual-axis high-efficiency Solar Power System
<a href="#">Exergi Predictive, LLC</a>	AI-Based Energy Control for Tactical Microgrids

## General News

[Clean Energy Accelerator Grid Catalyst Unveils 2025 Cohort](#)  
*Dan Niepow, Twin Cities Business, March 13, 2025*

**Excerpt:** “[The Minnesota based] Grid Catalyst’s accelerator pairs startups working on various clean energy technologies with bigger industry

partners willing to test them out. The organization this week unveiled the five companies in its 2025 cohort.”

The 2025 cohort includes: C-Motive, Flow Environmental Systems, LiquidCool Solutions, Ensipi, and EcoSnap. Grid Catalyst plans to open applications for its 2026

demonstration cohort In June 2025. Announcements should be forthcoming soon. Funded by the MN Energy Alley, monetary awards and technical assistance are provided to firms selected. See <https://www.gridcatalyst.org>.

**'Nothing will be safe' from Army's kit overhaul**

Meghann Myers, Defense One, March 25, 2025

**Excerpt:** “The way the service would like to approach procurement going forward, he said, is treating the squad as a system, an evolution of the Soldier-as-a-System concept going back almost 20 years. Rather than bogging down each individual with every device and piece of gear, there’s room to equip them as a unit.

“We must reduce weight and increase combat power. We must reduce the cognitive load and increase combat power. We must increase efficiency and increase combat power,” Kiniery said.”

**2024 Global Decline in VC Funding for Clean Tech**

ETC

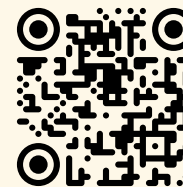
**Commentary:** According to crunchbase.com, 2024 saw a global

decline in VC funding for clean tech. This has continued into 2025 with a decline of 2/3 thus far from the same period last year. Hot spots are carbon capture and sequestration, fusion, hydrogen and clean concrete. Batteries continue to see investments. In 2022, 2/3 of VC energy funding was in batteries and renewables <https://www.crunchbase.com>

**The Global Startup Ecosystem Report 2024**

*Startup Genome*

**Commentary:** Per Startup Genome’s Global Startup Ecosystem Report 2024, Silicon Valley and NYC tied for the top global startup ecosystems. Los Angeles and Boston also cracked the top 10. The Minneapolis region did not make the top 40, but it was ranked in the 21-30 range for top “Emerging Ecosystems”.



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**Solicitations**

**Topics for SBIR/STTR Solicitations Request for Proposals**

Twelve new topics are released on the first Wednesday of each month. SBIR 25.2/STTR 25.B and SBIR25.4/STTR 25.D, Release 7, will be pre-released on April 2. Pre-release and open and closing dates for DoD SBIR/STTR topics can be found on the Defense SBIR/STTR Innovation Portal at <https://www.dodsbirsttr.mil>.

**ESTCP Supplemental Solicitation for Energy Resilience**

*Request for Proposals, Deadline for pre-proposal: April 22, 2025*

Description: The ESTCP (Environmental Security Technology Certification Program) issued a supplemental solicitation for Energy Resilience on March 13. Pre-proposals are due April 22. This program demonstrates and validates promising novel technologies that target the most pressing environmental needs at DoD military installations.

**Upcoming Events**

Date	Event	Location
April 17, 2025	<a href="#">2025 Minnesota Energy Factsheet Launch</a>	St. Paul, MN or Virtual
April 22, 2025	<a href="#">PowerNorth Incubator Showcase</a>	Saint Paul, MN
May 3, 2025	<a href="#">Minnebar19</a>	Minneapolis, MN
June 9–11, 2025	<a href="#">2025 Midwest Solar Expo</a>	Chicago, IL
June 10–11, 2025	<a href="#">2025 C5ISR Industry Expo</a>	APG, MD

**Legislative Updates**

**Subcommittee on Energy Holds Hearing on Grid Reliability**

*Press Release, House Energy and Commerce Subcommittee, March 25, 2025*

Excerpt: “Today’s grid operators made it clear that America needs more energy to be produced to keep up with our growing needs not just for consumers, but for the many small businesses, manufacturers, agriculture industry, and medical facilities that employ them,” said Chairman Latta. “Too many electric-generating facilities have been retired in recent years while new and emerging technologies are increasing the need. It is critical that we meet the growing demand for power, the need to secure it, and address the reliability challenges confronting our electric industry.”

**Making Minnesota a ‘Silicon Valley of clean energy’ goal of House bill**

*Rob Hubbard, Minnesota House of Representatives, March 18, 2025*

Excerpt: “Minnesota Energy Alley is intended to be something similar for companies working in the sphere of renewable energy. It was launched in 2023 with a \$3 million grant from Minnesota’s Renewable Development Account, and now Kraft would like to see its early successes built upon with another \$5 million appropriation from the account in fiscal year 2026.”