

This is the BEST START Digest, an energy sciences newsletter published 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 newsletter aids in this mission.

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Technology Demonstrations

Join us for the [BEST START Technology Demonstrations](#), May 4-6 in Minneapolis and St. Paul. This three-day event brings together a small group of defense, government, academic, and industry leaders for live demonstrations of seven breakthrough technologies focused on energy resilience and warfighter capability, developed by the partner companies below. This is an opportunity to see systems operating in real-world and extreme-condition environments, including next-generation battery performance, hydrogen fuel cell backup systems, AI-driven tactical microgrid optimization, and more.

[Register Now!](#)

Partner Update

SYNCRIS was invited by SOCOM to demonstrate their VISTA platform for modular scalable inverters at a follow-on event to RCA16. VISTA is a portable, rugged system designed as a 2-person lift that can be rapidly deployed in tactical situations to provide reliable electrical power.

COMPANY	PROJECT
Maxwell Labs Inc.	Photonic Cooling
SYNCRIS	Microgrid Inverter with Model Predictive Control
BWR Innovations, LLC	Hydrogen Fuel Cell
Ascentek, LLC	Sodium Ion Battery
Aza Power Systems	Ammonia Power Combustion
LEMA, Inc.	Dual-axis high-efficiency Solar Power System
Exergi Predictive, LLC	AI-Based Energy Control for Tactical Microgrids

General News

[‘An Old Grid Cannot Handle the AI Future’: President Trump’s SOTU Touts On-Site Power for Digital Era](#)

Trump made statements regarding the future of the U.S. energy infrastructure in keeping up with projected demand. “We’re telling the major tech companies

that they have the obligation to provide for their own power needs,” President Trump said[.]” The increased projected demand for power from AI factories and data centers outpaces the available capacity of the grid. There are many considerations regarding this outpacing of technology, including worries regarding the affordability of residential electric bills. Leaders, including Trump, need to act on proposed plans.

[Charging to the Fore: US Battery Storage Capacity Raced to Another Record in 2025](#)

“Battery energy stationary storage (BESS) surpassed 28 GW of new installations in 2025, 28% higher than 2024, according to the key findings of SEIA’s Energy Storage Market Outlook Q1 2026 released

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Legislative Updates

[House Passes Energy and Commerce Legislation to Secure American Energy Supply Chains](#)

“H.R. 3617, the *Securing America’s Critical Minerals Supply Act*, requires the Department of Energy to assess critical energy resource supply chains, including critical minerals and rare earth elements, and to strengthen supply chains that are vulnerable to disruption or overreliance on adversarial nations. By taking a holistic view of critical energy resources, the Department of Energy can identify vulnerabilities and address supply chain disruptions to help ensure Americans have access to affordable, reliable, and secure energy systems.”

[BABA and FEOC Restrictions for Microgrid Developers from One Big Beautiful Bill](#)

Follow the link to the Microgrid Knowledge article to see the specific details. Largely, the One Big Beautiful Bill “significantly reduced and tightened federal funding options for renewable energy projects, introducing new eligibility criteria.” These eligibility requirements include, but are not limited to, certain mandates requiring domestically manufactured materials in construction and restrictions on foreign entity participation if claiming key tax credits.

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in partnership with Benchmark Mineral Intelligence. This new battery storage is capable of 57 GWh in generation capacity, including 12 GW of behind-the-meter distributed BESS installations.”

[AI climate tech startups are propping up clean energy VC deals](#)

According to Pitchbook, although the number of total deals declined in 2025, AI climate tech deal value was higher than previous years. Nuclear and geothermal technologies seem to be generating strong investor interest. There is also interest in high-efficiency cooling technologies, as these technologies are useful beyond just AI data centers—broadening their customer base.

Opportunities and Solicitations

[Topics for SBIR/STTR Solicitations](#)

[12 new topics](#) are released on the first Wednesday of each month. Pre-release and open and closing dates for DoD SBIR/STTR topics can be found on the [Defense SBIR/STTR Innovation Portal](#).



Scan QR or visit <https://www.beststart.io> for more information.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Date	Event	Organizer	Location
March 24–26, 2026	AUSA Global Force Symposium	AUSA	Huntsville, AL
April 7–9, 2026	ARPA-E Energy Innovation Summit	ARPA-E	Chula Vista, CA
April 15, 2026	2026 Chamber Day at the Capitol	MN Chamber of Commerce	MN State Capitol
April 19–22, 2026	Navy League Sea-Air-Space	Navy League	National Harbor, MD
April 21, 2026	Clean Energy Business Day	Clean Energy Economy MN	MN State Capitol
April 21–22, 2026	BNEF Summit	Bloomberg	New York, NY
April 21–24, 2026	CxEnergy2026	CxEnergy	Chicago, IL
May 2, 2026	Minnebar20	Minnestar	Minnesota
May 4–6, 2026	Advancing Defense Power and Energy Technologies	BEST START	Minneapolis and St. Paul, MN
May 4–6, 2026	Microgrid Knowledge Conference 2026	Microgrid Knowledge	Orlando, FL
June 2–4, 2026	EEI 2026	Edison Electric Institute	Las Vegas, NV
Aug. 4–6, 2026	Data Center Frontier Trends Summit	Data Center Frontier	Reston, VA
Sept. 23–25, 2026	T&D World Live	APS	Phoenix, AZ
Sept. 28–30, 2026	Yotta 2026	DatacenterDynamics	Las Vegas, NV
Sept. 28–30, 2026	Experience POWER 2026	Access Intelligence	Washington, DC
Nov. 16–19, 2026	RE+ 26	RE+ Events	Las Vegas, NV