BEST START Digest

Building Minnesota's Energy Science Ecosystem

BEST START
Accelerating energy technologies

October 2026

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.



Partner Updates

Exergi Predictive's designation as award-ready through Army Applications Laboratory's DevX Autonomy gives its physics-informed AI energy prediction technology a direct pathway to government customers evaluating autonomy and unmanned systems. The recognition validates the real-world potential of Exergi's Energy Prediction for Intelligent Command and Control (EPICC) technology to predict energy demand, extend mission duration, reduce sustainment burden, and ultimately improve the readiness and operational reach of robotic platforms. Read more here.

SYNCRIS showcased their VISTA tactical power system during Minnesota National Guard Annual Training at Camp Ripely, demonstrating the system's ability to provide resilient power in a field environment. The exercise offered an opportunity to demonstrate VISTA's capabilities directly to soldiers and gather firsthand perspectives on the power challenges faced during military operations.

Ascentek's sodium-ion battery is moving through an evaluation with the Minnesota National Guard, which will put the technology through an extended cold-weather demonstration at Camp Ripley. By replacing two heavier lead-acid batteries with a single lightweight 24V 6T sodium-ion battery designed to perform in extreme cold, Ascentek could give military units greater confidence that their vehicles will start and operate on missions in northern or Arctic environments.

BEST START Partner Companies	
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

Ascentek, **LEMA**, and **SYNCRIS** participated in a Technology Validation Showcase hosted by the Defense Innovation OnRamp Hub: Minnesota, presenting their energy technologies to the Deputy Director of the Defense Innovation Unit and Minnesota National Guard leadership. The companies showcased solutions addressing critical defense energy challenges, from reliable power in extreme environments (Ascentek) and rapidly deployable off-grid energy (LEMA) to modular microgrids and resilient power systems (SYNCRIS). The showcase provided a direct opportunity for the companies to demonstrate how their technologies can strengthen energy resilience, reduce logistical demands, and support distributed military operations.

General News

Call for Speakers is Open for 2027 Microgrid Knowledge Conference

The 2027 Microgrid Knowledge Conference will be held in Glendale, AZ from May 5-6, 2027. The selection committee for the conference is looking for speakers whose content "centers around end-user customer perspectives from microgrid use cases, operations & maintenance best practices, utility and developer collaborations and emerging business models and technical innovations along multiple power generation resource fronts." The call will be open until October 2, 2026.

250 MW Electrolyzed Green Hydrogen Project is Being Developed in Nebraska

As reported by EnergyTech, this project will combine hydrogen with biogenic carbon dioxide from ethanol plants to create low-emissions natural gas. It is in development and pre-construction phase, forecasting a 2030 commercial launch. The process begins with electrolyzers separating hydrogen from the oxygen atoms in water through electric current. This hydrogen is then mixed with carbon dioxide produced as a byproduct from ethanol production in the state. The end product is called e-NG, identical to methane natural gas, which will work with

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Legislative Updates

Clean Energy Economy MN Recaps the 2026 Legislative Session

Highlights include: incentives and tax credit allocations for Sustainable Aviation Fuel, funding for a study on the future of nuclear generation in Minnesota, and defending existing clean energy policy. During the session, Clean Energy Economy MN focused "advancing sustainable aviation fuel (SAF), supporting transmission and grid modernization, driving infrastructure investment, and strengthening workforce and economic development." They serve as the clean energy business voice at the MN Legislature.

Energy & Commerce Committee Advances Bills to House Floor to Unleash American Energy and Lower Prices

The committee advanced 10 bills "that highlight the Committee's effort to support energy innovation, cut burdensome red tape, and lower costs for hardworking American families," said Chairman Guthrie. The full list of bills can be found at the link above. They included topics such as nuclear energy and regulation, diesel emissions, commerce red tape, safety and environmental standards, and battery recycling.

Opportunities and Solicitations

Special Operations Forces Rapid Acquisition Consortium for Emerging Requirements (SOF RACER) is a USSOCOM–GovSignals–BMNT initiative launched in August 2026 to accelerate the delivery of specialized technologies to U.S. Special Operations Forces (SOF). They offer a no-cost membership model that streamlines the ability for submitters to propose solutions to technology areas and for the government sponsors to "rapidly issue requirements and evaluate commercial and defense industry solutions." One of the technology areas is Energy (Power & Storage) (SOF RACER SYNOPSIS).

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existing pipelines and equipment without the need for adaptation. e-NG is intended to be exported primarily to Japan where there is a large demand for imported energy.

Siemens and FuelCell Energy Collaborate to Accelerate On-Site Power Deployment

As reported by Microgrid Knowledge, Siemens and FuelCell Energy are working together through a memorandum of understanding to improve the deployment of fuel cell-based commercial power generation installations for facilities like industrial plants and data centers. The collaboration comes as the demand for more innovative, large-scale energy solutions is increasing, especially as data centers are being called to "bring [their] own power." These two companies will focus on large-scale installations of at least 100MW each, work on emerging uses of fuel cell technology, and scale pilots into commercial applications.

A Home Battery to Support the Grid Raises $1B Series VC Funding

Base Power, a distributed energy developer, is developing a lithium iron phosphate battery to support the grid at the home level. This new technology has a single cabinet capacity of 39.2 kWh and a duel cabinet capacity of up to 78.4 kWh. It is intended to be an affordable system, which protects homeowners from extended outage and can be installed and switched over to seamlessly. They have raised over $2.5B in capital so far, and manufacturing for the system is being done in the U.S.

University of St. Thomas Engineering Becomes a College

As reported by the UST Newsroom, engineering education at UST began forty years ago and is now newly named a College of Engineering, changed from School of Engineering. Over the years, UST has responded to industry demand, evolving its programs to meet the technology workforce needs of the region, growing over time and becoming a prominent regional powerhouse. Looking forward, UST engineering continues to emphasize the importance of "bringing students, faculty and industry together to solve real-world problems." Read more about the history at the link above.

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

UPCOMING EVENTS

Date	Event	Organizer	Location
Nov. 16–19, 2026	RE+ 26	RE+ Events	Las Vegas, NV
Nov. 27, 2026	2026 Economic Summit + Annual Meeting	MN Chamber of Commerce	St. Paul, MN
Dec. 3, 2026	Women in Business MN legislator luncheon	MN Chamber of Commerce	St. Paul, MN
Dec. 8, 2026	Environmental Compliance Conference	MN Chamber of Commerce	St. Paul, MN
May 5–7, 2027	Microgrid Knowledge Conference	Microgrid Knowledge	Glendale, AZ