

# — THE — INNOVATION SHOWCASE

Where Capital Meets Innovation



## **FiberX, StoryBolt, OuroBio, GEOH, SecondSight Win Top Honors at The Innovation Showcase, Taking Home \$35,000 in Prize Money**

*Hosted by the [Venture Club of Indiana](#), 15<sup>th</sup> Annual Pitch Competition Attracted 500-plus Attendees, Connecting Investors with Indiana's Top Startups*

INDIANAPOLIS (July 13, 2023) – Nineteen of Indiana's top startup companies went toe-to-toe Thursday at the 15<sup>th</sup> Annual Innovation Showcase's Pitch Competition. After an afternoon of pitches to a packed house of 500-plus attendees, two startup companies walked away with first and second place in two categories: Life Sciences and Digital Innovation:

### **Life Sciences/AgTech**

- First Place and a \$10,000 prize: FiberX, Co-Founder Dave Skibinski, West Lafayette – Nominated by Elevate Ventures
- Second Place and a \$5,000 prize: OuroBio, CEO Alec Brewer, Indianapolis – Nominated by Elevate Ventures

### **Digital Innovation (Two Second Place Winners)**

- First Place and a \$10,000 prize: StoryBolt, Co-Founders Nassim Abdi and Babak Shahmansouri, Hammond – Nominated by 50 South Capital
- Second Place and a \$5,000 prize: GEOH, Sales Manager Trevor Caudy, Indianapolis – Boomerang Ventures
- Second Place and a \$5,000 prize: SecondSight, CMO Dirk Shaw, Bloomington – Nominated by Render Capital

Judges for this year's Innovation Showcase Pitch Competition were Kelley Rich, interim vice president and associate provost for Innovation, [University of Notre Dame IDEA Center](#); Sherry Aaholm, chief digital officer, [Cummins, Inc.](#); and Patrick Henshaw, managing director, [Render Capital](#).

Each company was judged on the following criteria: the breakthrough nature of their product or service, market size and competitive advantage, team, go-to-market strategy, and commercial traction.

Commenting on the Innovation Showcase, Pitch Competition judge Kelley Rich said, "Indiana's robust innovation ecosystem was on full display today at the Showcase. It truly represented the ground-breaking technology and creative problem-solving taking place across Indiana in our universities, tech incubators, corporations, and communities across the state. Whether in digital tech, life sciences, advanced manufacturing, or material sciences, this is absolutely the place to start companies. We invite all investors to take a closer look at Indiana's startups and research universities where much of the state's tech innovation is born."

Speaking on behalf of [The Venture Club of Indiana](#), Chairperson Sandy Wilcox congratulated all of the startup companies that competed in the pitch competition. "The Innovation Showcase Pitch Competition is unique in that all of the startups in the competition were founded or are based in Indiana and were vetted by an Indiana venture capital firm or university-based innovation department. With some 20 venture firms in attendance, the connections made with VCs at the Innovation Showcase by these diverse and talented startup CEOs is priceless. And we wish all much success as they continue their startup journey."

Added Wilcox, "I'd also like to thank our judges and all of our special guests and speakers, including Indiana Secretary of Commerce Brad Chambers; David Watkins, senior vice president, Entrepreneurship & Small Business, IEDC; and Karen Wurster, CEO, Adipo Therapeutics and 2022 Innovation Showcase Pitch Competition Winner. Your support and insights shared at the Innovation Showcase were greatly appreciated."

The Venture Club of Indiana would like to thank this year's Innovation Showcase sponsors: include [Indiana Economic Development Corporation](#) (IEDC), [Elevate Ventures](#), [Barnes & Thornburg](#), [50 South Capital](#), [TechPoint](#), [Gener8tor](#), [Allos Ventures](#), [High Alpha](#), [Hyde Park Ventures](#), [Katz, Sapper & Miller](#), [Purdue Innovates](#), [Rose-Hulman Institute of Technology](#), [Sawmill Society](#), [IU Ventures](#), [Armory Square Ventures](#), [The Mill](#), [Sixty8 Capital](#), [VisionTech Angels](#), and [Graham Allen Partners](#).

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**CAPTION (L to R):** Sherry Aaholm, Cummins; Aaron Gillum, 50 South Capital; Jeff Ready, Scale Computing; Sandy Wilcox, Venture Club of Indiana; Babak Shahmansouri and Nassim Abdi, StoryBolt; Benjamin Harrison and Trevor Caudy, GEOH; Dave Skibinski, FiberX; Alec Brewer, AouroBio; Kelley Rich, Notre Dame IDEA Center; and Patrick Henshaw, Render Capital.

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