



Media Contact: Julie Du Brow, USGBC-LA
Julie@dubroworks.com, 310-922-1301

1st Sustainable Cities Tech Challenge Winners, Announced at MGBCE, Offer Fresh Technologies to Harness Solar Energy, Clean HVACs, and Save Water in Thermoelectric Power

Wide Range of Hot Topics Addresses at Municipal Green Building Conference & Expo

LOS ANGELES (April 26, 2018) The 17th [Municipal Green Building Conference and Expo](#) (MGBCE) on April 19th hosted over 650 attendees from across 88 Southern California cities, who gained insight into ideas, tools, processes and policies that will help them integrate sustainability into municipal action. Fresh ideas to take back to the office included the winning technologies from start-up companies that entered the 1st *Sustainable Cities Tech Challenge*, a global competition and joint effort between the [U.S. Green Building Council-LA](#) chapter (USGBC-LA) – which produces MGBCE – and the [Los Angeles Cleantech Incubator](#) (LACI). NEXT Energy was announced as the Grand Prize (or Overall) winner, as well as the Smart Infrastructure Category winner. Additional announced winners included BlueBox Air for the Energy & Water Efficiency Category, and Infinite Cooling for the Waste Category. The event was hosted at SoCalGas' Energy Resource Center.

Overall winner, [NEXT Energy Technologies, Inc.](#), which won \$15,000 in addition to other opportunities (see below), transforms glass facades and windows into producers of low-cost, on-site renewable solar energy for buildings – greatly expanding the surface area that can capture and create energy from the sun, and addressing the largest variable operation expense for commercial buildings.

"NEXT Energy is honored to be part of this year's Municipal Green Building Conference Expo," says the company's Manager of Special Projects, Bruno Caputo. "Our vision at NEXT Energy is a world in which buildings will power themselves, and in receiving this recognition, we are truly inspired by the industry's validation of our technology and approach to transforming the built environment and having significant impact on the carbon footprint of buildings."

The two additional Category winners (both patent-pending) each won \$3,000 and the same noted opportunities. They are:

- [BlueBox Air, LLC](#), the only known solution that cleans and sanitizes the coils in an HVAC system. Its foam injection coil-cleaning technology makes it possible for commercial and industrial buildings to operate their HVAC systems at peak thermal efficiency. This has the potential to save buildings money and mitigate issues such as "Sick Building Syndrome".
- [Infinite Cooling](#), which addresses massive water consumption in the water-energy nexus. Their technology's goal is to enable water-sustainable thermoelectric power; using significantly less water by capturing water from cooling tower plumes.



The winners will also receive in-kind support from sponsors or partners, as well as the opportunity for membership to LACI's business incubation program, access to the La Kretz Innovation Campus, and Advanced Prototyping Center. The nine Challenge finalists presented their technology to 600+ attendees during the lunchtime program, and winners were announced at the end of the day.

Shared attendee Coomy Kadribegovic, senior project manager at Caltech, "Getting a preview of up and coming technologies, and being able to discuss the concepts with these individuals and then share the ideas with my Caltech colleagues for potentially improving our operations was exciting!"

Prior to the afternoon announcement, MGBCE offered 27 panels and three keynotes that shared usable ideas and processes across the green building sector, touching upon community projects, and residential and commercial properties. From resilience to microgrids, zero waste to STEM outreach to the NextGen, legal issues in construction to codes and standards, and lots of networking, the conference's theme of 'Innovative Cities Leading the Way to a Sustainable Future' crossed all sectors.

During the day, an announcement from USGBC National was also shared, that new projects built to California's strong energy and green building codes (CALGreen) are pre-approved for significant streamlining of fundamental LEED requirements.

"The LEED streamlining announcement today is welcome news for local governments and LEED practitioners in California," states USGBC-LA Executive Director Dominique Hargreaves. "Recognizing the work it takes to meet CALGreen and streamlining the LEED energy prerequisites and credits will reduce costs and allow teams to pursue higher levels of LEED. The timing of this announcement today, during our conference, could not have been better."

USGBC-LA worked again this year with the Zero Waste Company to further encourage zero waste practices at MGBCE. The 2018 MGBCE achieved an 84% diversion rate, with the event generating less waste to divert than in 2017.

For information on USGBC-LA or MGBCE 2019, please contact Dominique Hargreaves at dominique@usgbc-la.org.

About U.S. Green Building Council-Los Angeles

USGBC-LA is a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization committed to creating a prosperous and sustainable future within one generation. Our mission promotes sustainability in LA County's built environment by delivering access to knowledge, resources, recognition and networking. (www.usgbc-la.org)

About Municipal Green Building Conference and Expo (MGBCE)

Since its inception in 2000, MGBCE has become an important gathering of leading sustainability and green building advocates within both the public and private sectors in southern California. Hosted by the SoCalGas at the ERC building in Downey, this annual Spring conference and trade show provides training, education and outreach to inform local government agencies, building industry professionals and the general public about the principles, practices and products associated with green building. (<https://usgbc-la.org/programs/mgbce/>)



LOS ANGELES

About LACI

The [Los Angeles Cleantech Incubator \(LACI\)](http://laci.org) is a private non-profit organization helping to accelerate the commercialization of clean technologies and ensuring an inclusive green economy by unlocking innovation, transforming markets and enhancing community. Founded as a cluster-driven economic development initiative by the City of Los Angeles and its Department of Water & Power (LADWP), LACI is recognized as one of the most innovative business incubators in the world by UBI. In the past six years, LACI has helped 72 portfolio companies raise \$165M in funding, \$220M in revenue, create 1,700 jobs, and deliver more than \$379M in long term economic value. LACI recently acquired the Cleantech Open to amplify and expand their positive impact toward building an inclusive green global economy. For more information, please visit <http://laci.org> and follow us on Twitter and Facebook @LACIncubator.

###