



Accelerating entrepreneurial success.

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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NYSEG, RG&E Support Vital Seed Stage Business Resources Through Launch NY

Upstate New York, April 12, 2016 – NYSEG and RG&E, subsidiaries of AVANGRID, have awarded two economic development outreach grants totaling \$100,000 to Launch New York (Launch NY) to fuel the implementation of Launch NY’s new seed fund that will augment its business mentoring program with vital proof-of-concept support for high-growth entrepreneurs in Upstate New York. Launch NY will use the NYSEG and RG&E economic development grants for implementation, training, marketing, outreach, and communication services.

“Innovation and entrepreneurship are vital contributors to economic vitality and transformation, and we know how important it is to support promising startup companies with a powerful combination of entrepreneurial support services and access to venture capital,” said Mark S. Lynch, president and CEO of NYSEG and RG&E. “We are pleased to play a role in building this capacity in our region through this award to Launch NY”.

The grants will facilitate the implementation of the new Launch NY Seed Fund, which is slated to make its first investment in early 2016 to support entrepreneurs who also receive pro bono services from Launch NY’s Entrepreneurs-in-Residence (EIR) program. Since 2012, Launch NY has assisted nearly 500 firms across 27 counties in the western half of New York State. As the only venture development organization (VDO) spanning the entire region, Launch NY has more than a dozen EIRs located in Buffalo, Rochester, Syracuse, and Ithaca, along with 1,800 experts available through its National Mentor Network, to service startups in the area. Now its new seed fund will provide working capital to accelerate the progress of its clients during the most challenging startup phase, often called the “valley of death.”

Launch NY supports existing partner programs and fills gaps in the entrepreneurial services ecosystem so that Upstate New York has well-coordinated resources to nurture start-ups. The addition of a nonprofit seed fund completes the Launch NY business model, which was built on best practices from successful VDOs around the country, who have been proving the strength of mentoring plus seed capital programming for decades in communities like Pittsburgh, PA and Cleveland, OH.

It's well known that high-growth start-up companies create the majority of new jobs in the U.S. - especially through new businesses that provide technology-based products and services. Although Upstate New York is fortunate to have a \$3 billion/year academic research engine that drives innovation, we lack many of the resources that can transform this innovation into new products, services, and businesses. Data released in a report by SUNY Research Foundation in 2014, showed that only 3% of all venture capital invested in the New York State went to upstate New York companies, and only 15% of that went to the 'hard sciences', where so much of the region's economic development investments are targeted.

"The timing for this award couldn't be better because the demand for our new seed fund is greater than ever. All the investment in R&D and innovation in our region has spawned unprecedented demand for entrepreneurial support," said Marnie LaVigne, PhD, president and CEO of Launch NY. "We know that startups face tough odds, but that's why we're here, to fill the gap in seed stage resources so we can accelerate the most promising new business ventures, instead of letting them die on the vine or head elsewhere to find success."

NYSEG and RG&E economic development programs have provided assistance to a wide range of businesses, universities and institutions. Since 2010, NYSEG and RG&E have invested more than \$65 million in upstate New York to attract new companies and jobs as well as retain existing ones. To learn more about NYSEG and RG&E economic development programs, please visit: www.lookupstateny.com.

About NYSEG and RG&E:

NYSEG and RG&E are subsidiaries of AVANGRID, Inc. (NYSE: AGR). NYSEG serves 883,000 electricity customers and 264,000 natural gas customers across more than 40% of upstate New York. RG&E serves 371,000 electricity customers and 307,000 natural gas customers in a nine-county region centered on the City of Rochester. For more information, visit www.nyseg.com and www.rge.com.

About AVANGRID:

AVANGRID, Inc. (NYSE: AGR) is a diversified energy and utility company with \$31 billion in assets and operations in 25 states. The company operates regulated utilities and electricity generation through two primary lines of business. Avangrid Networks includes eight electric and natural gas utilities, serving 3.1 million customers in New York and New England. Avangrid Renewables operates 6.3 gigawatts of electricity capacity, primarily through wind power, across the United States. AVANGRID employs 7,000 people. The company was formed by a merger between Iberdrola USA and UIL Holdings Corporation in 2015. IBERDROLA, S.A. (Madrid: IBE), a worldwide leader in the energy industry, owns 81.5% of AVANGRID. For more information, visit www.avangrid.com.

About Launch New York:

The mission of Launch New York, Inc. (Launch NY) is to identify, support, and invest in high-growth, high-impact companies and catalyze the entrepreneurial culture in the 27 counties comprising Upstate New York. Launch NY is a 501(c)(3) non-profit venture development organization that promotes economic development activities and uses best practices, proven activities of experienced business mentoring, and seed capital investing in order to create venture capital-ready (deal-ready) companies which have the promise to create significant economic wealth and jobs for our region.

Launch NY was formed as a result of a collaboration between stakeholders and regional economic development leaders in Upstate New York to create successful, sustainable strategies that would foster a robust self-sustaining entrepreneurial ecosystem built on regional collaboration. Launch NY is headquartered in Buffalo and has regional co-location with partner organizations in Binghamton, Ithaca, Rochester and Syracuse. It has served nearly 500 companies comprising more than 1,200 jobs since starting operations in 2012. For more information, see www.launchny.org.

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