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**THE FLORIDA VENTURE FORUM AND SPACE FLORIDA
ANNOUNCE WINNERS OF THE
2018 FLORIDA EARLY STAGE ANGEL CAPITAL CONFERENCE
*THE ACCELERATING INNOVATION CASH PRIZE OF \$50,000 WAS AWARDED TO
GRIDICS AND TOMAHAWK ROBOTICS***

TAMPA, FL (May 18, 2018) – The Florida Venture Forum and Space Florida are pleased to announce the grand prize winners of the 2018 Florida Early Stage Angel Capital Conference, held at the Westshore Grand in Tampa. A total of 19 Florida-based companies and one California-based company from a variety of industry sectors were selected to present before an audience of investors, deal professionals and entrepreneurs.

A panel of judges reviewed each selected company’s presentation and supporting materials. The top companies, which each received \$25,000 of Space Florida’s \$50,000 Accelerating Innovation Award, Gridics and Tomahawk Robotics.

“Space Florida congratulates today’s winners, Jason Doyle, President of Gridics and Brad Truesdell, President and Founder of Tomahawk Robotics, as well as all participating companies in the 2018 Florida Early Stage Angel Capital Conference,” said Space Florida President and CEO Frank DiBello. “In addition to providing access to capital, early stage events provide a vital opportunity to showcase Florida’s flourishing start-up ecosystem. Space Florida thanks the Florida Venture Forum for its leadership in hosting and promoting a thriving capital acceleration environment.”

“In its 11th year our Florida Early Stage Angel Capital Conference continues to grow in both attendance and company applications, offering early stage companies the unique opportunity to connect directly with a who’s who of top early stage investors,” said Kevin Burgoyne, President and CEO of the Florida Venture Forum. “We are very pleased and grateful to partner with Space Florida on another successful conference, and thankful for their continuing support of Florida’s capital acceleration ecosystem. Congratulations to Jason and Brad!

The event marks the 11th year the Florida Venture Forum has hosted the Early Stage Angel Conference. The 20 presenting companies were selected from a pool of more than 150 applicants by a committee of active Florida venture capitalists and other investors. Space Florida provided the Accelerating Innovation prize money totaling \$50,000. To date, Space Florida supported capital accelerators, have attracted nearly \$160 million in funding and investments for the participating companies. Past early stage presenters have attracted more than \$80 million in funding.

About Space Florida: Space Florida was created to strengthen Florida’s position as the global leader in aerospace research, investment, exploration and commerce. As Florida’s aerospace and spaceport development authority, we are committed to attracting and expanding the next generation of space industry businesses. With its highly trained workforce, proven infrastructure and unparalleled record of achievement, Florida is the ideal location for aerospace businesses to thrive – and Space Florida is the perfect partner to help them succeed. www.spaceflorida.gov.

About Florida Venture Forum: The Florida Venture Forum is Florida’s largest statewide support organization for investors and entrepreneurs, helping emerging Florida companies connect with sources of capital from across the country. The organization provides programs statewide throughout the year in addition to hosting the Florida Venture Capital Conference, the Statewide Collegiate Business Plan Competition and the Early Stage Capital Conference. www.flventure.org.

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