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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

Florida Venture Forum Announces 2021 Florida Early Stage Capital Conference
14th annual conference will be held in-person and will feature
Space Florida's "Accelerating Innovation" Cash Prizes of \$100,000

Miami and Tampa, Fla. (July 13, 2021) – Florida Venture Forum, Florida's largest statewide support organization for investors and entrepreneurs, today announced plans for its 2021 Florida Early Stage Capital Conference, taking place October 7-8, 2021, at the Westshore Grand Hotel in Tampa, Florida.

The 2021 conference will mark the 14th year for the event and will also feature the 11th annual [Statewide Collegiate Startup Competition](#), where winners of university-based competitions present before active venture investors and compete for prizes.

In addition, the conference will feature presentations from 25-30 fast-growth early stage companies selected by a committee of active venture investors, as well as keynote speakers, breakout educational sessions, and other networking opportunities. Registration and other information about the Early Stage Capital Conference can be found on the Forum's website, or by clicking [here](#). For sponsorship inquiries please click [here](#).

Previous early stage presenting companies have had tremendous success, raising over \$350M in equity capital. Startup collegiate participants have raised over \$320M in capital.

Florida Venture Forum board member firm, Locke Lord LLP, will serve as title sponsor and John Igoe, partner with Locke Lord and a Forum board member, will serve as honorary conference chair. Locke Lord was the leading proponent of the Forum's decision to create the Early Stage Capital Conference and has been the conference's title sponsor for each year of its existence.

"Florida Venture Forum's Early Stage Capital Conference has grown every year in scope and size, and we are particularly excited that this year's event will mark a return to our traditional in-person format, and a return of our title sponsor, Locke Lord" said Kevin Burgoyne, the Forum's President and CEO. "We are also thrilled to continue our collaboration with Space Florida, which will be awarding its "Accelerating Innovation" cash award. Space Florida's unwavering support of Florida's innovation ecosystem has been critically important to early and growth stage companies, and we are extremely proud to serve as their partner."

Space Florida's "Accelerating Innovation" Award

Space Florida will offer its "Accelerating Innovation" (AI) cash prizes at the conference. The AI Award offers cash prizes totaling \$100,000 to eligible and accepted Florida companies and to out-of-state companies seeking to relocate or establish a presence in Florida. The prize allocation will be: \$40,000 to the Grand Prize Winner, \$30,000 to the 1st Runner up, \$20,000 for 2nd Place and two startup cash prizes of \$5,000 each.

"With nearly \$600 million in funding and investments for participating companies to date, Space Florida is proud to partner with the Florida Venture Forum on capital accelerator events like the Florida Early Stage Capital Conference," said Space Florida President and CEO Frank DiBello. "Space Florida looks forward to the 2021 Florida Early Stage Capital Conference as the state's capital venture ecosystem continues to thrive with the support of Florida Venture Forum in providing an arena for early stage companies and entrepreneurs."

Companies may apply to present by submitting an application via the Forum's website using the [ONLINE PRESENTER APPLICATION](#). Companies will be notified of their eligibility for the AI Award at the time of their acceptance.

Selected companies in the following industries will be eligible for the AI Award: Information Technology, Health Technology, Knowledge Based Services, Space Transportation And Advanced Aerospace Platforms, Satellite Systems and Science Payloads, Ground And Operations Support Systems, Agriculture, Climate/Environmental Monitoring, Civil Protection and Emergency Management, ISS And Human Life Science (Including Medical Research), Communications, Cyber Security, Adventure Tourism, Clean/Alternative Energy Applications, Advanced Materials And New Products. In Addition To, Aircraft and Spacecraft Design, Parts and Assembly, Engineering Design and Construction, Structural Materials and Electronic Assembly, Data Analytics, Medical and Surgical Innovations, Satellite Communications, Innovations in Planetary Sustainability Towards the Development of Nutritious Food, Clean Water and Energy, Payload Development, Robotics – Parts, Design and Assembly, Unmanned Aerial Vehicles, Surveillance, 3D Printing and Innovation, Radiation Protection, Reconnaissance and Missile Development.

Selected Early Stage presenters are not charged a registration fee to attend or present at the conference. The [FINAL APPLICATION DEADLINE](#) is **September 10, 2021**. Early submissions are welcomed and encouraged. Universities are requested to pay a discounted entry fee for their students to attend and their selected competitor to pitch and compete for allocated prize money.

About The Florida Venture Forum: The Florida Venture Forum is Florida's largest statewide support organization for investors and entrepreneurs, helping companies with headquarters, operations or supply chain in Florida connect with sources of capital from across the country. Since 1984 over 1,400 companies have presented at Forum events and have gone on to raise upwards of \$15B in equity capital and economic value to the state of Florida. The Forum's 200+ members represent a "who's who" of venture capital and private equity dealmakers, including and equity and debt investors at all stages, as well as major law, accounting, and investment banking firms, and large corporations active in the innovation ecosystem. The Forum provides programs and programming statewide throughout the year in addition to hosting major annual conferences like the Florida Venture Capital Conference, the Statewide Collegiate Startup Competition, the Early Stage Capital Conference, and industry-focused events including aerospace and healthcare. For more information, visit: www.flventure.org.

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.

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