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Over Six Years of CNY Defense Alliance Efforts Come to Fruition with Launch of Innovare Advancement Center, Announcement of 18 Teams Awarded Major Research Funding at the ‘Million Dollar International Quantum U Tech Accelerator’

A Cornerstone of the CNY Defense Alliance Goal to Create a Global Hub for Technology and Innovation in Central New York, Innovare will Lead Discovery in Quantum, Neuromorphic Computing, Artificial Intelligence, Cyber and Unmanned Aerial Systems

Rome, NY – Rome, NY – On September 1st, the [Innovare Advancement Center](#), a partnership between the [Air Force Research Laboratory Information Directorate](#) (AFRL/RI), [New York State, Oneida County](#) (OC), New York, the [City of Rome](#), the [Griffiss Institute](#) (GI), [NYSTEC](#), and [The State University of New York](#) (SUNY), highlighted its virtual ribbon cutting ceremony with the “Million Dollar International Quantum U Tech Accelerator” event. Over one thousand top-tier researchers, members of industry, higher education leaders, and members of the public from around the world participated in this first-of-its-kind virtual event centered around a \$1,000,000 quantum-focused pitch competition for university researchers. Adding to the regional impact of this global event, a Central New York research team was among the winners.

Innovare Advancement Center is strategically located adjacent to the AFRL Information Directorate in the Griffiss Business and Technology Park, Innovare will bring together thought leaders and research scientists from government, defense, academe and the private sector in a single cutting-edge research and collaboration facility. This agile and transformative ecosystem will connect global technology leaders to collaborate and solve complex Air Force computing challenges in areas that include quantum, neuromorphic computing, artificial intelligence, cyber and unmanned aerial systems , sharing ideas and facilities virtually and in person.

The Alliance is grateful for the support and participation of our federal, state, and local representatives, especially Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer and Congressman Anthony Brindisi.

“The race to innovation in quantum computing is proving to be the great scientific race of the 21st century, and Rome Lab is leading the pack. The impacts of falling behind international competitors like China and Russia when it comes to this emerging technology would be wide-ranging and severe—from our economic stability to our national security,” said U.S. Senator Charles E. Schumer. “Fortunately, with launching of the Innovare Advancement Center, Rome Lab and its partners in academia and the private sector will be on the scene to help prevent that from happening. The open innovation campus and competitions like these are exactly why I



fight so relentlessly to secure federal funding for Rome Lab’s quantum research capabilities—to ensure they stay a quantum leap ahead of the competition.”

Information Directorate deputy director, Dr. Michael Hayduk, who coordinates quantum research across AFRL, believes that Quantum science will impact many future Air Force capabilities, including “GPS-like precision ...where there is no GPS signal..., ultra-secure global communication networks, high-precision sensors linked together with a quantum network, and new computing paradigms for optimization of asset and resource allocations, discovery of new materials, and novel applications of artificial intelligence.”

“The path to a strong national defense and innovation in quantum computing runs through the Mohawk Valley. The incredible work at Rome Lab is helping our country fight back against adversaries like China. In the 21st century and beyond, we need to continue to lead the pack in innovation, R&D, and technology. The partnership between the Air Force and our region created with the Innovare Advancement Center will help keep our country safe and our region at the top. As a member of the House Armed services committee, I’ll always fight to bring crucial research dollars back home for projects like this,” said Congressman Anthony Brindisi.

The 18 international winners included a team from Central New York led by Syracuse University Physics Professor Britton Plourde. In addition to federal funding from IARPA and other agencies, Dr. Plourde has a long-term collaboration with IBM, Innovare industry partner and key member of the New York State business community. Nearly 250 teams from 22 countries submitted proposals to take part in this unique pitch competition. Of those, 36 teams were selected to pitch their potentially game-changing concepts related to quantum timing, sensing, information processing/computing, and communications/networking at the event to an elite panel of judges. On Tuesday and Wednesday, September 1-2, 36 teams pitched ideas ranging from quantum sensors for GPS-denied navigation and a chip-scale integrated quantum platform, to ion traps and innovative lasers, and on Thursday, September 3, 18 teams went on to qualify for a portion of the more than \$1M in basic research funding provided by the AFRL, AFOSR, and ONR. The event concluded with insights into the importance of advanced research, especially related to quantum, to technological progress with a keynote discussion “Quantum Fundamentals for Everyone” with astrophysicist **Dr. Neil deGrasse Tyson** and U.S. Air Force and U.S. Space Force Acquisition Executive **Dr. Will Roper**.

The “Million Dollar International Quantum U Tech Accelerator” was the kick-off event for the Innovare Advancement Center, the new open innovation campus located at the Griffiss Business and Technology Park in Rome, NY. The opening ceremony of the event included a dynamic video with remarks from **Congressman Anthony Brindisi**, United States Representative, NY 22nd Congressional District; **Jacqueline Izzo**, Mayor, City of Rome; **Colonel Timothy J. Lawrence**, Director, Air Force Research Laboratory Information Directorate; and **Heather Hage**, Vice President, Industry and External Affairs, SUNY Research Foundation.

“The Air Force Research Laboratory Information Directorate welcomes you to the Innovare community, our launch pad for creative collisions among the international research community,” said **Colonel Lawrence** during the opening ceremony. “The Air Force Research Laboratory launched the ‘1 Million Dollar International Quantum U Tech Accelerator’ in partnership with the Air Force Office of Scientific Research and Office of Naval Research, because *we* are focused, and *we* are motivated, and *we know* you are too, to accelerate the



achievement of quantum breakthroughs that can elevate our game – in the air, on the land, at sea, in space and cyber space.”

Welcoming remarks were provided by **Dr. Michael Hayduk**, Deputy Director, Air Force Research Laboratory Information Directorate; **Brigadier General Heather Pringle**, Commander, Air Force Research Laboratory, Air Force Material Command; **Rear Admiral Lorin Selby**, Chief of Naval Research, Office of Naval Research; and **Dr. Shery Welsh, Director**, Air Force Office of Scientific Research (AFOSR).

Innovare’s key strategic collaborators seek to engage partners to initiate entrepreneurial ventures and tech startups in key strategic areas, including artificial intelligence/machine learning, cybersecurity, and quantum, in addition to building a robust talent pipeline at a time when scientific advancement across boundaries is needed now more than ever to remain economically and strategically competitive in this fast-changing world. As Innovare-connected research takes place at partnering organizations all over the world, the Innovare launch is concurrently a bold step forward in implementing the National Quantum Initiative Act, which aims to foster the development of a quantum technology ecosystem among government, industry, and academia.

The 3-day event is now available for viewing on YouTube:

- Day 1 - <https://youtu.be/rsF5g85kXoM>
- Day 2 - <https://youtu.be/QktdRyOxHvY>
- Day 3 - <https://youtu.be/lg4bR4GTNvw>

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About the Central New York Defense Alliance

The Central New York Defense Alliance is a not-for-profit 501(c) 6 incorporated in April of 2011. We are the only regional organization legally empowered to lobby in Washington and Albany to protect our federal and defense assets. The Alliance is a collaborative force of New York businesses, universities and colleges, government agencies, economic development groups, and community leaders working together to protect, strengthen and expand our high tech ecosystem by supporting research, development, and commercialization opportunities made possible by our defense and federal assets. To learn more, visit cnydefensealliance.org.

About Innovare Advancement Center

Innovare Advancement Center aims to be a global catalyst to converge world-class talent with cutting-edge facilities and focused technology challenges to accelerate the development of game-changing capabilities that protect and empower our country. An open innovation environment immediately adjacent to Air Force Research Laboratory’s Information Directorate in Rome, NY, Innovare Advancement Center offers a globally connected innovation ecosystem in which world-class scientific, engineering, and entrepreneurial talent from universities, government, and industry can leverage highly specialized resources in critical research areas, including artificial intelligence/machine learning, cybersecurity, quantum, and unmanned aerial systems to tackle the country’s greatest challenges to national security and economic competitiveness. To learn more, visit innovare.org.

