



## **HARDWARE ACCELERATOR ALPHALAB GEAR AND TECHSHOP TEAM UP ON NATIONAL HARDWARE CUP Eight-City Competition For \$50K prize**

**Jan. 27, 2015 -- Pittsburgh, San Francisco – [AlphaLab Gear](#)**, a leading hardware accelerator based in Pittsburgh, and [TechShop](#), a membership-based, do-it-yourself workshop and fabrication studio with locations nationwide, are launching the [AlphaLab Gear National Hardware Cup](#) to find the top hardware ideas in each of the eight cities where TechShop has a location. Starting February 11 in Detroit, the AlphaLab Gear National Hardware Cup team will travel to each of the other TechShop locations to host a pitch competition for startups creating a physical product. The culmination of the competition is in Pittsburgh where the national winner will receive a \$50,000 grand prize investment from [StartBot](#), a venture capital firm focused on robotics, plus product design software and other prizes from [Autodesk Fusion 360](#), the official software partner of the National Hardware Cup. Full details can be found at [www.hardwarecup.com](http://www.hardwarecup.com)

The pitch competitions will feature six teams in each city selected by the AlphaLab Gear team from online applications. The order of cities hosting the Hardware Cup will be: Detroit, Washington D.C., Austin, Phoenix, San Francisco, Redwood City, San Jose and Pittsburgh. Each company or team will give a four-minute pitch to a panel of judges from the investment, hardware and software community who will then have five minutes to ask questions. Winning teams from each city will get \$1,000 cash, a single year-long TechShop membership, and Fusion 360 software and support from Autodesk. Teams will be judged on: 1) commercial viability, 2) team capability, and 3) demonstrated commitment. Select finalists will be chosen to compete in a grand-prize competition held later this spring in Pittsburgh at AlphaLab Gear. AlphaLab Gear is a project of [Innovation Works](#), one of the country's most active seed-stage investors and the organization which operates top-ranked accelerators AlphaLab (all technologies) and AlphaLab Gear (hardware companies).

“There are so many great ideas for physical products that entrepreneurs dream up from their work experience as a designer or engineer, a university project that a team of students is trying to solve, or just an imaginative leap from an individual,” says Ilana Diamond, managing director of AlphaLab Gear. “We want to tap into all these brilliant ideas and give people a way to fund and commercialize their vision,” continues Diamond. “The AlphaLab Gear National Hardware Cup takes what we know from our experience running one of the nation’s first accelerators for hardware companies and marries that with the technical expertise and reach of TechShop. With StartBot providing funding for the winner and Autodesk providing software and other resources, the National Hardware Cup can help launch a great idea. ”

“We’re excited to host the AlphaLab Gear National Hardware Cup in each of our TechShop locations,” says Jim Newton, TechShop founder. “This national competition is a great opportunity for us to inspire members of the maker community to go ahead and build their dreams, just like we did with TechShop. We hope to see the next big invention and commercial success rise from this challenge.”

The AlphaLab Gear National Hardware Cup is free for participants and easy to enter. The six teams or individuals pitching in each city will be selected based on their one-page application. To apply, go to: [www.hardwarecup.com](http://www.hardwarecup.com)

**CONTACTS:**

Terri Glueck  
AlphaLab Gear/Innovation Works  
412-818-8191 mobile  
[tglueck@innovationworks.org](mailto:tglueck@innovationworks.org)

Connie Zheng  
North of Nine Communications for TechShop  
(415) 400-6655  
[connie.zheng@nof9.com](mailto:connie.zheng@nof9.com)

###

About the partners:

**AlphaLab Gear and Innovation Works:** AlphaLab Gear is a program of Innovation Works, one of the nation's most active seed-stage investors and Pittsburgh's top resource for startup funding and business assistance. AlphaLab Gear is a top-ranked accelerator for hardware and physical products companies providing: investment, education and mentoring, collaborative workspace, membership to TechShop, and other assistance to commercialize and successfully launch hardware companies. For info: [www.alphalabgear.org](http://www.alphalabgear.org) and [www.innovationworks.org](http://www.innovationworks.org)

**TechShop Inc:** Founded in October 2006, TechShop is a membership-based, do-it-yourself (DIY) workshop and fabrication studio providing access to a vibrant community of creative people and more than \$1 million worth of high quality machines, tools and software. TechShop offers classes, workshops, instruction and meet-ups for people of all ages and skill levels. TechShop is based in San Jose, Calif., with locations nationwide. For information and course listings, visit [www.techshop.com](http://www.techshop.com), email [info@techshop.com](mailto:info@techshop.com) or call 855-TECHSHOP. You can follow TechShop on Twitter at "@TechShop." TechShop is also on Facebook as "TechShop Incorporated."

**StartBot:** Startbot is a robotics investment firm based in Pittsburgh that powers the Robotics Track of AlphaLab Gear. In partnership with AlphaLab Gear, Startbot also offers successive 9-month residency programs for startups in the fields of robotics, automation, and supporting technologies. For more info: [www.startbot.io](http://www.startbot.io)

**Autodesk:** Autodesk helps people imagine, design and create a better world. Everyone—from design professionals, engineers and architects to digital artists, students and hobbyists—uses Autodesk software to unlock their creativity and solve important challenges. Autodesk Fusion 360 is a modern 3D CAD/CAM tool for product development. Fusion 360 integrates design, engineering, and collaboration in a cloud-based tool that can be accessed anytime, anywhere on any device. A free tool for hardware startups. For more information visit <http://fusion360.autodesk.com> or follow @autodesk.