

For Immediate Release  
September 8, 2011

## MTEC SmartZone Partners with Michigan Technological University's Superior Innovations

**New program will help entrepreneurs develop classroom and lab discoveries.**

### ABOUT MTEC SMARTZONE

The mission of MTEC SmartZone is to provide technology-based facilities, resources and programs to high-growth entrepreneurs and companies that increase employment, income, wealth and recognition in the U.P. communities where we serve. Our vision is having integrated economic development of the region that includes a vibrant technology sector, driving Michigan's technological leadership and economic growth with sustainable opportunities for companies and their employees to prosper. More information is available at [www.mtecsz.com](http://www.mtecsz.com)

### ABOUT THE MEDC

The Michigan Economic Development Corporation (MEDC) is the State of Michigan's one-stop resource for businesses seeking to grow in Michigan. Whether it's an expansion, a relocation, or even a concern with another agency of state government, the MEDC can help. From site location assistance to job training grants, from help with permits to tax abatements, we're the state's economic development corporation. More information is available at [www.themedc.org](http://www.themedc.org).

*SmartZone is a service mark of Michigan Economic Development Corporation.*

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HOUGHTON, Michigan (September 8, 2011) – For over seven years, MTEC SmartZone has established a track record of successfully providing concrete resources and support to high-tech entrepreneurs, many of whom come from Michigan Technological University. In new collaborations, organizations are aligning to help alumni, staff and students start more companies than ever.

To further the commercialization of University innovation, Michigan Tech recently created Superior Innovations. A for-profit company, Superior Innovations helps move entrepreneurs and their early-stage discoveries, from inside labs and classrooms into the marketplace. Entrepreneurs receive assistance to establish intellectual property protection and prepare go-to-market strategies for their ideas. In addition, entrepreneurs have access to small business funding resources through the new program. Fundraising strategies, prototype development and management recruitment are examples of early stage issues that Superior Innovations can help an entrepreneur navigate.

Jim Baker, Executive Director for Innovation and Industry Engagement at Michigan Tech, and John Diebel, Vice President of Superior Innovations, also help entrepreneurs build significant relationships with industry and Michigan Tech alumni, which often prove critical to business growth. Together, Baker and Diebel work to provide early stage ventures with appropriate resources inside and outside the University.

Once entrepreneurs are established with Superior Innovations, they can access additional statewide resources and actually grow their technology-based company inside MTEC SmartZone. "Often entrepreneurs start at Michigan Tech with grant funding, but that will only last through the prototype phase," says MTEC SmartZone Program Director Jonathan Leinonen. "We work with companies for additional investment – between fifty thousand and a half million dollars."



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Collaborations and support to foster entrepreneurship between Michigan Technological University, Superior Innovations and MTEC SmartZone will continue to create companies and family-sustaining jobs right here in the Keweenaw. Houghton City Manager Scott MacInnes enthusiastically stated, "MTEC SmartZone has created over 300 jobs and that number continues to grow. The idea of Superior Innovations is exciting because it will fuel even more job creation and keep Michigan Tech talent here."

For more information about Superior Innovations, contact Jim Baker at (906) 487-2228.

For more information about MTEC SmartZone, contact Program Director Jonathan Leinonen at (906) 487-7004.

