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CHEROKEE CHALLENGE ADDS SafeTNA TO CLASS OF 2012

Startup is Developing DNA-Based Tracers for Hydraulic Fracturing Fluid

(Raleigh, September 13, 2012) -- [The Cherokee Challenge](#) announced today that it has officially added [SafeTNA](#) (Safe Tracking of Non-native Aggregate) to its 2012 class of high impact environmental ventures.

“SafeTNA is an exceptional team of wonderful, young and determined entrepreneurs who have developed a timely technology,” said JT Vaughn, who oversees the Challenge for Cherokee Investment Partners. “We believe in their technology, but even more so in their individual character and ability to make things happen.”

SafeTNA is developing DNA-based, well-specific tracers for hydraulic fracturing to help establish accountability and improve relations between the energy industry and local communities. After inserting its well-specific tracer into fracking fluid, SafeTNA can analyze any contaminated groundwater in the vicinity to determine if it was contaminated by fracking fluid and, if so, from which well the fluid derived.

According to the US Energy Information Administration, natural gas now accounts for over 30% of US electricity generation. Hydraulic fracturing, or ‘fracking,’ as it is commonly referred, has greatly increased natural gas output. Fracking necessitates the pumping of millions of gallons of sand, water and chemicals underground to break apart shale layers and release gas.

This invasive process has led many to question the environmental impact of fracking. SafeTNA’s technology will remove uncertainty by determining if the source of groundwater contamination is from fracking fluid. More importantly, if fracking fluid is the source of contamination, SafeTNA will be able to determine precisely which fracking well is causing the contamination.

Since joining the Challenge in June, SafeTNA has established a fully-equipped wet-lab space at First Flight Venture Center in Research Triangle Park and made significant progress on their patent-pending tracer research and development.

“SafeTNA found an invaluable source of guidance in Cherokee and its advisors,” said Justine Chow, SafeTNA’s CEO. “The ability to float ideas at the Cherokee Challenge dinners or during one-on-one meetings was key to helping our company gain incredible momentum in spite of working in completely novel territory.”

SafeTNA joins three other startups -- [LYF Shoes](#), [JouleBug](#) and [Sanitation Creations](#) -- as participants in the three month accelerator program based in North Carolina’s famed Research Triangle. The four ventures each received:

- \$20,000 seed funding
- Complimentary office space in Raleigh from June-August, 2012, if needed
- Back office support, if necessary
- Mentoring from an [advisory committee](#) of experienced entrepreneurs and investors

The companies and their advisors cap off the accelerator program with a finale on September 20th, where each entrepreneur will pitch his or her venture. Other investors, entrepreneurs and sustainability experts are encouraged to attend the finale. RSVP here:

<http://cherokeechallengefinale.eventbrite.com/>

About Cherokee Investment Partners

The Cherokee Challenge is sponsored by Cherokee Investment Partners. Cherokee has raised over \$2 billion in private equity funds focused on brownfield remediation and, separately, founded a number of environmental businesses and invested in over 70 startups or venture funds in the past 28 years. Through the Challenge, Cherokee hopes to lend their experience and expertise to other environmentally focused entrepreneurs.

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