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*******MEDIA ADVISORY*******

What: Introducing the 2017 Northern Alberta Nominees for the prestigious Manning Innovation Awards

When: Monday, May 29, 2017 | 1:30 p.m. – Alberta Legislature | 2:30 p.m. – TEC Edmonton

Where: TEC Edmonton, Main Floor, Enterprise Square | 10230 Jasper Avenue Edmonton
Please RSVP to Patricia DeCoste | 780.441.4356

Why: The Honourable Deron Bllous, Alberta Minister of Economic Development and Trade will introduce the six qualified nominees of the Northern Alberta Chapter of the Ernest C. Manning Awards Foundation in the Legislature at 1:30 p.m.

Following their introduction, the nominees will be recognized at a reception at TEC Edmonton. These nominees are eligible for one of the Foundation’s four awards, which will be announced on November 29th at the 36th Manning Innovation Awards Dinner, presented by Scotiabank.

The awards include two \$10,000 Manning Innovation Awards, the \$25,000 David E. Mitchell Award of Distinction and the \$100,000 Principal Award.

Who: The nominees will be available for media interviews:

Innovators	Innovation
Sophia Fairweather	Start Up by Sophia – Leading by Example
James Keirstead & Jim Qualie	GoConex Wire-Free Switch
Gordon Molnar	Municipal Infrastructure Optimization and Pipeline Integrity Management
Dr. Jianhua Zhu	Process for Creating Prebiotic out of Starch
Des Quinn	Non-Explosive Setting System for the Replacement of Oilfield Explosives (NESS)
Tim Battle	AASAP Pet Safekeeping Program

(Profiles included in Nominees’ Backgrounder)

Background: The Ernest C. Manning Awards Foundation is helping create a culture of Canadian innovation by discovering, encouraging and rewarding Canadian innovators, and telling their stories. The Foundation was established in 1980 by Alberta Energy Company CEO David Mitchell. Working with former Alberta premier Ernest C. Manning and others, he built the foundation to recognize and celebrate Canadian innovators of all ages and across all disciplines. Since then, the Foundation has built a national network of 3,000 young and adult innovators who are leaders in technology, business, engineering, and social innovation advancement. It has awarded innovation prizes to 281 Canadians who have demonstrated innovative talent in developing and successfully marketing a new concept, process or procedure. For more information visit: www.manningawards.ca

The Northern Alberta Chapter is one of 11 Chapters across the country, which are a dedicated group of volunteers who are passionate about innovation.

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For more information and to book interviews, please contact:

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Northern Alberta Chapter Chair

Jennifer Diakiw
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President

BACKGROUND: NORTHERN ALBERTA NOMINEES' PROFILES

Sophia Fairweather had the desire to see diversity and continued education in Alberta and International STEM sectors. Recognizing traditional male dominance in these sectors, she moved ahead to break down the walls and make STEM accessible and acceptable for all with her innovation - **Start up by Sophia – Leading by Example**. Sophia shares her successful experiences with young Canadians by role modelling their innovative achievements, specifically to get more girls and youth into STEM-related fields.

James Keirstead & Jim Qualie were presented with a challenge to find a way to prewire housing panels, effectively removing switch leg wiring. So they set to work and created the **GoConex Wire-Free Switch**. This switch can control the on/off state of a light bulb through a wireless signal from a switch. With this, the traditional wiring between the switch and bulb is eliminated, reducing the cost of material and installation.

Gordon Molnar's graduate work at the University of Regina has evolved into his innovation – **Municipal Infrastructure Optimization and Pipeline Integrity Management**. This is a high level infrastructure asset management tool that improves the decision making process during an asset's life cycle. A predictive model, it combines software and an application process to municipal infrastructure including roads and pipelines. It compares the costs of upkeep, repair and replacement, while evaluating risk. Its pipeline application will increase the reliability of pipelines.

Dr. Jianhua Zhu was inspired by his parents to improve public health through research, work he has continued since he arrived in Canada in 1998. Dr. Zhu's innovation is the **Process for creating prebiotic out of starch**. He and his colleagues have found a natural way to develop probiotics – live bacteria and yeasts that are good for your health – in the gut with the development of prebiotics.

Des Quinn worked with oilfield explosives in setting systems, here and across the world, and knows there many risks. These include surface detonation, the challenges of transporting, handling and storage of explosives and the wide range of safety-related incidents. His innovation – **Non-Explosive Setting System for the Replacement of Oilfield Explosives (NESS)** was developed to eliminate these risks. NESS operates by way of hydraulic pressure, using a battery-powered motorized hydraulic pump.

Tim Battle has long been aware of the link between animal cruelty, domestic violence and other forms of interpersonal violence. One of the related issues is that the lack of placement for pets often hinders victims of abuse from leaving their abuser. His innovation, the **AASAP Pet Safekeeping Program** brings together animal welfare agencies and domestic violence shelters to address this. AASAP provides shelter for pets when victims decide to leave their abusive relationships, helping animals and people escape abusive situations.

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