FORGE NORTH ANNOUNCES LEADERSHIP TEAM, SEEKS INPUT ON REGIONAL STARTUP GOALS

MINNEAPOLIS-SAINT PAUL—(Nov. 5, 2019)—The GREATER MSP Partnership recently announced a council to lead Forge North, the initiative of entrepreneurs, investors, and business leaders working in partnership to accelerate the Greater Minneapolis-Saint Paul (Greater MSP) region’s startup ecosystem.

The Forge North Council will build off a new 2030 ambition to make the Greater MSP region the best place to solve global challenges. The ambition was announced by Ecolab CEO Doug Baker at the GREATER MSP Partnership’s annual meeting on November 11 and will inform a set of 3-year goals for new business growth. Although the Greater MSP region has one of the best rates of startup survival, it lags in startup rates.

“We must dream bigger to achieve the next iteration of ourselves,” said Brett Carter, Executive Vice President and Chief Customer & Innovation Officer at Xcel Energy. “Working in partnership gives us a chance to be competitive in the new American economy. The strong base of established large companies and the vast number of entrepreneurs is a great basis for a new platform.”

Carter will chair the council along with entrepreneur Amy Langer, the co-founder of Minneapolis-based Salo. Other council members include startup founders, investors, business leaders, and leaders of local organizations supporting entrepreneurs.

“There’s incredible momentum across our community,” said Langer. “We have an opportunity to support and build off the work being done by dozens of accelerators, funds, co-working spaces, events, and programs that support local entrepreneurs. We’re going to start by setting big goals.”

The Forge North Leadership Council is designed to reflect a diverse and growing coalition of partners from multiple industries and sectors. “The biggest impact will be the intentionality of diverse voices included at the decision-making table,” said Anisha Murphy, Director of Community Engagement at the Northside Economic Opportunity Network. “I am excited by the wealth of knowledge that exists within this group.”

Potential goals include realizing the country’s fastest growth rates in new business ventures or early stage capital invested in diverse startup teams. They are asking partners and community members for input. The public can weigh in at forgenorth.com.

“We’ve seen how the wisdom of crowds has helped improve society and decision making,” said startup founder Damola Ogundipe of Civic Eagle. “By working in partnership, we’re harnessing that wisdom to create a region that looks, feels, and acts inclusively while creating opportunities.”
Members of the Forge North Leadership Council include:

- Angie Bastian, Co-Founder, Angie's BOOMCHICKAPOP
- Jessica Berg, Director of Minnesota Cup, Holmes Center for Entrepreneurship
- Jason Breen, Senior Director, Enterprise Accelerators, Target
- Brett Brohl, Managing Director, Techstars Farm-to-Fork Accelerator; Managing Director, The Syndicate Fund
- Brett Carter, Executive Vice President and Chief Customer & Innovation Officer, Xcel Energy
- Mary Grove, Partner, Revolution's Rise of the Rest Seed Fund
- Brian Gustafson, Managing Director, Investments, Tonkawa, the Carlson Family Office
- Mark Henneman, Chairman & CEO, Mairs & Power
- Amy Langer, Co-Founder, Salo
- Neela Mollgaard, Executive Director, Launch Minnesota (Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development)
- Anisha Murphy, Director of Community Engagement, Northside Economic Opportunity Network; Owner, Just Law LLC.
- Sam Ndely, Business Consultant, Metropolitan Economic Development Association; co-founder, Graveti
- Damola Ogundipe, Co-Founder, Civic Eagle

“People don’t solve global challenges by working alone,” said Matt Lewis, Vice President of Strategic Initiatives at the GREATER MSP Partnership. “This Council was built to represent a big coalition – one that was started by great local leaders and will grow to include thousands more.”

See the supplementary document for more information about council members.

About GREATER MSP

GREATER MSP is the economic development partnership for the 16-county Minneapolis Saint Paul region. Over 200 leading businesses, universities, cities, counties, philanthropies and others are working together to accelerate the competitiveness of the 15-county regional economy and drive inclusive economic growth through job creation, capital investment and the execution of strategic initiatives.

About the Forge North initiative, powered by the GREATER MSP Partnership

Forge North is a strategic initiative of the GREATER MSP Partnership, designed to accelerate startup growth and innovation across the Greater MSP region. Forge North was built by a coalition of people and organizations, including leaders of startup companies, investment firms, Fortune 500 corporations, government, and support organizations like incubators and accelerators. Support to build the Forge North coalition was provided by the Saint Paul-based Bush Foundation.

###