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Financial Technology Startups Pitch, Winners Crowned at NXTUS Innovation Event
NXTSTAGE program helps Kansas become proving ground for tomorrow's financial tools

Wichita, Kan. – October 12, 2023 – At an in-person and live-streamed Innovation Showcase yesterday, NXTUS and Premiere Sponsors **Emprise Bank**, **INTRUST Bank** and **Kansas Bankers Association**, announced **seven winners of the 2023 NXTSTAGE Financial Technology Pilot Competition**.

Leading FinTech startups from five states and Canada pitched at the showcase event, offering their next-generation solutions to help regional banks, credit unions and financial services businesses improve identity verification, offer new digital tools to customers, link in with their small-business clients' financial information, and expand lending and services to rural and urban underserved community segments.

Similar to ABC's *Shark Tank*, the event included three-minute pitches from each finalist. Then, the Premier Sponsors provided remarks on their innovation goals and revealed which finalists they will continue to work with as prospective technology partners.

Emprise Bank praised the whole finalist cohort and announced they are pursuing a project with **PitaTech**, which offers a targeted solution for lenders needing to search equipment lien records. "Embracing innovation is pivotal to our future growth and we remain committed to supporting innovators and building the ecosystem," said **Matt Michaelis, Chairman, President and CEO of Emprise Bank**. "We take great pride in nurturing the next wave of financial innovators in many ways, including by offering guidance on core capabilities essential for creating a market-ready product that enables us to empower our customers to thrive. We will continue to engage with PitaTech as they build their capabilities, working toward a potential pilot program."

INTRUST Bank announced they will be working with **V2Verify** to potentially implement their voice authentication solution, and **ForeSight**, which enhances banks' loan evaluations and reduces drop-offs among loan applicants, who can get mired in current processes. "We see fostering innovation as a key to serving our customers and communities well," said **Steve Castro-Miller, INTRUST Bank's** Managing Director of Technology. "The NXTSTAGE program continues to bring great ideas and new approaches to Kansas, and we are pleased to help these entrepreneurs get the exposure to decision makers that they need to continue to improve their products and approaches."

The **Kansas Bankers Association** has selected **ASA Technologies**, **Pebble Plan**, **Railz** and **V2Verify** as their organization's winners. Each of these winning firms receives a feature article in *The Kansas Banker* magazine, as a well as a complimentary one-year associate KBA membership. "Each of the finalists offer relevant tools that can help our member banks innovate and compete, but these four rose to the top as most promising solutions for banks across the state to better serve their clients and promote growth for their communities," said **Doug Wareham**, President & CEO of the **Kansas Bankers Association**. "I want to thank the leaders from these KBA member banks for serving on the task force that helped choose KBA's winners: Bank of Commerce, Bank of the Plains, First Heritage Bank, NBKC Bank, and Union State Bank."

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These 2023 finalists, chosen from among 111 competitors hailing from 22 states and 11 countries, pitched their solutions to the NXTSTAGE pilot partners and other Kansas financial services entities:

[Archway Software](#) (Redmond, Wash.) delivers banking innovation as a service to regional and community financial institutions so they can empower their customers.

[ASA Financial](#) (Provo, Utah): Embedded fintech platform that connects financial institutions with customer-facing fintechs in a secure, compliant and easy to implement marketplace.

[Foresight](#) (Kansas City, Mo.) offers a patented machine learning platform to enable financial institutions to instantly assess credit risk, fraud, and bias, allowing traditional banking services to safely open doors for underserved consumers and drive impact at scale.

[Pebble Plan](#) (Amarillo, Texas) reduces small business failures by giving entrepreneurs a collaborative and educational workspace to plan their growth and/or recovery.

[PitaTech](#) (Jefferson City, Mo.) modernizes equipment lending by delivering efficient data integration, making collateral validation and UCC filing fast, seamless, and secure for lenders.

[Railz](#) (Toronto, Canada) offers an API to connect to major accounting, banking, and eCommerce platforms to provide financial institutions quick access to normalized and analyzed financial data on small and medium-sized customers.

[V2verify](#) (Omaha, Neb.) 'Simplifies Life' by replacing MFA, Passwords, and PINs with a simple-to-use voice authentication solution.

This marks the fourth year of regional banks getting an early look at promising technology solutions through this program, which reaches global startups looking to gain market feedback and access to customer prospects in Kansas. The 2023 program attracted diverse startups; 89 percent of initial competitors had either ethnic minority or female founders and 75 percent of the finalists are led by minority or female entrepreneurs.

In addition to the **KBA**, **Emprise Bank** and **INTRUST Bank**, the competition's third founding pilot partner, **Fidelity Bank**, remains a NXTUS funder. Thanks to their support, as well as grant funding from the **Ewing Marion Kauffman Foundation**, and support from the **Greater Wichita Partnership**, NXTUS is advancing its vision to help promising startups grow, enhance Kansas' innovation culture and foster inclusive prosperity in the region.

For more information on this program, see the [competition website](#); to learn more about NXTUS entrepreneur support programs or about investing in local startups, see the [organization's website](#) or its [annual report](#) or contact hello@nxtus.io.

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[NXTUS, Inc](#) helps entrepreneurs grow companies of significance. The organization works to connect startup founders with community resources, capital, and customers. NXTUS manages Accelerate Venture Partners, a fast-growing regional Angel investor syndicate, as well as the NXTSTAGE programs, which are aimed at connecting startups to enterprises and regional partners looking to become customers for their innovations and to help accelerate the pace of innovation and startup growth in the region.