Ocean Exchange Awards $450,000 in Prizes to Blue Economy Startups

Fort Lauderdale, FL October 28, 2026 - The Ocean Exchange, a leader in accelerating innovative solutions for healthy oceans and a sustainable Blue Economy, announced the recipients of $450,000 in nondilutive awards at its annual event last week in Fort Lauderdale, Florida. The awards included two $100,000 Neptune Awards, one $100,000 Neptune Ocean Enterprise Award, two $50,000 Florida Environmental Impact Awards, and five $10,000 Collegiate Awards. A Canadian award was previously announced, bringing the total 2026 purse to approximately $525,000.

“Now in our 15th year, this award competition continues to attract deserving startups from around the globe. 2026 added two new $50,000 awards sponsored by Wayne and Lucretia Weiner and the Marine Research Hub as well as two new Collegiate awards sponsored by Oceaneering and the Florida Office of the Ocean Economy. We are so fortunate to have the support of sponsors who support our mission of accelerating the adoption of innovative solutions for healthy oceans and the sustainable blue economy.” said Millicent Pitts, Executive Director of Ocean Exchange, now a featured program of the Marine Technology Society.



Winners of the 2026 Ocean Exchange Awards (Left photo) Ignition Packaging, Abdu Bejjaj, AIMM, Lauren Brown, with Sponsors Angus Littlejohn, Jr., and Phil Purcell. (Right photo) Sponsors Wayne and Lucretia Weiner and Katherine O’Fallon with Ocean Enterprise Award and Florida Environmental Award winner Casey Wilson of Subtidal and Fraser Dalgleish, BeamSea Associates LLC

The winners were selected from an international list of 16 finalists at the Ocean Exchange event held October 25-27 in Fort Lauderdale, Florida. Voting delegates from around the world registered and attended to vote for the winning solutions.
The 2026 award recipients are:

Ignition Packaging, an ag residual biomaterial, represented by Abdurrahman Bejjaj - Neptune Award, $100k.
AIMM (Advanced & Innovative Multifunctional Materials), a tunable sorbent for short chain PFAS, represented by Lauren Brown - Neptune Award, $100k.
Subtidal, continuous buoy monitoring for toxic waterway blooms, represented by Casey Wilson - Neptune Ocean Enterprise Award, $100k AND a $50k Florida Environmental Impact Award.
BeamSea Associates LLC, quantitative biological intelligence at scale for marine habitats, represented by Fraser Dalgleish - Florida Environmental Impact Award, $50k.

Five outstanding collegiate innovators received $10,000 awards in recognition of their work and contributions to the blue economy. The winners are: EnviraCell, Ocean Exchange Collegiate Award Winner, SeaHand Systems, Ocean Exchange Collegiate Award Winner, Ocean Detect, Guy Harvey Foundation Collegiate Award, Noble Deep, Oceaneering Collegiate Award, and Kaiyu Oceans, Florida Ocean Economy Collegiate Award.



The 2026 Collegiate Award Finalists: (LtoR) Christine de Silva, University of Rhode Island, Marena Low, Florida Gulf Coast Univ., Andrew Jimeniz, College of the Canyons, Hayden Foster, Univ. of Florida, Daniel Odoom, Univ. Prince Edward Island, Bhavya Jain, North Carolina State, Kehinde Ojasanya, Univ. of Vermont, Navid Nasajpour, Georgia Institute of Technology, Maddi McArthur, Univ. Alaska Fairbanks, Gianna Galezo, St. Thomas Univ. Miami

About Ocean Exchange: Ocean Exchange is a global ecosystem whose mission is to accelerate the adoption of innovative solutions for healthy oceans and the sustainable blue economy by providing monetary awards, connecting innovators with experts, and promoting breakthrough technologies through a global ecosystem. Ocean Exchange is part of the Marine Technology Society, a 501(c)(3) that advances marine technology by fostering collaboration among industry, academia, and government.

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