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**Governor Quinn Launches Illinois Corporate/Start-Up Challenge**  
***Pilot Program will Drive Innovation and Growth by Connecting Four Leading Illinois Corporations with Emerging Illinois Start-Ups***

**CHICAGO** – Governor Pat Quinn today launched the Illinois Corporate/Start-Up Challenge, a program designed to connect the state’s emerging, innovative start-up businesses and major corporations, strengthening the connections between these critical components of the business community. The initiative is part of the governor’s agenda to create jobs and drive Illinois’ economy forward.

“Illinois is experiencing an entrepreneurial renaissance with tremendous growth in the start-up community,” Governor Quinn said. “We have one of the largest concentrations of Fortune 500 companies in the nation, and better connecting our corporate leaders to our cutting-edge entrepreneurs will foster even more innovation and drive economic growth.”

Four major corporations have agreed to participate in the pilot program: Allstate, Molex, Motorola Mobility and Walgreens. Each company is designating a point of contact to serve as a liaison to the Illinois start-up and technology community, functioning as a "Chief Start-up Officer" for the purposes of this program. The pilot, to be run by the Illinois Science & Technology Coalition (ISTC) with support from Governor Quinn’s Illinois Innovation Council, will assist these corporations by matching them with some of Illinois’ most innovative start-ups and emerging companies.

“Illinois corporations are now relying more than ever on technology and innovation to stay globally competitive and, as a result, are looking outside their walls for new ideas and disruptive solutions,” Brad Keywell, Illinois Innovation Council chairman said. “This program will better link corporate leaders with entrepreneurs and helps pave a path for these emerging companies to gain feedback and expand their businesses.”

As part of the program, the corporations will work with a select group of Illinois-based start-up companies over the course of four to six months, providing them with mentoring, partnership and business opportunities. Each corporation will have a customized plan based on their needs and innovation priorities, and will report back on the outcomes of their engagement. Ultimately, the goal is to encourage all Illinois companies to support the growth of emerging Illinois businesses.

“We are thrilled to be working with this group of corporate leaders to help them more systemically engage with local entrepreneurs and emerging enterprises,” ISTC President and CEO Mark Harris said. “Illinois is rich with innovation talent, and this program will better link our entrepreneurial and corporate communities for mutual benefit.”

***About the Illinois Science & Technology Coalition***

*The Illinois Science & Technology Coalition (ISTC) is a member-driven, nonprofit organization that works to cultivate and attract research and technology-based investment, talent and job growth in the state. Through strategic public-private partnerships, advocacy efforts and project management, ISTC connects government, academia and industry to leverage the state’s world-class resources to enhance Illinois’ position as a global hub for research, innovation and entrepreneurship. For more information, visit [www.istcoalition.org](http://www.istcoalition.org)*

***About the Illinois Innovation Council***

*The Illinois Innovation Council (IIC) is a diverse group of leaders convened by Governor Pat Quinn to promote engagement, innovation and economic development. Its mission is to identify and advance strategies that foster and accelerate the innovation and economic growth that will create the jobs of today and tomorrow. For more information, visit [www.istcoalition.org/innovation](http://www.istcoalition.org/innovation)*