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## Calif. contest picks 'clean technology' winners

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By Leonard Anderson

SAN FRANCISCO, Sept 26 (Reuters) - Five "clean technology" California business startups won a business plan competition on Tuesday aimed at keeping the state at the head of the race to commercialize green technologies.

The goal of the "Clean Tech Open" competition was to jump start a state industry with the entrepreneurial drive of the California computer and biotechnology sectors, freeing energy investment from relying on sky-high oil prices and government subsidies.

The winners were Adura Technologies Inc., a wireless lighting developer, for energy efficiency; GreenVolts, a solar energy company, for renewable energy; EDC Technologies, a developer of systems to reduce natural gas consumption in buildings, for smart power; Kite Ship, a builder of giant sail kites to help ships burn less fuel, for transport energy; and Crystal Clear Technologies, a filter maker that converts contaminated water to potable water, for water management.

The five were picked by judges from the venture capital industry, law firms, universities, and research institutes. Each winner received \$100,000, a year of free office space, legal and accounting advice, and publicity.

Clean tech business in California faces growing competition for investors from technology "clusters" expanding in the Pacific Northwest, Boston, Toronto, the Midwest, Texas and overseas, said Rob Day, principal at venture capital firm Expansion Capital Partners.

U.S. venture capital investments in clean tech in North America in the second quarter more than doubled to \$843 million from a year ago, according to Cleantech Venture Network.

California Republican Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger has played a major role focusing attention on the state's efforts to get greener, striking a bipartisan deal with Democrats to pass a landmark bill making the state the first to mandate a cut in greenhouse gas emissions.

Schwarzenegger will sign the measure into law on Wednesday.

Silicon Valley venture capitalist Vinod Khosla told the clean tech meeting on Tuesday that developments in fuel cells, biomass fuels, new battery technology and other fields "are starting on a trajectory that is an alternative to petroleum."

Biomass, pulling energy from sources like cow manure and municipal waste, "will become competitive with oil," Khosla said.

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