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Written by David Young

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In an effort to spur water-based businesses, Imagine H2O and the Colorado Water Innovation Cluster, or CWIC, have signed a Memorandum of Understanding to jointly provide entrepreneurs with opportunities, tools and resources to build successful water businesses.

The partnership permits access to each partner's programming resources to provide a greater depth of resources for entrepreneurs, according to a news release. The city of Fort Collins is a founding member of the CWIC.

"This agreement creates new opportunities for Colorado water innovators" said Jeff Throckmorton, chairman of the CWIC, in a prepared statement. "And partnerships with organizations like Imagine H2O will fuel innovation, collaboration and growth throughout the region."

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The organizations will hold a water entrepreneurship workshop for those interested in new business models and water technologies. The workshop will be hosted by the Rocky Mountain Innosphere on Oct. 13. For more information, visit www.imagineh2o.org or www.co-waterinnovation.com.

institutions from which innovative water solutions and new businesses can evolve.

Potential water projects include: home water conservation, agricultural water rights management, water infrastructure asset management and other water-related issues.

The collaboration with Imagine H2O is intended to position Northern Colorado and the Colorado Water Innovation Cluster as a leader in the water sector.

Brian Ashe, CWIC vice chairman, said the partnership can provide greater resources and funding locally.



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Imagine H2O, which is prevalent in the U.S. as well as Canada, can help promote new business growth and funding opportunities for the organization.

This year, Imagine is focusing on innovations surrounding waste water with funding for ideas related to gray water systems, energy waste water, treatment systems and other related business plans.

As for the CWIC, it is moving forward with its first project with the Lake Canal Alternative Practices and In-stream Flow Demonstration.

The demonstration addresses municipal, industrial and environmental water "gap" during irrigation season in the Lake Canal area by using packaged software, field instrumentation solution developed by Colorado-based Regenesis Management Group, along with researchers from Colorado State University and U.S. Department of Agriculture.

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Josh Birks, city of Fort Collins economic adviser, said ultimately the partnership could lead to more funding and jobs for the community in the realm of water based innovations.

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"The great thing is Imagine H2O creates a laser focus on good companies that are innovating," Birks said. "It all translates into greater awareness by the venture community about the innovative things we are doing with water."

Such a partnership has the ability to launch CWIC from a local cluster into a much more broad based initiative with Imagine H2O's national and international presence, said Birks who said the move bodes well for the future of the cluster.

Scott Bryan, director of operations Imagine H2O, based in San Francisco said Fort Collins is only the second community that they have partnered with the first being Fresno, Calif. He said Fort Collins is unique in its water cluster cooperation between the city, private sector and university.

"This is not something we do with every community," said Bryan, whose organization is offering a \$150,000 cash prize in a contest this year related to waste water solutions. "We are looking for innovative communities and centers, just like this, that we can partner with."

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