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Opportunity Calgary Investment Fund supports AltaML initiative to create AI/ML talent pipeline

July 22, 2020 –The Opportunity Calgary Investment Fund (OCIF) will provide AltaML Inc. with up to \$3.25 million over three years to create applied data science internships to accelerate artificial intelligence/machine learning (AI/ML) skill development in Calgary through hands-on, mentored work experience.

Alberta has a long history at the forefront of AI/ML as a result of decades-long investment in academic research. The applied data science internship program will be an industry-led initiative, building on and extending the province's strength in the field, and specifically shoring up capacity in Calgary.

AltaML has partnered with ATB Financial and Spartan Controls to deliver the internship program in which paid interns with appropriate STEM qualifications can learn to solve real-world industry problems using data and applied AI/ML – thereby gaining essential experience for job readiness. Discussions are underway with Suncor Energy to explore how they can participate in this initiative.

The program will operate on a cohort basis with the first three-month cohort launching October 1, 2020, and over the program term, up to 240 individuals will have the opportunity to participate. Individuals interested in applying for internships are encouraged to follow AltaML's social media accounts to receive updates.

"Calgary is an innovation hub across a number of sectors and creating the capacity for training and advancement through AltaML's centre of excellence will further that reputation," said Mayor Naheed Nenshi, a member of the OCIF Board of Directors. "This investment will help grow the talent pipeline necessary to address the increased demand for professionals in the artificial intelligence and machine learning space."

The applied data science internship program is targeted at addressing a local shortage of experienced AI/ML talent faced by Calgary companies specializing in delivering AI/ML products and services, as well as local companies that endeavor to develop their own in-house AI/ML teams and capabilities.

"It's a no-brainer for AltaML to be in Calgary with all the decision makers, capital and data concentrated here, but a constraint on our plans for growth is the availability of local AI/ML talent," said AltaML Co-founder and CEO Cory Janssen.

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"We quickly realized that we'd be competing with our industry partners for data science talent with experience on applied business problems, so we took a collaborative approach in developing the concept for the internship program. Now with industry and post-secondary partnerships and support from OCIF, we can begin implementing it. We are proud to lead this initiative and to partner with these premiere Calgary companies."

"At ATB Financial, we strive to provide our customers with expert advice to support them in building their financial future, and this is enabled in part through the creation of world-class, trusted artificial intelligence," said Curtis Stange, President and CEO of ATB Financial. "We are proud to sponsor the applied data science internship program, knowing it is an important step to building talent to support Alberta's future prosperity."

"We are very excited to be working with AltaML on this important initiative to develop talent in Calgary," said Grant Wilde, President & CEO of Spartan Controls. "AI/Machine learning is one of the fastest growing fields in the world today and our team at Spartan is focused on accelerating industry innovation by combining our automation expertise and applied data science."

"AltaML's internship program will provide significant opportunities for students in the recently approved Master of Data Science and Analytics program. Furthermore, this initiative will help to solidify Calgary as a home that fosters Data Science learning and as a pipeline of Data Science talent for many years to come," said Usman Alim and Jim Stallard, Co-directors of the Data Science and Analytics program at the University of Calgary.

AltaML is the 11th submission to be approved for OCIF funding.

"We are excited to support AltaML, who is a proven leader in developing and commercializing ML software, in building out the programming and training foundation to address the need for talent to take advantage of opportunities critical to companies' growth in our market. OCIF is excited to support and partner with AltaML and their established industry players to put Calgary on the map and train the next generation of AI and ML talent to help support and grow the local ecosystem" said Mark Blackwell, Chair of the OCIF Board.

The [Opportunity Calgary Investment Fund](#) was launched by The City of Calgary in April 2018 to support investments that spur growth and create jobs in strategic sectors identified in the economic strategy [Calgary in the New Economy](#).

A live stream of the Opportunity Calgary Investment Fund announcement will start at 9 a.m. MT on July 22, 2020. Join using this link:

<https://bit.ly/30xLqFj>

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About Opportunity Calgary Investment Fund:

Opportunity Calgary Investment Fund was created as a wholly owned subsidiary of The City of Calgary in 2018 to support catalytic investments within the city that will help diversify and transform the economy. The Fund is administered by Calgary Economic Development and has a volunteer Board of Directors. For more information, visit our [website](#).

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About AltaML:

[AltaML](#) builds transformational software for business, powered by machine learning (ML). We partner with organizations using a co-development model where we can provide technical and strategic expertise on how to leverage their data with AI/ML to deliver significant ROI and new forms of competitive advantage. AltaML has successfully deployed AI solutions across many industries including health care, energy, utilities, construction, agriculture, financial services, and more.

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About ATB Financial:

With \$55.8 billion in assets, [ATB Financial](#) is an Alberta-built financial institution that is a catalyst for economic growth in our province. We got started in 1938 to help Albertans through tough economic times and are still the only financial institution in more than 100 Alberta communities. ATB's more than 5,000 team members love to deliver exceptional experiences to nearly 777,000 customers in our 175 branches, 139 agencies, 24-hour Client Care Centre, four entrepreneur centres, or through our digital banking options. Everything we do is focused on how we can serve Albertans—from providing expert advice and supporting entrepreneurs to helping Albertans buy a home and grow their wealth.

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About Spartan Controls:

Spartan Controls is the leading provider of automation, valves, measurement, process control, digital transformation, and solutions in Western Canada. For over 55 years, Spartan has provided customers with high performance solutions, industry expertise, lifecycle support, and technical training — delivering value our customers want. Our automation solutions are used in all process industries including oil and gas, oil sands, mining, pulp and paper, power, pipeline, and municipal. We are dedicated to providing exceptional customer experiences and delivering superior business results where expertise and collaboration come together. For more information, visit www.spartancontrols.com.

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