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Capital Investments Drive Innovations in Supply Chain Sector

St. Louis Venture Capitalist Showcases Recent Investments, Offers Advice for Early-Stage Companies

[ST. LOUIS, MO/June 3, 2025] St. Louis-based venture capital firm proChain Ventures is investing in two St. Louis-based companies that have the potential to advance supply chain transformation, security and resiliency. These investments and startup advice for companies seeking capital to advance their supply chain innovations were the focus of a virtual FreightWeekSTL 2025 panel session released on June 3. The virtual panel session sponsored by St. Louis Regional Freightway featured J.P. Keating. He discussed proChain Venture's investments in Intramotev and AVOL – which he considers two of the most exciting startups in the St. Louis region right now. Keating is the Managing Partner at proChain Ventures, a business which specializes in investing in critical technologies in the supply chain and logistics sector.

With more than 25 years of previous Fortune 500 experience in supply chain innovation, corporate startups, collaboration and corporate ventures, Keating uses his professional expertise to connect supply chain technology startup companies with large enterprises. Keating said the Midwest is one of the most ideal locations to build a supply chain venture firm based on his career experience with St. Louis-based companies ranging from Boeing and Anheuser Busch to Ameren and ConAgra, and the freight and logistics assets found in the region. Those same assets, he said, are what also attract innovators.

Intramotev is a startup company founded in 2020 that converts conventional freight cars to self-propelled battery-electric railcars with its TugVolt and ReVolt batteries. Keating explained Intramotev is a company of interest for proChain Ventures because of the founders backgrounds and their ability to build on 200 years of previous rail technology while capitalizing on resources available in the bi-state region. Intramotev states its products can reduce transportation costs, reduce diesel consumption and provide zero-emissions freight.

"We build things in this city," said Keating. "With our supply chain assets here, we really need to leverage those, with rail being a very clear area where we need to be innovating even more." In the case of Intramotev, Keating said they knew the team and knew the technology. "They are really transforming what rail can do. They're former aerospace guys that worked on technology I knew very well," he said.

AVOL is a health care logistics delivery company that enables medical institutions to deliver blood, kidneys, and lab samples via drone, using advanced aircraft technology that Keating was also familiar with. Originally located in New York, Keating convinced AVOL to relocate to St. Louis because of resources in the region.

"I convinced AVOL to come here because of our world-class aerospace community, our world-class health care community, and our world-class supply chain community," Keating said. "All three of those things, along with the number of potential customers and the environment we operate in, could provide them an extremely strong advantage."

Keating talked about factors that potential investors look for when seeking out investment opportunities in the freight and logistics sector, with an emphasis on startup companies understanding the complexities of supply chains. Keating said investors look for teams that have a deep understanding of the freight and logistics sector, particularly the interconnectivity, dependencies and orchestrations found in the system. If teams do not have a deep understanding of logistics and supply chain systems, Keating worries startup companies in the sector may be missing opportunities and taking unnecessary risks. He also said startup companies should have some initial traction and revenue to attract investors.

From an investing perspective, Keating said understanding the type of technology being invested in builds a stronger relationship between the company and the investor. That's because it allows the investor to better understand how the new technology will be adopted by an enterprise buyer.

Keating also offered advice for companies seeking capital to advance their supply chain innovations. He advised supply chain professionals not to limit themselves to the Midwest, but to also network with investors on the East and West Coasts. Keating also recommended seeking out investors familiar with the supply chain sector.

"I would always recommend if you are some sort of supply chain related startup, seek out the investors that understand the space very well versus going to a generalist investor," said Keating. "You may have some luck with a generalist investor, but my co-investors and I have found that, if investors understand the tech, they're typically going to see value much quicker and provide more value as an investor."

Keating stressed the significance of innovation in the supply chain logistics sector. He said there will always be opportunities for providing solutions for greater efficiency, effectiveness, resiliency and transparency to meet customer needs. Keating also said he enjoys working with startups because they solve massive problems in niche areas, while generating immediate return on investment.

Mary Lamie moderated the virtual panel session. Lamie is Executive Vice President of Multimodal Enterprises for Bi-State Development, which operates the St. Louis Regional Freightway.

"This is a fascinating look at the supply chain sector from an investor's perspective," said Lamie. "It offers great insight on two local companies with the potential to revolutionize the movement of freight while sharing valuable advice for others who seek to make their own mark in the logistics industry."

FreightWeekSTL 2025 continues through June 6. The week-long freight and logistics event is delivered by the St. Louis Regional Freightway. To learn more, register for the remaining virtual panel sessions, or view past sessions for FreightWeekSTL 2025, visit www.freightweekstl.com.

About St. Louis Regional Freightway

A Bi-State Development enterprise, the St. Louis Regional Freightway is a regional freight district and comprehensive authority for freight operations and opportunities within eight counties in southwestern Illinois and eastern Missouri, which comprise the St. Louis metropolitan area. Public sector and private industry businesses are partnering with the St. Louis Regional Freightway to establish the bi-state region as one of the premier multimodal freight hubs and distribution centers in the United States through marketing and advocacy for infrastructure development that supports the movement of freight. To learn more, visit thefreightway.com.