



Updates from the Office of Economic Development

New Hill Development Receives City Contribution



Recently, the Office of Economic Development presented New Hill Development Corporation a \$500,000 check as part of the city's commitment to the BEACON shared-use commercial kitchen project. The project, known as the Black Entrepreneurial Advancement and Community Opportunity Network (BEACON), will have 16 workstations available in addition to freezers and dry storage space when complete. Construction is underway at the Carlton Road facility with a late 2024 opening planned.

The Future of Talent Series

The first event in the three-event series for the Future of Talent kicked off on Monday, February 12 at City Space where speaker Chris Heinz, Director of People & Associate Experience for Carter Myers Automotive, presented on "10 Engagement Strategies to Improve Your Workplace." Attendees learned what engagement was, and was not, how it impacts their business and its bottom line, and how adopting an engagement identity and practice will improve the experience of employees, leaders, and customers; reduce wasted costs; and drive better results. The next event in the series will focus on Recruitment where a group of panelists will discuss the challenges and opportunities they see from their perspectives as hiring managers, HR professionals, workforce development career advisors and job placement counselors. View the recruitment process from all angles and gain a better understanding of what's working, what's not, and how to incorporate best practices for recruitment to ensure success. The Future of Talent is co-sponsored by OED and the Charlottesville Regional Chamber of Commerce. Join panelists Allyn Sinderbrand and Steve Pekary, with JW Townsend Landscapes, Frank Squillace with Civil Solutions, Brookes Sims with Virginia Career Works, and Roy Fitch with the Downtown Job Center on Wednesday, February 21 from 8am to 10am at City Space. [Click here register.](#)

Office of Economic Development Hires Entrepreneurship Program Specialist

The Office of Economic Development is pleased to share that Keith Groomes, Jr. has joined the OED team as the Entrepreneurship Program Specialist. In this role Keith will help support the City's vibrant entrepreneur ecosystem and facilitate opportunities for more inclusive and diverse growth within Charlottesville's small business community. Keith will proactively engage with entrepreneurs and small business owners to help ensure they are aware of programs offered through the Office of Economic Development and its partner organizations. His firsthand experience as an entrepreneur who has been able to benefit from many of the programs that are available, will allow Keith to share with local entrepreneurs in a unique way.

Keith is the owner and operator of The Pie Guy, a savory and sweet mobile catering company servicing the greater Charlottesville area Since 2012, and has years of catering, logistics and large venue experience that expands up and down the east coast. He started his career as an entrepreneur in 2010 after studying history education at Virginia State University. A South Philadelphia native, Keith is a Charlottesville High school graduate, having moved to the area in 1997. Keith was raised in an entrepreneurial home and credits his mother for nurturing his entrepreneurial spirit and grit. Keith enjoys sharing travel and food with his partner, and to date he has traveled to 4 continents, 9 countries, 30 states, and counting.

Nominations for VA's TOP Employer for Interns Now Being Accepted

The Commonwealth is seeking to recognize the "Top Virginia Employers for Interns" and their role in providing work-based learning opportunities to students. State-level recognition and award notification will take place on April 1, 2024 and regional events will occur the week of April 8. The 2024 recipients will also be recognized during a special event in Richmond on July 25, 2024 - Virginia Intern Day.



All employers offering internships, regardless of size and sector, are encouraged to submit a nomination form by March 1, 2024. Apply [here](#). This is a great opportunity for businesses to showcase their commitment to meaningful internships that strengthen the workforce. If you know of any businesses that should be nominated for this award, please share this opportunity with them – it would be wonderful for our Charlottesville businesses to be recognized for all the great work they do!

Piedmont Pitch



In case you missed it, there was a big kickoff a few days ago. While you would be right if you were thinking about the Super Bowl, you would be even more correct if you were thinking about last week's kickoff session for Piedmont Pitch. Over 30 people representing 25 business ideas participated in the opening session of the program's second year. Throughout the next several weeks, staff from the Central Virginia Small Business Development Center (CVSBDC) will take participants through their "Business Essentials Training" course, which is designed to

cover multiple facets of new business development and growth. Subject matter experts will provide insights and advice on topics ranging from how to create a business entity and the essentials of business finances, to understanding your target market and promoting your business idea. One-on-one sessions with a business advisor are also included and one of the key components to the Piedmont Pitch program. Individuals who complete the Business Essentials Training and advising sessions will have the opportunity to submit their business plan as part of the final pitch competition and have a shot at winning a cash prize. This year's final pitch competition will take place in April.

CvilleBioHub and Tech Expo

CvilleBioHub recently hosted its 1st Annual Device and Tech Expo. The event drew a capacity crowd to InBio's facility, located in the heart of Charlottesville, to see examples of the latest biomedical R&D work taking place in the region and network with likeminded individuals in the field. Charlottesville-based companies such as **InBio**, **Luna**



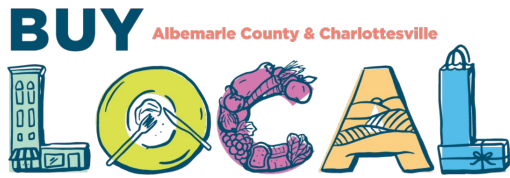
Labs, and **Icarus Medical Innovations**, were able to demonstrate advances made in particle detection technology, hyper-realistic medical training models, medical aid devices, and customized orthopedic braces. The Device and Tech Expo served to pull back the curtain so the public could see and appreciate just a portion of the innovative biomedical R&D taking place in Charlottesville and the surrounding area.

The event's timing couldn't have happened any better as it fell immediately on the heels of a **report being released** that cited successes in Charlottesville/Albemarle BioHub and its member's collaborative efforts with other regions, contributing to positive strides made in the first year of Virginia Bio-Connect, a statewide life sciences initiative.

OED Fun Fact

In 1950, Gregory Hayes Swanson was the first African-American student admitted to the University of Virginia to pursue a master's in law. Swanson went on to a long career as an

Free Business Resources



The Albemarle County & City of Charlottesville Buy Local campaign highlights small businesses within the Charlottesville-Albemarle area through a multi-channel, multimedia promotional and educational campaign. To learn more about the campaign, click [here!](#)



The Central Virginia Small Business Development Center is a team of business and technical experts available to advise and assist entrepreneurs, confidentially and free of charge. They offer 1:1 assistance, curated research, access to technical experts and professionals, and timely events/training. To see upcoming SBDC events, click [here!](#)

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