



Date: July 30, 2016

Memo To: Town of Bluffton Town Council; Don Ryan Center for Innovation Board of Directors; Marc Orlando, Town Manager

From: David Nelems, Don Ryan Center for Innovation Executive Director

RE: JULY 2016 DON RYAN CENTER FOR INNOVATION REPORT

CENTER OPERATIONS

- **2016 Golf** meetings. Continuing to sign up sponsors and golfers.
- **Updated DRCI Golf website.**
- **Updated DRCI website.**
- Submitted **AT&T grant** paperwork.
- **Expanding membership** program benefits.
- Submitted **Bank of America** grant paperwork.
- Working on a grant application from the **“Beaufort Fund”**.
- Interview with **Lucas High from the Island Packet** about the Girls Who Code program.
- Completely **updated DRCI membership software** in relation to member tracking, payment, renewals, email communications and event handling. DRCI website pages relating to membership and events were completely redone for a cleaner look, more ease of use and functionality. We are very pleased with this update.
- Passed the **100 member mark**.

INNOVATORS

- Currently there are **5 innovators** in the Center. We will stay at this level until mid Fall.
- All innovators are current with their monthly program fees.
- Met with **every innovator at least once** (some multiple times) during the month.
- Coordinating prototype development for Bluffton-based **Elongator**. Traveled to Liberty, SC with Steve DeSimone (innovator) to meet and discuss an agreement for this company to design and build five prototypes of the product. Multiple calls regarding this in the month of July. Agreement was reached in late July and the design work has already begun.
- Spoke with **two potential mentors**.
- Involved with multiple conference calls and meetings with and on behalf of Bluffton-based innovator **“Monroney Labels”**
- Onsite meeting with innovator **Blatchley Power** and representatives from **Palmetto Electric** about helping the innovator measure the power output of the hydro power device. The Palmetto reps were impressed with the idea and the prototype. We will

continue to work with them to move forward as we collect data on the device. Many **thanks to Councilman Dan Wood** for pointing us to the right people at Palmetto Electric.

- Attended **Bluffton Regional Committee Meeting**.
- Meeting with DRCI graduate **Page1 Media** about becoming our third and final **Entrepreneur in Residence**.
- Attended a second meeting and the launch of a **new angel-investing fund** in the region. **"SaltMarsh Angels"** will be a great resource to our local entrepreneurs. This fund is part of a 9-fund group of other city-based angels funds run by very experienced, professional fund managers from the upstate.

OUTREACH, STRATEGIC RELATIONSHIPS

- Finished work with USCB and Celebrate Bluffton and launched the **"Celebrate Bluffton" app**.
- Finalizing details for the **"Girls Who Code"** program. This program will run for 20 weeks and will start in early September from 7-9pm on Wednesdays. 20 girls have signed up for the program. Six girls are on the waiting list. Our local instructor has been approved.
- Finalized and **entered into a marketing agreement** with SmartMarketing communications.
- Attended a meeting in Charleston with Mayor Sulka, Marc Orlando, **Charleston Digital Corridor and Charleston County representatives about economic development**
- Continued conversations with the City of Beaufort about **DRCI satellite location**. The DRCI submitted a new, streamlined partnership proposal based on feedback from that meeting. Waiting to hear back from the City regarding next steps.
- Second meeting with **WJCL** about marketing DRCI.
- Attended Bluffton/HHI Chamber event **"Cocktails & Conversations"**. In talks with the chamber about hosting this event next summer in the new DRCI space.
- Meeting with **Thomas Henz (Market President NBSC Bank)** and son about entrepreneurship.
- Meeting with Thomas Henz (Market President NBSC Bank) and SBA regional representative about **SBA programs available for small business development**. Topics were specifically focused on growth capital for graduate Village Features and startup capital for Elongator.
- Meeting with **John Lundin who teaches IT courses at USCB**. He may teach an educational session at DRCI in the Spring.
- Met with members of **T.W.E.A.C.** who work with **retired military** coming out of Northern Beaufort County.

TOWN OF BLUFFTON OPERATIONS

- Attended **Senior Staff** meetings.
- Attended **Town Council** meeting.
- Attended **Council workshop** relating to strategic planning