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The Don Ryan Center For Innovation Appoints New CEO



BLUFFTON, SC May, 22, 2018: The Town of Bluffton, along with the board of directors of the Don Ryan Center for Innovation (DRCI) – a leader in creating the area’s vibrant business climate and entrepreneurial spirit – is pleased to announce the selection of Trent Williamson as the organization’s new Chief Executive Officer. The appointment follows an intensive strategic planning process that outlines the opportunity for DRCI to emerge as the regional leader in economic development and innovation.

“Bluffton is at an exciting and significant stage in its economic progress,” said Williamson. “Our community has so much to offer – an incredible quality of life while being progressive and innovative. I look forward to working with our staff and Board to push for new opportunities for Bluffton.”

“After a thorough and deliberate selection process, we are delighted that Trent will lead the Don Ryan Center as we navigate through evolving and expanding opportunities in Bluffton and the entire region,” said Matt Green, Board Chairman.

Williamson officially assumes his leadership role after serving as the organization’s interim CEO and overseeing the incubation program while maintaining his focus on the Town’s economic development interests.

Prior to the Don Ryan Center, Williamson made an impact in roles with the Metro Atlanta Chamber and Cobb Chamber where he created partnerships with the Georgia Department of Economic Development, Georgia Tech, Georgia University and Georgia’s utility providers. Williamson also worked to build strategic partnerships with twenty-nine neighboring counties, which directly contributed to the economic success of a dynamic and growing business community. These opportunities provided extraordinary experience spanning a variety of industries.

“Trent’s diverse corporate experience, well-appointed skill set and track record of success, coupled with his love of life in Bluffton, will be an important catalyst that drives the mission of the Don Ryan Center for Innovation onward.” said Marc Orlando, Bluffton town manager.

Learn more by connecting with @donryancenter on LinkedIn, Instagram or Facebook or at their [website](#).

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About the Don Ryan Center for Innovation

Since 2012, the Don Ryan Center for Innovation (DRCI) has been instrumental in creating a business-centric community while empowering innovators through its successful incubation program. The organization has also emerged as the Town of Bluffton's economic development arm, facilitating numerous projects and partnerships that have led to today's vibrant economy. It fosters strategic, sustainable growth in five core areas:

- *Entrepreneurism*
- *Business Attraction, Expansion & Retention*
- *Real Estate & Infrastructure*
- *Workforce Development & Talent Retention and Attraction*
- *Marketing Education & Outreach*

A consistent aspect of the Don Ryan Center's mission has been its business incubator. In the first five years, the incubator graduated more than 35 companies and mentored many more. Graduate companies have created 100+ jobs and generated more than \$5 million in annual payroll as well as more than \$30 million in annual revenue. The incubator provides resources such as hands-on mentoring, company formation and overall business planning.

The organization will soon break ground on a state-of-the-art 3,000 square foot facility within the Town's Buckwalter Commerce Park. The "HUB" will serve as home-base for innovators working within the incubation program as well as offer co-working space for area entrepreneurs, allowing for collaboration and sharing in a high-tech open environment.

Through membership, the DRCI continues to build a community of leaders who play an active role in the region's future economic success and quality of life. Executives and entrepreneurs all at all stages in their professional journeys are joining with the organization in confidence that it provides a unique value and will make an impact on the future economic success of our community.