

# Media Release



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HEART OF THE LOWCOUNTRY

## The Don Ryan Center For Innovation Partners with the Beaufort County School District to Encourage Entrepreneurship Skills in Elementary, Middle and High School Students

### Partnership Includes Joint Training with Teachers, Internships and Guest Speaking

In an effort to acknowledge, encourage and cultivate the entrepreneurial spirit and skills of elementary, middle and high school students, representatives of The Don Ryan Center for Innovation and the Beaufort County School District are working together to create partnerships in training, internships, guest instructors and idea-sharing.

“This partnership has benefits for the schools, the innovation center and the region. As we work together, we cultivate innovative thinkers which could ultimately add to our region’s new businesses,” David Nelems, executive director for The Don Ryan Center for Innovation, said. “As more and more start-up companies settle in Bluffton, they are also looking for a skilled work force. The first step to assuring we have what companies need is having a relationship with our public school systems. We are excited to have these students and teachers among our innovators.

“Innovation happens at every age,” Nelems said. “Knowing what is important as a product or service to people of every generation only makes innovations more relevant.” Nelems and his board members have partnered with Beaufort County School Superintendent Jeffrey Moss, former Beaufort County Superintendent Jackie Rosswurm and Karen Gilbert, director of career and technical education for the BCSD.

“When educators and innovators work together, students can get a preview of the world they’re going to inherit,” said Superintendent Jeff Moss. “The school district’s partnership with the Don Ryan Center can give our students a glimpse of their own potential and a real-world approach to building the skills they’ll need.”

In addition to Nelems guest speaking to several middle school classes about entrepreneurship and 3D printing, the Don Ryan Center is hosting a teacher’s training June 11-12, “Innovation in the Classroom and Beyond,” and will be hosting Bluffton High School interns this summer.

The media is invited to the two summer partnership activities: “Innovation in the Classroom and Beyond” Training and summer internships. Please contact Nelems (email: [dnelems@townofbluffton.com](mailto:dnelems@townofbluffton.com) for more information)

### Innovation in the Classroom and Beyond:

- Held at the Don Ryan Center, June 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup>, 2015, 8: 30 – 2: 30 both days.
- See attached for full agenda.
- Training topics include: How to prepare the future workforce, assisting students with product design, value of market research, fostering creativity within the engineering design process and assisting students’ “Shark Tank” presentations.

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- Speakers/Facilitators include: Mayor Lisa Sulka, Town Manager Marc Orlando, BCSD Superintendent Dr. Jeffrey Moss, Former BCSD Superintendent Dr. Jackie Rosswurm, Karen Gilbert, career & technical education director for BCSD, Carrie Barth of Hargray Communications, Jared Jester of Jester Communications and Kathleen Mercier of eviCore.

## Summer Internships:

- Held at the Don Ryan Center for Innovation
- Rising Bluffton High School seniors will participate
- Summer dates to be announced
- If interested in interviewing students as dates are scheduled, please contact David Nelems (email): [dnelems@townofbluffton.com](mailto:dnelems@townofbluffton.com)

“This is what we call Innovation with a capital “I”; innovation keeps demanding we think of new ways to cultivate the ideas and the entrepreneurial spirit of our residents at every age,” Nelems said. “This partnership has the potential to help shape a new product, a new career and, ultimately, a more advanced workforce for our region.”

About the Don Ryan Center for Innovation: The Don Ryan Center for Innovation is a private-public partnership between the Town of Bluffton and Clemson University Institute for Economic and Community Development. The Town of Bluffton was the first non-metropolitan municipality to partner with Clemson to advance regional economic development.

Located in the CareCore National (now referred to as eviCore) building in Buckwalter Place, the Center provides regional start-up companies with consulting, resources and office space to accelerate their business growth. Currently, the Center has ten innovators and nine graduates. Since opening in May 2012, the Center has incubated 19 local companies. The current and graduate companies which have been a part of the Center collectively employ 77 people with an annual payroll of \$4,110,000.