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## **Director's Report – DRCI**

### **May 2023**

**Entrepreneur Program Update** - There are currently 17 *Program Companies* in the Don Ryan Center with several others in the pipeline

- STARTUP companies
    1. Hull & Husk
    2. Hilton Head Coffee Roasters
    3. Wheeler Trucking (Hardeeville)
    4. Capital Chiropractic (Hardeeville)
    5. Prime IV Hydration
    6. Hardee Greens (Hardeeville)
    7. Gullah T's n Tings
  - HEROES companies
    1. OPFOB (STARTUP)
    2. Elite Support Americas (STARTUP)
  - GROWTH
    1. MXM Productions
    2. Barbers of the Lowcountry
    3. CrossFlight
    4. Universal Bookkeeper
    5. Effervescence Yoga
    6. LoCone
    7. Custom Audio Visual
    8. Beach City Tires
- Standing meetings with every company at least 2 times per month.
  - Multiple screening calls with leads that are interested in learning about our Programs.
  - Diligence meeting with Amy Dickson of La Source. Likely GROWTH company that would start in July.
  - Kickoff Meeting with new GROWTH Program customer, Custom Audio Visual.
  - Resiliency meeting with Anne Lawyer about her Food Truck Business.
  - Signed Beach City Tires up for GROWTH Program. Start Date in June.

- Diligence meeting with ChangePoint software. Likely STARTUP company that would start in August.

## **Operations**

- Meeting with Ryan family and college officials regarding Providence College Ryan Incubator
- Refreshed Mentor page on DRCI site
- Re-evaluating revised, leaner contract with HubSpot
- Hosted the OneBlood Bus for a Blood Drive at DRCI on May 9<sup>th</sup>
- Submitted staff report to Town Council as part of the June 13 Boards and Commission process. This report includes a recommendation from the DRCI Board to fill an empty Board seat.
- Submitted staff report to Town Council as part of the June 13 consent agenda. This change will increase the number of ex-officio members from five to a maximum of ten
- DRCI employees completed Kolbe Testing to see how we can better communicate and work together as a team

## **Mentor Program**

- 70 Mentors

## **Partnerships**

### **Hardeeville**

- Working with City of Hardeeville to cross-pollinate social media sites DRCI/HDV
- HDV Newsletter
- Held Business 301 Event for on May 17<sup>th</sup>. The focus was on finances and funding
- Drafted new version of Hardeeville contract for years 2023-2026
- Signed up new STARTUP customer, Hardee Greens to start in June

### **BlacQuity**

- Ongoing classes at DRCI
- Diligence meeting with BlacQuity graduate Gullah T's n Tings for STARTUP Program

### **Beaufort County Economic Development Corporation**

- Working with them on multiple projects
- Attended BCEDC Board Meeting

### **SCORE**

- Working with SCORE to schedule their Minority Small Business Program Presentation in August

### **Greater Bluffton Chamber**

- Lunch and Learn at The HUB on May 30<sup>th</sup> The topic was hiring.

### **HHI Chamber of Commerce**

- Industry expert at Hilton Head Island Chamber's Road to Entrepreneurship: How Local Small Businesses Find Success

#### **BusinessATTRACT**

- Attended BusinessAttract monthly meeting
- Planning Fall 2023 event with us and BCSD - Aerospace, manufacturing and Healthcare focus

#### **Hilton Head Christian Academy**

- Held Shark Tank at The HUB for 2 HHCA classes

#### **Marketing**

- Working with Town of Bluffton to cross-pollinate social media sites DRCI/TOB
- Social Media
- Newsletter
- Spoke about DRCI at Coffee and Conversations at Margaritaville

#### **Board of Directors Meeting**

- Onboarded 3 ex officio board members
- Presented applicants to the Board and members were selected to recommend to Town Council

The DRCI has made remarkable progress and achievements over the past several months, specifically focusing on the notable increase in GROWTH companies benefiting from the enhanced level of experience and offerings of our experienced staff.

One of the key indicators of our success is the growing number of high-potential GROWTH companies that have sought the support and resources provided by the Don Ryan Center. Our VP of Innovation, Paul Arvantides has been instrumental addition in attracting and nurturing these companies, providing valuable guidance and mentorship to help them navigate the challenges and opportunities they face.

Paul is a seasoned industry expert and business advisor, and he brings a wealth of knowledge and experience to the table. Through his expertise, we have been able to address the unique needs and demands of each GROWTH company, offering tailored solutions and strategic guidance.

The impact of these improvements is evident in the increased number of GROWTH companies DRCI is working with. By leveraging the experience and offerings of the Don Ryan Center, these companies have experienced accelerated growth, secured additional funding, and created new job opportunities within our community. Their success further demonstrates the positive influence of our experienced staff and robust programs on the overall economic landscape of Bluffton.

Looking ahead, the DRCI remains committed to further strengthening the support we provide to all of our innovators. We are continuously refining our programs and expanding our network of partnerships with industry leaders, investors, and other business support organizations. These efforts will ensure that we remain at the forefront of innovation, offering cutting-edge resources and opportunities to our companies as they continue to shape the future of Bluffton's economy.

We are proud to report that the Don Ryan Center for Innovation has experienced significant growth in the number of high-potential growth companies seeking our support. The expertise and offerings of our experienced staff, combined with our robust programs, have played a pivotal role in this success. As we continue to empower and nurture these companies, we anticipate further economic growth and prosperity for our community.