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## **Director's Report – DRCI**

**March 2024**

### **Entrepreneur Program Update**

- STARTUP companies
  1. Hardee Greens
  2. ChangePoint
  3. Petitek
  4. ESA
  5. Pro Series Golf Irons
  6. OPFOB
- GROWTH
  1. Beachside Tire
  2. Bluffton Electric
  3. LaSource
  4. Delta Roofing
  5. Barbers of the Lowcountry
  6. Custom Audio Video

#### *Key efforts in February*

- Barbers of the Lowcountry and Custom Audio Video are back at the DRCI as GROWTH companies
- Check in with Universal Bookkeepers - confirmed restart in April
- Diligence Meeting with Rhoda Gordon for STARTUP Program
- Diligence Meeting with NobleHearts HR for GROWTH Program

### **Economic Development Update**

#### ***Overview***

Following the enactment of the Economic Development Ordinance, the DRCI is increasingly engaged in more traditional economic development activities. Our current primary focus encompasses two critical elements:

1. The implementation of a comprehensive marketing strategy aimed at enhancing awareness of the EDO program. A meticulously crafted marketing plan has been developed, encompassing a range of activities designed to generate leads and facilitate communication. This plan includes targeted messaging, digital media initiatives, social media engagement, and other strategies to effectively disseminate information and streamline the application process for potential participants. The month of March has seen the evolution of plan and assets with the help of various AI software.
2. The ongoing development of the Buckwalter Place Project, situated in proximity to the LEC, is another key undertaking. DRCI is slated to occupy a portion of Building A, and various aspects of this project are now entering a phase requiring detailed review and oversight.

In addition to these projects, we maintain regular interactions with Assistant Town Manager Chris Forster and the BCEDC. These meetings are instrumental in ensuring that all parties are consistently informed about emerging opportunities and collaborative endeavors that may benefit any or all of the involved organizations. Our goal is to foster a synergistic approach to economic development, leveraging the strengths and resources of each entity to maximize impact and efficiency.

#### *Key efforts in March*

- A deeper dive into EDIP marketing plan; begin creation of key assets and separate website at [www.bluffton.biz](http://www.bluffton.biz)
- Second meeting with the PowerTeam and TOB staff regarding grant application for building upfit
- Third meeting scheduled for 25 March of stakeholders (PowerTeam, TOB & BCEDC to be held at DRCI which will include a site visit.
- Attended BCEDC Board Meeting

#### **Operations and Marketing**

- Won 2023 Golden Oyster Award – Member of the Year

- Hosted Clemson Senior Leadership at The HUB
- Attended Bluffton Regional Business Council meeting
- Taught to 3 HHCA Economic/Business classes to prepare them for Shark Tank in April
- Met with President of SBAC to discuss marketing funding services SC Lowcountry
- Met with Lisa Souls of Coastal States Bank
- Meeting with Kate Rott of South State Bank
- Economic development marketing messaging work
- Budget/staffing discussion
- AI program work. Class starts next month
- Attended DEI Committee Meetings

### **Mentor Program**

- 70 Mentors
- Held DRCI Mingle for Mentors and Innovators

### **Partnerships**

#### **Hardeeville**

- Site visit to Hardee Greens
- Working on AI Educational Series
- Working with City of Hardeeville on social media sites DRCI/HDV
- Annual paid partnership renews this month

#### **BlacQuity**

- Next cohort started

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

- Working with them on multiple projects

#### **Greater Bluffton Chamber**

- Won a Golden Oyster Award – Member of the Year
- GBCC Breakfast meeting held at The Hub

#### **Hilton Head – Bluffton Chamber**

- Attended Bluffton Regional Business Council meeting

## DRCI Highlight



DRCI won the Golden Oyster Award for **Chamber Member of t Year**

The Golden Oyster Awards is an annual event hosted by The Greater Bluffton Chamber of Commerce to honor outstanding local businesses that have made substantial positive contributions

to the Greater Bluffton Community. Golden Oyster Awards are prized to businesses who display business excellence, community-mindedness, and commitment to the growth and well-being of Greater Bluffton. To receive one of these awards is to obtain one of the highest honors dignified among the entire Greater Bluffton business community.