



Director's Report – Don Ryan Center for Innovation (DRCI)

May 2026

Overview:

May was a month of continued momentum and strategic growth for the Don Ryan Center for Innovation (DRCI). The organization advanced tenant activity at The COVE, expanded mentor engagement, and continued building AI education initiatives and entrepreneurial programming. DRCI strengthened regional partnerships through events, workshops, and networking while continuing to refine internal program structure and business support services.

Entrepreneur Program Update

- First meeting with High Tide Pediatric Dentistry
- Signed new STARTUP company scheduled to begin at the end of the month
- Kickoff meetings held for Airbana Technical Solutions and Keora Finance
- AMA Private Dining/Lucky Fig strategic meeting regarding physical location launch

STARTUP Companies

- **OPFOB**
- **Part of the Family**
- **AMA Private Dining**
- **Bright Beginnings Academy**
- **Belleau Woods Tavern (HEROES)**
- **Buysight.ai**
- **221B Studios**
- **Rosano**
- **Airbana (New - HEROES)**
- **High Tide Pediatric Dentistry (New)**
- **Keora Finance (New)**

GROWTH Companies

- **Effervescence Yoga**

THRIVE Companies

Ongoing long-term work with established Growth companies

- **Universal Bookkeeper**
- **HardeeGreens (Hardeeville)**
- **Delta Roofing**

Mentor Program

- Met with and onboarded several new mentors
- Signed on two additional mentors with Healthcare and Legal experience
- Continued mentor engagement and alignment for expanding programs

Operations, Economic Development, Events and Meetings:

- Prepared lease presentation materials and Town Council memorandum for The COVE
- Executed Landing Pad leases for Chase and Mashburn
- Chase Bank moved into The COVE Landing Pad office
- Mashburn Construction moved into The COVE Landing Pad office
- Continued lease updates and negotiations related to The COVE
- Finished and posted first reading packet for Project Helicopter EDIP
- Finished and posted second reading packet for Bluff Ortho EDIP
- Furniture discussions for The COVE with CBI and Interior Elements
- Hosted GBCC Coffee & Connections at The HUB
- Hosted GBCC Lunch & Learn
- Hosted HHI-Bluffton Chamber Candidate Recruitment Forum
- Attended Hilton Head-Bluffton Chamber Executive Networking Event
- Continued planning for next Founders Forum event in June
- Conducted DRCI Board work, preparation, and candidate review for open board seat
- Participated in Shop Local meeting with Hardeeville
- Continued work on signage for The COVE
- Continued DRC logo revision work
- Participated in Hurricane Preparedness meeting
- BHS marketing capstone presentations and postmortem review meeting
- Hosted AI in Business Training
- Continued AI Education Series at The HUB
- Continued AI-focused entrepreneurial and business support initiatives

Partnerships

Key Collaborations:

- **Hardeeville:** Continued joint marketing planning efforts with Hardeeville. Working on Shop Local Video and Lunch and Learn for October
- **Beaufort County Economic Development Corporation:** BCEDC temporarily moved to the Landing Pad to allow more space at The HUB. Ongoing collaboration on multiple impactful projects. Attended board meeting.
- **Greater Bluffton Chamber:** Participated in numerous ribbon cuttings, showcasing the growth and expansion of local businesses and attended. Hosted several GBCC events at The HUB and The COVE.
- **Hilton Head – Bluffton Chamber:** Participated in ribbon cuttings and networking events
- **Hispanic Business Association of the Lowcountry:** Ongoing membership, Paul Arvantides is a member of the HBA Lowcountry Partnerships Committee
- **Beaufort County Airport Board:** David Nelems is a member of this Board