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## **Director's Report – DRCI**

### **April 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. Custom Audio Video
  6. Universal Bookkeeping
  7. Noble Hearts Human Resources

#### *Key efforts in April*

- Universal Bookkeeping is back at the DRCI as a GROWTH company
- Noble Hearts Human Resources started as a GROWTH company
- Diligence Meeting with potential STARTUP 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 April*

- Selected messaging elements for each of the target industries
- Final work on separate website at [www.bluffton.biz](http://www.bluffton.biz). Site will go live in early May. Will be accessible directly and from Don Ryan and Town of Bluffton websites.
- Attended BCEDC Board Meeting

#### **Operations and Marketing**

- Presented quarterly Town Council Update
- Presented DRCI to Councilwoman Burden
- April Board meeting
- Staff members attended Heritage on Friday and Saturday
- Held AI in Business lunch and learn classes for the greater Bluffton community

- Partnered with TCL to do an AI series starting in May
- Going to present AI series to NIOA/Government Committee Workshop. Debbie Szpanka is a member.
- OPFOB held their 3<sup>rd</sup> Annual Concert for the Heroes – about 3000 in attendance
- Several conference room rentals
- Working on developing a new program called THRIVE
- Working on developing a new program called EVOLVE
- Working on developing a new program called TRADEUP
- Hosted Professional Women’s Network at The HUB
- Attended Arbor Day celebration
- Attended TCL groundbreaking celebration

### **Mentor Program**

- 70 Mentors

### **Partnerships**

#### **Hardeeville**

- Planned AI Educational Series to start in June
- Working with City of Hardeeville on social media sites DRCI/HDV
- Annual paid partnership renewed

#### **BlacQuity**

- Next cohort started

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

- Working with them on multiple projects

#### **Greater Bluffton Chamber**

- Exhibitor at the Greater Bluffton Chamber Business Expo
- GBCC Membership 101 The Hub
- Attended multiple ribbon cuttings

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

- Attended multiple ribbon cuttings and ground breakings

