

Spotlight on Success

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Peninsula Global Entrepreneurship Week Will Help Area Entrepreneurs Thrive

By Suzanne Douglas

Do you have a product idea that you want to bring to life? Have you always dreamed of starting your own company? Longing to do something totally different with your business, but don't know where to begin?

Innovators and entrepreneurs on the Peninsula, this is for you: announcing the first-ever Peninsula Global Entrepreneurship Week, November 18 - 24, 2013.

A weeklong series of events ranging from large-scale workshops to intimate networking gatherings, Peninsula Global Entrepreneurship Week is designed to help local area participants connect to the regional businesses, mentors, and investment opportunities that can help turn ideas into reality.

Thomas Nelson Community College (TNCC) Workforce Development, in collaboration with other area groups and businesses, is sponsoring the event. "Entrepreneurs are the people that help bring new ideas to life, drive business growth, and expand human welfare," says William "Bud" Barnett, Director of Professional & Continuing Education TNCC. "For many years, business on the Peninsula wasn't seen as particularly entrepreneur-friendly. Peninsula Global Entrepreneurship Week will completely alter that perception."

At least twenty different individual events are currently scheduled to take place during the week, at venues ranging from the National Institute of Aerospace to William and Mary, in locations from Hampton to Williamsburg. (See insert for a list of most, but not all, of the sponsored events.)

Importantly, the Peninsula event coincides with Global Entrepreneurship Week (GEW), the world's largest celebration of entrepreneurs and job creators. Each November, through local, national and international activities, GEW inspires people across the globe to explore their potential as self-starters and innovators. Last May, the President of GEW, Jonathan Ortman, actually visited the Peninsula as Keynote Speaker for TNCC's well-received 2013 Entrepreneurship Forum.

Event Highlights

Just one of the highlights of Peninsula Global Entrepreneurship Week is the "Start!/Peninsula 2.0" workshop, sponsored by Peninsula Technology Incubator, an extraordinary, area-based resource dedicated to nourishing the growth of ideas into small businesses that are prepared to change the world.

Says Incubator Director Tom Flake, "In this three-day program, budding entrepreneurs will work with like-minded people including designers, programmers, marketing professionals, inventors, engineers and sales pros to build a viable startup business for themselves." The event will take place on Friday, Saturday and Sunday,

November 22 - 24 at the National Institute of Aerospace in Hampton, and tickets are required.

Another major event will be the Networking Extravaganza, on Friday evening, November 24. Sponsored by the Hampton Roads Small Business Development Center, this one-of-a-kind networking event will allow area entrepreneurs to mix and mingle with business people from the many industries and companies in and around Hampton Roads.

Right here in Williamsburg, William and Mary will also be contributing to the initiative, by sponsoring a "Business Insights" forum on Wednesday, November 20. "Starting and growing a business is a really intense experience," says Bill Bean, Director of the Technology and Business Center at the college. "Our business forums give people

the inside story on what it takes to meet that challenge."

Check the Website

As new events for Peninsula Global Entrepreneurship Week are being added almost every day, readers are strongly encouraged to visit the TNCC website for the latest information and schedules (www.tncc.edu). They can also visit the special Facebook page (www.facebook.com/PeninsulaEntrepreneurshipWeek) to learn more about the week's events.

Sherri Thrift, Entrepreneurship Coordinator at TNCC Workforce Development, will be available by phone (757-258-6591) or email (thrifts@tncc.edu) to answer any questions you may have right up until the November event.

"This week is one of the most innovative initiatives ever offered to Peninsula business people," says workshop sponsor Kate Sipes, James City County Office of Economic Development. Even if it's just a distant dream, if launching your own venture is part of your future, don't miss this exceptional business opportunity.

in focus...

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LIST OF EVENTS*

Friday, Nov. 15

- Small Business Showcase (College of William & Mary)

Monday, Nov. 18

- Turning Your Passion Into a Profitable Business (SBDC Williamsburg)
- Entrepreneurial Leadership Academy Open House (TNCC Hampton)

Tuesday, Nov. 19

- Coffee Connections (Va. Peninsula Chamber of Commerce)
- Government Contracting for Entrepreneurs (SBDC Hampton)
- Pitch Perfect (Peninsula Tech. Incubator, Hampton)

Wednesday, Nov. 20

- Triangle Entrepreneur Exchange (James City Co./TNCC)
- Peninsula Technology Incubator Open House (Peninsula Tech. Incubator)
- Business Insights (College of William & Mary)

Thursday, Nov. 21

- Business Matchmaking Event (SBDC Hampton, Dept. of Minority Enterprise)
- Public Relations & Marketing Your Business for Success (Hampton Univ. Business Incubator)
- B.L.I.N.G. (Business Ladies of Industry Networking Group (Verena at the Reserve, Williamsburg))

Friday, Nov. 22

- Networking Extravaganza (SBDC Hampton)
- Friday, Nov. 22 - Sunday, Nov. 24 (3 Days)
- Start! Peninsula 2.0: Building a Viable Startup (NIA/Peninsula Tech. Incubator)

*Please check our website! Workshops and networking events are being added daily.