

DORCHESTER Currents

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TOP STORY

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New SunX Wet Lab at Eastern Shore Innovation Center

The Eastern Shore Innovation Center (ESIC) at the Dorchester Regional Technology Park has added a 1,100-square foot commercial wet laboratory. It is the first facility of its kind on the Delmarva Peninsula available for co-op use by businesses and researchers.

The new lab is operated by SunX Analytical, an Innovation Center licensee, that together with a \$77,500 grant from the Rural Maryland Council and \$125,000 of its own funds, built out the facility.

SunX is seeking to engage businesses in the region needing lab space, including those in the agricultural, environmental and food industries.

Common uses for wet labs include chemical analysis of well water and residential lead contamination; agricultural product development; chemical/biological quality assurance



and life science research and product development.

SunX is one of the original start-up businesses leasing space at the ESIC. The company is working on new product technology to extract oil from agricultural hemp.

"We conducted a thorough search and were unable to find any commercial or higher education-based wet labs on the Eastern Shore for our own product development research," said Barry Pritchard, an analytical chemist and

managing member of SunX. "The Innovation Center has given us unparalleled support, so we proposed the idea of developing shared lab space that our company and others could use for testing and research at no cost to Dorchester County."

Jeff Trice, Dorchester County Economic Development Director, said the new addition supports the mission of the Innovation Center to build a vibrant economic base for the region.

"The wet lab fosters a spirit of innovation among our tenants and improves their technical capabilities so new ideas can be developed and commercialized locally," he said. "Through tours and demonstrations, it also creates opportunities to expose our middle and high school students to STEM-related research."

Rob Figliozzi, a Salisbury PhD student at the University of Maryland Eastern Shore, is SunX's first co-op tenant at the lab. Figliozzi is developing a

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WHO'S HIRING

Hiring Opportunity at Valley Proteins



Valley Proteins a leader in the recovery, rendering, and recycling of used cooking oils, is having a job fair on August 18th, 9:00 AM-4:00 PM. Current openings for Plant Operators, Wastewater Operators, Plant Maintenance Mechanic, Tractor & Trailer Mechanics, Plant Electrician, and General Clean Up . For immediate consideration please send your resume to rparks@valleyproteins.com; call 410-228-1616ext 36108 or apply in person at 5420 Linkwood Road, Linkwood, MD 21835. To learn more about Valley Proteins please visit www.valleyproteins.com.

www.ChooseDorchester.org

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concept for a new medical research tool that will increase lab productivity and contribute to quicker discoveries of life saving techniques and products.

Pritchard said SunX is interested in consulting with local businesses to help them commercialize new ideas and technology. The company is also working on a STEM-focused workforce development initiative that, with the input of local industry partners, would provide career training and certifications.

“So much of today’s research focus is Internet based, but facilities like this dedicated to the hard sciences remain vital to many businesses looking to advance new ideas,” he said.

The lab is fully equipped and includes a fume hood, water purification system, spectrophotometer, glassware, furniture and chemical resistant counter tops. The facility is also readied for specialty gases and a bio hood may be added in the future.

Fixed monthly co-op fees to use the lab will be determined for each tenant based on needs, according to Pritchard. The space can also be used at an hourly rate. Businesses and researchers looking to access the lab must first become a co-working member at the Innovation Center. Memberships range from \$150 a month for full-time businesses to \$12.50 a month for student researchers and a one-time setup fee of \$25.

“We offer a fully supportive environment to accelerate business growth and help entrepreneurs develop the next generation of technologies,” said Steve Dolbow, Innovation Center manager. “In addition to providing individual office space, our shared services at the Innovation Center include conference rooms, a lunch/snack room, fiber access with free high

speed WIFI, web casting and conferencing, secure 24 x 7 access with video and badge security, copier/scanner and white boards.”

Every business in the ESIC is provided an experienced business mentor who has been certified by SCORE, a Small Business Administration organization, according to Dolbow. In addition, through a partnership with hotDesks, members have access to office facilities throughout the mid-Atlantic region.

Joseph T. Dashiell Builders, Inc. joined in the efforts to support business development at the ESIC by providing construction services for the wet lab “at cost.”

The ESIC opened in February 2016 with \$1.2 million in funding from the Maryland Department of Commerce and \$1 million from the Maryland Technology Development Corporation (TEDCO).

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**Entrepreneur Award
MCE Palmer Gillis
Entrepreneur of the Year
Award**

MCE Palmer Gillis Entrepreneur of the Year Award Maryland Capital Enterprises is all about nurturing and encouraging

entrepreneurship to grow here on the Eastern Shore. We are proud to announce the 6th Annual MCE Palmer Gillis Entrepreneur of the Year Award!

AWARD ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA:

Must be a small business owner/ majority partner involved in daily operations of the business. The business must be located in Wicomico, Worcester, Somerset, Kent, Queen Anne’s, Talbot, Caroline or Dorchester County. The company must employ 100 employees or less. The business must have been established locally for at least 2 years. It must be a for-profit business.

The business must be in good standing with the State of Maryland. The winner will receive an award and a \$2000 check.

For more information or to download an nomination form please visit marylandcapital.org/about/entrepreneur-of-the-year-nomination.



**Small Business
iValue LED Secures State
Contract**



Congrats to Eastern Shore Innovation Center business, iValue

LED for securing a contract to replace the lighting system on at the State House dome. The system will include a combined LED lighting technology with a connected control system for monitoring. This project should provide a showcase for future marketing. For more Information on iValue please visit ivalued.com.