

DORCHESTER Currents

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TOP STORY

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New Program Supports Farm and Fishing Business Startups

Entrepreneurship Center Launches Free Startup Business Program

F³ Tech Pre-Accelerator test drives ideas, markets, and funding for early stage companies

The Eastern Shore Entrepreneurship Center (ESEC) will launch a new online training program April 3 to identify ideas and early stage business concepts for products and services that improve farming, fishing and the environment. The free six-week F³ Tech Pre-Accelerator runs through May 10 and is open to individuals and small groups looking to validate a business concept and potentially join a four-month accelerator.



“The F³ Tech Pre-Accelerator program is a specially-designed proof-of-concept process for startups and entrepreneurs looking to develop an idea or product to commercialization,” said Mike Thielke, Executive Director of the ESEC. “We’re targeting very early-stage startups to offer them an opportunity to validate their ideas, acquire valuable feedback from industry experts, and position

themselves to take advantage of a more aggressive, traditional multi-month accelerator program such as the F³ Tech program beginning September 2018.”

Eight entrepreneur teams have already been accepted into the inaugural program from across Maryland including Baltimore City, Anne Arundel, Kent, Montgomery and Prince George’s counties. Based in all F³ Tech sectors – agri, aqua and enviro – their business ideas call for recycling fruits and vegetables into high-protein edible spice mix, reversing the loss of bee hives, and creating hydroponic farms in urban areas.

In addition to Thielke, the training includes industry subject matter

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Small Business START1UP Showcase

The START1UP Showcase event was held in downtown Annapolis on March 14th. The celebration honored entrepreneurship, startups, and ecosystem builders. Eight pitch finalists were invited to compete in front of peers, investors and economic development professionals.

After the Great Eight Finalists pitched, a panel of judges announced the winner for the Overall Great Eight Competition category. Throughout the evening Ecosystem Champions and Supporters announced winners for Fan Favorite, Champions’ Choice and Industry sub-categories (Cyber, Manufacturing, Health/Wellness and Social).

Eastern Shore Innovation Center business, IES life Sciences, was included as one of the Great Eight Finalists. To learn more about Startup Maryland visit startupmd.org.

www.ChooseDorchester.org

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experts and mentors like Charles White, Founder and CEO of

PaverGuide. White benefited from the innovation ecosystem supported by ESEC to create an enviro-tech company in Queen Anne's county. White commercialized PaverGuide, a structural base for paving systems that is manufactured from recycled plastic and replaces impermeable stone surfaces with a massive reservoir to prevent nutrient runoff.

“As an entrepreneur and environmentalist, I've dedicated my career to improving storm water quality in the Chesapeake Bay watershed and the world. Thanks to the support of the ESEC and seed funding from multiple sources including ESEC's Revolving Loan Fund Portfolio, I proved that our innovative technology could be profitable and sustainable. I look forward to sharing lessons learned and best practices with the pre-accelerator participants.”

The online program features two, one-hour interactive webinar sessions each week as well as a one-hour mentoring session with a designated mentor/coach. Topics include: Assessing an idea; validating the market; evaluating customer acquisition; business model preparation; handling intellectual property; branding and marketing strategies; and finances and raising capital

To learn more or to apply to the F³ Tech Pre-Accelerator visit f3tech.org or call (410) 770-9330.

About F3Tech

F³ Tech includes three sectors: Agritech, Aquatech and Envirotech. Agritech products improve farming yield, efficiency and profitability. Aquatech creates innovations to improve fish farming, aquatic plants, algae and aquatic organisms in controlled freshwater and saltwater conditions. Envirotech applies science, green chemistry, electronic devices and technologies to monitor, model and conserve environmental resources.

About ESEC

The Eastern Shore Entrepreneurship Center is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization created in 2004 to help advance an entrepreneurship ecosystem on Maryland's Eastern Shore including Caroline, Dorchester, Kent, Queen Anne's, Somerset, Talbot, Wicomico and Worcester counties.

*Image courtesy of ESEC

Small Business Emily's New Picnic/Party Menu



Impress your guests with locally picked & Produced options directly from your LOCAL farmer. Emily's has a new Picnic/Party Menu with some great options for catering. Emily's provides catering to

upcoming meetings or seminars at your place of business or as an option for any personal needs as well. Opening day is scheduled for April 20th, catering will begin April 1st.

For more information please visit <http://www.emilysproduce.com>.

Available Space Cambridge Office Space

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