

E-Month Closeout and Stakeholder Forum



December 5, 2014, 2:00 P.M. – 4:00 P.M.
Leon County Training and Community Center
918 Railroad Avenue (Amtrak Station)

Welcome and Introductions

Commissioner Kristin Dozier briefly reviewed the Forum's outline and then asked everyone in the room to introduce themselves (Attachment #1).

Review Successes from 2014 Entrepreneur Month

Commissioner Dozier noted that Entrepreneur Month (E-Month) 2014 had grown to almost 30 events, representing increased collaboration and support for the growing entrepreneur community. The Commissioner thanked First Commerce for coordinating the Power Forward Series and the noted the successes of the Florida State University (FSU) Sneak Peek and Florida A&M University (FAMU) I-Show entrepreneur showcase events. Commissioner Dozier also highlighted the Startupland Entrepreneur Documentary Series co-hosted by Domi and Leon County.

Commissioner Dozier then opened the floor for suggestions on how to improve E-Month for 2015. Below is a summary of the Forum's feedback:

- Add links to additional information on the digital E-Month calendar. These links could then be posted to social media throughout the month to let people know which events are coming up.
- Create E-Month event coordinator contact list and ensure continued communication between coordinators. Including a photo of the event organizer would help attendees identify whom to follow up with at the event.
- Hold an event featuring various industries entrepreneurs could explore. This event would include entrepreneur opportunities for those without a college degree, such as starting a plumbing company.
- Create a recognition component for local entrepreneurs.
- Hold a "maker fair".
- Expand the mentor network to include local small business owners so entrepreneurs can better connect with those who have already created a business.
- Market E-Month through experience tracks for different stakeholder groups (i.e. events that would appeal to an entrepreneur vs. investor).
- Reach out to FSU Film School/ Digital Domain about opportunities to grow new film industry.
- Expand E-Month type activities to be held throughout the year.
- Showcase entrepreneur resources like www.BigBendBiz.com and www.TallahasseeBusinessResources.com.
- Create a scavenger hunt activity that will encourage participants to visit and learn about local companies.

Review Progress of Entrepreneurial Ecosystem since the Initial Stakeholder Forum in 2012

Commissioner Dozier noted that less than half of the participants were involved in the Initial Stakeholder Forum in 2012, suggesting that the entrepreneur ecosystem stakeholder group has grown. She then turned to Mr. Ken Morris, Assistant County Administrator, to review successes since the 2012 Forum.

Mr. Morris reminded the Forum that a community-wide E-Month was a product of the 2012 Forum, particularly noting First Commerce's creation of the Power Forward Series as a signature E-Month event and example of public and private collaboration. He also highlighted FSU's Sneak Peek, an entrepreneur showcase, moving from Innovation Park to the Downtown area to make it more accessible to the community. FAMU has started its own entrepreneur showcase and Mr. Larry Lynch, FSU Office of Research, announced that there might be a joint-FSU/ FAMU/ Tallahassee Community College entrepreneur showcase for E-Month 2015.

Mr. Morris noted the creation of the Alliance of Entrepreneur Resource Organizations and www.BigBendBiz.com as a result of the 2012 Forum. Another success of the 2012 Forum was the creation of the Domi Station business incubator. Mr. Morris stated that Domi station opened in May 2014, 18 months after the November 2012 Forum, and provides critical pieces that were missing in the entrepreneur ecosystem.

Mr. Morris also commented that the changes since 2012 were apparent from the redevelopment along Gaines Street. He noted that the 2012 Forum participants toured the warehouse that would become Domi Station and saw renderings of the development plans along Gaines Street; those ideas have been realized just a few short years later. Mr. Morris credited the commitment of the 2012 Forum participants with helping the community transition to having a focus on the entrepreneur ecosystem. He tied this commitment to the success of other community initiatives supporting entrepreneurship, such as:

- the efforts at Innovation Park to provide more land for university research and create wet lab space;
- passage of the penny sales tax extension that will provide approximately \$4.5 million for economic development annually; and
- funding from the Knight Foundation to support the Economic Development Council's (EDC) Entrepreneurial Excellence Program (EEP) and for Domi to develop new resources and outreach activities to support the entrepreneurial ecosystem.

Fresh Perspectives: Facilitated Panel Discussion on the Local Entrepreneurial Ecosystem

Mrs. Cristina Paredes, Leon County Director of Economic Vitality, introduced and facilitated a panel of entrepreneur stakeholders who were not active in the entrepreneurial ecosystem in 2012. The panel included Mr. Kyle Touchstone (EDC Executive Vice President), Mr. Micah Widen (Co-Founder and CEO of Domi Ventures), and Mr. Maximo Mendoza (entrepreneur, student, and EEP graduate). The panel discussed their initial perceptions of the entrepreneurial ecosystem, as well as its strengths, weaknesses, and future direction. The panel agreed that the collaboration of the community was a strength and that it was important that the community continue to not work in silos. They also identified a need to better market Tallahassee as a place for entrepreneurs outside the local community.

Open Forum: Sharing of Ideas to Further the Development of Our Entrepreneurial Ecosystem

Mrs. Paredes facilitated an open discussion on next steps to improve the community's entrepreneurial ecosystem. When asked what local government's role should be in the entrepreneurial ecosystem, the Forum participants suggested that it might be to help entrepreneurs secure investment capital through a micro-loan program or by providing bank loan guarantees. The participants agreed that a key role of local government was to continue facilitating similar collaborative discussions that help break down silos in the community. Others suggested that government's role might be to act as a one-stop shop to help entrepreneurs identify resources. Participants were also supportive of placemaking, noting that the Gaines Street placemaking improvements impact the area's culture and ability to cultivate human capital and retain talent.

One of the key issues that the Forum participants discussed was how to help entrepreneurs secure resources, such as creating a program for entrepreneurs to purchase local professional services. There was also significant discussion about helping entrepreneurs secure investment capital. Most participants agreed that a structure was needed that would make it easy for investors to see and invest in start-ups and create management teams, especially a structure that would make it easy for the local community to invest in local companies. Adding an investor pitch component to FSU Sneak Peek into and facilitating crowd-sourcing was discussed as a way to leverage local investment capital.

Another issue brought up multiple times was the need to broaden the focus to include entrepreneurs without/not seeking a college degree. Participants suggested partnering with Lively Technical Center and Tallahassee Community College to support entrepreneur growth in skilled-trade industries. Another suggestion was creating an entrepreneurship program in the prison system to help released inmates start their own business.

The need for improved networking and business connections was also identified. It was suggested that the community could improve networking through topic round table meetings and involvement of non-profits. Another suggestion was to create a business advisor matching program similar to SCORE, a nonprofit association that assists small businesses with education and mentorship.

Other feedback from the Forum includes:

- Create a measureable vision for growing entrepreneur ecosystem.
- Support second state companies, which in turn will support startup companies.
- Create spaces for second state entrepreneurs such as a maker space or wetlab.
- Ensure the economic development portion of the penny sales tax is used for the best benefit of the community.
- Identify new ways to tell success stories and the "Tallahassee Entrepreneur Story" better.
- Develop a food incubator.
- Create more opportunities for entrepreneur internships.
- Create 'how-to' entrepreneur guide video(s).
- Encourage people to buy from local entrepreneurs.

Some participants identified needs, such as business plan development assistance, that were already addressed in the community. During the discussion, participants helped identify existing resources for those needs, such as the Small Business Development Center at FAMU, the Economic Development Council, and Domi Station.

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Following the discussion, Commissioner Dozier thanked everyone for participating the forum. Commissioner Dozier encouraged all participants to continue to stay engaged and active as the community continues to grow Leon County's entrepreneurial ecosystem. Finally, Commissioner Dozier invited the participants to tour Domi Station following the Forum's conclusion and participate in the first Friday events throughout Railroad Square that evening.

Exhibits

1. Forum Participants

December 5, 2014 Entrepreneur Stakeholder Forum Participants

Name	Organization
Allen Joesph	TCC
Anthony Gaudio	Sustainable Tallahassee
Barbara Wescott	PointCatcher, Inc
Becca Gilbert	Thomas Howell Ferguson
Ben Graybar	Tallahassee State Bank
Brent Edington	FSU Office of Commercialization
Brian Mimbs	Senator Marco Rubio's Office
Carlos Douglas	C. Julian Douglas & Associates
Chris Edwards	City of Tallahassee
Christine Urban	GAIN
Commissioner Kristin Dozier	Leon County
Cristina Paredes	Leon County
Dale Weeks	GLBA
David Brightbill	Making Awesome Inc. The Tallahassee Maker Space (Tally Fab Lab)
David Teek	Domi
Deanna Mims	MarketDone
Dominick Ardis	The Town
Dr. Shawnta Friday-Stroud	FAMU
Dustin Daniels	City of Tallahassee, Mayor's Office
Gloria Pugh	AMWAT
Greg Donald	M.D.C.B
Haley Cutler	Oasis Center for Women & Girls
Jake Kiker	Domi & Williams Gautier
James Miller	Greater Tallahassee Chamber of Commerce
Jasmine Lewis	Keller Williams Realty
Jay Revell	Downtown Improvement Authority
Jim McShane	Career Source
John Fraser	FSU
Josh Pascua	Leon County
Kara Palmer Smith	Career Source
Katrina Johnson	Career Source Capital Region
Keith Bowers	FAMU Small Business Development Center
Ken Morris	Leon County
Kim Moore	TCC

December 5, 2014 Entrepreneur Stakeholder Forum Participants

Name	Organization
Kyle Touchstone	EDC
Larry Lynch	EDC & FSU
Lucas Lindsay	Domi
Maximo Mendoza	Efficient Systems
Micah Widen	Domi
Pamela Jones Smith	Keller Williams
Park Broome	First Commerce Credit Union
Patrick Monroe	BNI & The Bean Team
Ron Goldstein	Capital City Pedicabs
Ron Miller	LCRDA
Rosa Morgan	Sustainable Tallahassee
Ryan Aughtry	Waddell & Reed
Scott Balog	TCC
Shanea Wilks	Leon County
Sherri Bryan	
Steve Evans	IBM (Retired)
Vincent Hunt	MASSIVE Corporation
Wanda Whitehead	City of Tallahassee, Economic Development
Wendy Plant	Jim Moran Institute