

Business

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IGNITE Charles County a spark to grow business community

Economic Development Dept., College of Southern Maryland team up to inspire entrepreneurs, show resources available

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Sometimes it just takes a spark to ignite a conflagration. That's the intention of IGNITE Charles County Business Resource Fair: to start a conflagration of business growth.

The Charles County Economic Development Department has teamed up with the College of Southern Maryland to put on a one-day business expo to connect business owners, entrepreneurs and "dreamers" with government and quasi-government resources geared to help businesses get off the ground and help them grow — and inspire them with short stories from successful entrepreneurs and business owners.

"This is a new thing. We started with the idea of bringing in all the resources that are out there to help businesses to create a resource event," said Marcia Keeth, the department's deputy director. "Then in deciding what else to have as a part of this event we decided to add in an 'ignite' session, and so we, in making plans, said let's just call it IGNITE Charles County, because it just fits. Every bit of it has to do with igniting business growth in the county."

Keeth said that local, state and federal agencies, such as the Small Business Administration, the Small Business Development Center, the Maryland Department of Commerce and Maryland's TEDCO, as well as

many others, have committed to participate in the event.

The ignite part is a series of six presentations limited to five minutes each from entrepreneurs telling their stories of success.

"Twice during the day we're going to have an 'ignite' session," Keeth said. "Ignite sessions ... are done a lot surrounding entrepreneurial activities where presenters are given a time limit — and in some cases a [PowerPoint] slide limit, but we're not going to get into that. Each presenter will have five minutes to share his or her story about what ignited their desire to become an entrepreneur and what ignited their success — meaning how they were able to make that transition from starting a business to being profitable."

The six presenters are from categories that make up the IGNITE word:

Industry — Angela Meltan-Fray and Richard Fray of Dat Jerk Caribbean Charrill in Waldorf;

Government — Guy Black of Blackout Investigations and Security Services in Waldorf;

Networking — Mike Thielke of hotDesks on the Eastern Shore;

Innovation — Scott Decker of Cardinal Scientific in Waldorf;

Tenacity — Kim Briscoe-Tonic of Briscoe-Tonic Funeral Home in Waldorf; and

Entrepreneur — Somnath Sengupta of Powerhouse Con-

sulting Group.

"I think we've got a pretty good crew assembled," said Tommy Luginbill, director of CSM's Entrepreneur and Innovation Institute, who has been working on the project with the economic development department and is playing host.

He said he's excited about the format and thought the short, energetic presentations would be attractive to young innovators and future business owners.

"Rather than people just sitting and listening to speeches all day, we wanted people to learn something while walking around and talking to people," Luginbill said. "I thought of myself as an attendee and would want to go to a conference like that. That's how I thought about it."

"We'll do it twice, at 10 a.m. and again at 1 p.m., with the idea that business people can time their attendance to what fits in their schedule," Keeth said of the presentations.

All six presentations, at five minutes each, will take place at both time slots.

The rest of the event is designed like an expo with tables for up to 30 organizations. Business owners, entrepreneurs and what Keeth called "dreamers" — those that think they might like to start a business someday — will be encouraged to walk around and talk with resource professionals and find out what's available to help



PHOTO COURTESY OF CHARLES COUNTY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT

IGNITE Charles County Business Resource Fair

8 a.m. to 3 p.m. Friday, May 12
Business and Industry (BI) Building, CSM La Plata Campus
Free RSVP: www.ignitecharles.eventbrite.com

them realize a dream or grow their young business.

"No matter how many times we do stuff like this, I'm always amazed and delighted that, before the day's out, somebody's going to come up to me and say 'Thank you so much for doing this; we had no idea all these resources were here. This has been great.' It happens every time that I've been to an event like this," Keeth said.

While the economic development department has done smaller events with just a handful of organizations attending, Keeth said this will be the first of this size, and the first with the 'ignite' aspect.

The event is free for exhibitors and attendees with a light breakfast available in the morning and snacks available throughout the day. For those that want to make it a lunch trip, the college's cafeteria will

be available to everyone.

IGNITE Charles County is 8 a.m. to 3 p.m. Friday, May 12, at CSM's Business and Industry (BI) Building on the La Plata Campus. While the event is free, organizers request an RSVP at www.ignitecharles.eventbrite.com.

"If it's successful, we're definitely going to replicate it again," Luginbill, an entrepreneur himself, said. "I'm excited to be a part of it."

Keeth said she was hoping it would turn into an annual event, and could be considered a success if it just inspired even one new business or helped one be more successful.

"If one business shows up and ends up tapping into a resource that maybe changes the course for that business, then it's been a success," Keeth said.

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Business briefs



SUBMITTED PHOTO

Pictured are Jonathan Benya, owner of The Benya Group at Keller Williams Realty, and Leigha Messick, executive director of Round Table Haven rescue in Port Tobacco.

Benya Group donates \$4K to Port Tobacco animal rescue group Round Table Haven

The Benya Group at Keller Williams held a client appreciation event at the AMC theater in Waldorf for clients.

The event was a VIP screening of the new "Beauty and the Beast" movie. The Benya Group took the opportunity to make a \$4,000 donation to the Round

Table Haven animal rescue group based in Port Tobacco.

The donation was part of the Fur-Ever Home Initiative where a portion of sales commissions on every transaction are given to local animal rescue groups. Pictured are Jonathan Benya, owner of The Benya Group at Keller Williams Realty, and Leigha Messick, executive director of Round Table Haven rescue in Port Tobacco.

SBDC offers grant, biz accelerator courses

The Small Business Development Center at the College of Southern Maryland is offering a one-day course to help new or expanding technology businesses use small business innovation research (SBIR) and small business technology transfer (STTR) grants.

The course will help business owners understand the programs and learn how to successfully participate in the grants. Each year, over \$2.3 billion is set aside for small technology companies and individual entrepreneurs to conduct early-stage research and development.

The class is 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. Wednesday, April 12, at the Leonardtown Cam-

pus, Building C, Room 206. The tuition and fee for the course is \$78. For more information, call 301-934-7583.

The Launch Accelerator course is 18 hours of learning spread over two Saturdays and is designed for entrepreneurs looking to start a business or have recently started a business.

The course is 8:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. Saturday, April 29 and May 6, at CSM's La Plata Campus. The cost for the two-day course is \$250. For more information, call 301-934-7583.

Sagepoint Senior Living participates in pilot online Alzheimer's training program

Sagepoint Senior Living Services in La Plata announced that as part of its commitment to providing excellent care for people living with Alzheimer's disease or other forms of dementia, the staff is participating in an online CARES dementia training pilot program and will earn the Alzheimer's Association's "essentiALZ" and "essentiALZ Plus" certifications.

According to a news release, the nonprofit organization will post its progress toward employee participation goals in the main lobby.

The goal of the pilot program from the state Alzheimer's Council is to determine the feasibility of online training to enhance knowledge in and adoption of dementia care best practices in Maryland. Sagepoint Senior Living Services is the first nursing community in Maryland to participate in this program.

Staff will complete 10 modules of education which cover dementia basics (Alzheimer's and dementia, understanding behavior, communication, and person-centered care) and advanced dementia care (making a connection, eating well, recognizing pain, minimizing falls, rethinking wandering, and minimizing and eliminating restraints).

"With the CARES online dementia training program, we seek to offer training with a focus on person-centered dementia care. We are looking at all employees to participate in this endeavor," said registered nurse Hope Dweik, Sagepoint's staff educator. "As the first skilled nursing community in Maryland to participate in this pilot program, we are helping to pave the way for cutting-edge levels of dementia care for residents in long-term care, assisted living, and rehabilitation communities."

Business calendar

Saturday, April 8

Southern Maryland Chapter of SCORE hosts The Power of the Inbox to Grow Your Business workshop, led by Chris Ripley, 9:30-11:30 a.m. Saturday, April 8, Anne Arundel Chamber of Commerce, 134 Holiday Court, Suite 316, Annapolis. For registration, go to www.SCORE390.org/workshops.

Sunday, April 9

St. Charles Towne Center hosts pet photos with the Easter Bunny, 9 to 11 a.m., Center Court, 11110 Mall Circle, Waldorf. Pets on leash or in carrier; enter through

Food Court entrance.

Tuesday, April 18

U.S. Small Business Veterans Resource Day Open House for veteran-owned small businesses 8:30 a.m.-noon Tuesday, April 18, College of Southern Maryland Leonardtown Campus, Building A, auditorium, 22950 Hollywood Road, Leonardtown. To register, go to <https://tinyurl.com/n5oza2t>.

Wednesday, April 19

Bay Business Group hosts a "Speed Networking" event 8-10 a.m. Wednesday, April 19, Mamma Lucia, 1136 South-

ern Maryland Blvd., Dunkirk. To register, go to baybusinessgroup.org/speed.

Saturday, April 22

Charles County Department of Recreation, Parks, and Tourism hosts a Spring Baby Bazaar 9 a.m.-noon, Saturday, April 22, Somers Community Center, 300 Willow Lane, La Plata. Buy & sell used items. For table reservations, sellers can call 301-932-6679.

Wednesday, April 26

The Small Business Development Center at the College of Southern Maryland offers

Start Right for Success 5:30-7:30 p.m. Tuesday, April 26, CSM Leonardtown Campus, Building C, Room C206. Cost is \$55. For registration, go to <https://express.csmd.edu/Online/Services?TOKENIDX=2576632579&SS=1&APP=ST&CONSTITUENCY=WBCE>.

Friday, April 28

College of Southern Maryland hosts its seventh annual Nonprofit Institute Conference "Jumpstart Your Leadership!" 8:30 a.m.-1:30 p.m. Friday, April 28, CSM La Plata Campus, Center for Building and Industry (BI Building),

8730 Mitchell Road, La Plata. Registration before April 14 is \$45 for St. Mary's and Charles nonprofits and residents, \$65 from other counties. The cost is \$10 more after April 14. Email Cara Fogarty at cfogarty@csmd.edu, or call 301-659-3182; Harriet Yaffe at hyaffe@csmd.edu, 240-725-5432; or go to www.csmd.edu/NPIconference.

Saturday, April 29

Chesapeake Beach Resort & Spa Craft Beer Festival 2-6 p.m. Saturday, April 29, 4165 Mears Ave., Chesapeake Beach. Doors open for VIPs at noon. Over 50 craft beers from

25 breweries local and national. Food buffet on the beach. Raffles every half hour. VIP \$55 advance, \$65 door. General admission \$40 advance, \$50 door. Designated driver \$15. www.cbresortspa.com.

Wednesday, May 3

The Small Business Development Center is hosting a Women's Business Roundtable with the topic "Email & Social Media" noon-2 p.m. Wednesday, May 3, College of Southern Maryland Prince Frederick Campus, Building B, Room 104, Prince Frederick. Free lunch. For information, call 301-934-7583.