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***Innovate!HamptonRoads* launched as Hampton Roads Research Partnership re-organizes**

Ten years after its founding and as a result of the *Vision* process, the Hampton Roads Research Partnership (HRRP) transforms into *Innovate!HamptonRoads* (I!HR) with a renewed commitment to diversify the regional economy.

According to the report, [What Makes a City Entrepreneurial?](#), from the Rappaport Institute/Taubman Center for State and Local Government, housed in Harvard's Kennedy School of Government, "high levels of entrepreneurship are closely correlated with regional economic growth."

The strong connection between a culture of innovation and entrepreneurialism and the region's economic success was a significant outcome of *Vision Hampton Roads*. This first region-wide comprehensive economic development strategy (CEDS), developed after a year-long federal Economic Development Administration (EDA) process, provides a roadmap of strategies and actions to position Hampton Roads as a leader in the global economy.

Rick Lally, President of Oceana Sensor, serves as Interim Director of I!HR, and Dr. Joseph F. "Joe" Bouchard, Cox Communications' Director of Government Sales and Carrier Access, takes a leadership role as Chair of the *Vision Hampton Roads* Innovation Task Force, which identified the need for the transformation.

At the first organizational meeting of I!HR held on August 31st and as he turned over the reins in retirement, HRRP's Executive Director Dr. Lee Beach said, "It's an exciting time to be in Hampton Roads."

Beach noted the need today for more diversification and innovation in the region is stronger than ever, especially given the closure of Fort Monroe, International Paper and the impacts that would be associated with the proposed disestablishment of U.S. Joint Forces Command in the region.

"The guiding principles of *Innovate!HamptonRoads* remind us to be inclusive and consider the entire region, that what we do is part of a long term, self-sustaining commitment and every step is a key part of the outcome we're working toward: a robust economy. This could ostensibly take decades and the steps start now," said Innovation Task Force Chair Joe Bouchard.



L to R: Joe Bouchard, Rick Lally, Lee Beach

Innovate!HamptonRoads

Mission: To promote organic, i.e., "locally grown business," technology-based economic development in Hampton Roads.
Vision: Hampton Roads is recognized internationally as a region for clusters of excellence fueled by a culture of innovation, entrepreneurship, and economic opportunities.

Innovate!HamptonRoads adds industry and local municipal and regional economic development organizations as well as workforce and economic development interests to the college, university and federal lab experts of HRRP in order to take the work of the growing – and emerging – industry clusters to actual creation of new, higher paying jobs. The organization will serve as a central agent, or umbrella, for stimulating Hampton Roads technology innovation by building on the technological strengths and natural resources of the region. Those strengths include the existing technology clusters of modeling & simulation, sensors, bio-science, robotics and the emerging energy cluster. Natural resources are focused on the ports, military and tourism and an exceptional workforce and business-friendly communities.

Innovate!HamptonRoads is designed to promote and establish full-service entrepreneurial support including business stimulators, incubators and accelerator services by working closely with the Hampton Roads technology community to catalyze opportunities for the region. Sub-committees are forming to focus on cluster organization, outreach and education, new directions, i.e., reconnaissance and strategic planning, and long-term sustainability.

Through the efforts of *Innovate!-HamptonRoads*, the following results are anticipated: Hampton Roads will be a magnet for research and development investment; will facilitate university/government lab/industry teaming; catalyze opportunities in the region for new business formation, incubation and acceleration through *IdeaWorks-HamptonRoads*; will champion and coordinate private/public investments; will exhibit growth of cluster contributions to Gross Regional Product (GRP) and job creation.

IdeaWorksHamptonRoads, projected to be fully functional by December 2102, is intended to provide assistance to connect and assist the existing network of incubators as a way of centralizing services and serving as a clearinghouse to connect entrepreneurs throughout the region.

Innovate!HamptonRoads, as was HRRP, remains under the purview of the Hampton Roads Partnership as a strategic initiative.



Note: Website is under construction at <http://InnovateHamptonRoads.org>. More information about the progress of the *Vision Hampton Roads* Innovation Task Force may be found at <http://bit.ly/Vision-Innovation>

About the Hampton Roads Research Partnership (HRRP):

A consortium of seven colleges and universities, two federal laboratories and a research institute formed in 2000 to provide a mechanism for collaborative research leading to technology-based economic development in Hampton Roads. The power to compete with other regions more effectively is enhanced by leveraging existing strengths in carefully selected areas, known as technology clusters. The result is substantially increased prosperity for Hampton Roads, its institutions, businesses, and citizens.

HRRP was funded primarily by grants from the U.S. Department of Commerce's Economic Development Administration. Five HRRP members also made annual monetary contributions to augment the in-kind commitments already made to HRRP operations.

The members recognized the importance of diversifying the economy, particularly given the risk associated with a continued heavy reliance on Department of Defense spending in the region. There was also a concern about the negative net migration and our ability to create the jobs to retain our own high school and college graduates. HRRP grew out of this commitment to collaborate and worked to develop four active industry clusters (Modeling & Simulation, Sensors, Bio-Science, and Robotics) with another soon to launch (Energy).

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The Hampton Roads Partnership represents ten cities, six counties, one town and their citizens in Southeastern Virginia, "America's First Region," providing strategic leadership and improving Hampton Roads' competitive position in the global economy.

Think Globally ~ Strategize Regionally ~ Act Locally

Learn more at <http://VisionHamptonRoads.com>.