



## GO Virginia Region One Technology Working Group October 15, 2018

**Participants:** Ashvin Raj, Penny Horton, John Grimes, Sam Wolford, Becki O’Quinn, Andrew Barnes, Esther Bolling.

**Via Conference:** Jean Jordan, Robyn Lee, Vicki Ratliff

The Region One Technology Working Group meeting was held on October 15, at 10:00 a.m. at New People’s Bank in Gate City Virginia. The meeting began with a brief update on the GO Virginia grant awarded to the Southwest Virginia Technology Council for the SWVA Hub Link in the amount of \$27,547.19 and moved on to discussions around graphene, new findings from research and conferences, and new ideas and strategies.

### **SWVA Hub Link Grant Update:**

DHCD, UVa-Wise and the Southwest Virginia Technology Council met to discuss contract negotiations for the SWVA Hub Link grant. The grant start date was Thursday, October 11<sup>th</sup>. This grant will soon be under contract and has a 7-month timeframe.

### **National HUB Zone Conference:**

Becki gave a report from the conference where they displayed an interest in “Back-end operations.” These include possibilities in Human Resources and Telecommunications. Security clearances are an issue in SWVA as outside companies need clearances and may not let workers work remotely without them. Efforts should be considered to help locate workers with security clearances.

### **“TRY” SWVA:**

This pilot program idea would allow outside companies and employees to “try” the region. Ashvin noted that the region’s focus should be on companies and not just individuals coming to the region. People may be interested, but there is need for regional incentives to encourage companies to move to SWVA. Jean spoke to the incentives based on the company pay and promise of employment numbers that can be found if companies contact VCEDA to learn more.

### **Graphene:**

The group moved on to conversations about the many possibilities for this coal-based product. There is a lot of growth and demand expected for graphene over the next few years. Chemistry majors would be in demand to work in graphene related fields, and there would likely be a need to create new tools and machinery to work it. A list of possible uses include:

- The phone market/battery life
- Replacement for aluminum hull on aircraft
- Replacement for steel

- Solar panel roof tiles

Robyn spoke about the partnership between Virginia Tech and EnviraCarbon. This involves technology that would enable graphene to be produced 20 times cheaper. VT will transition the technology to EnviraCarbon in order to scale-up the process for industrial use.

### **Cross Connecting, “Spiraling Maker Space”:**

Sam Wolford proposed a question concerning how technology changes so fast and how do we start thinking about future innovations? The group talked about how manufacturing, tourism and technology need to cross-connect. The idea of a Spiraling Maker Space was mentioned. This would seek to provide opportunities within businesses for new and changing innovations. Research and development opportunities are coming, and there is a need to create a place where businesses can prepare, react and use new innovation with access to machinery for the new technology. Companies would be provided access to machinery for new technology in the “Spiraling Maker Space”

### **New Ideas:**

#### **Cyber Patriot Competition:**

(John Grimes) SWVA high schools need a stronger presence in the cyber security competitions at the state level. This idea looks at the possibility of a Regional IT Coordinator position with a strong scope of work and sustainability plan. This position would coordinate cybersecurity trainings, as well as competitions and teacher trainings for SWVA schools and would be something that can pull the region’s schools together. **In order to be eligible for GO VA, it will be important to** show the connection between the impact of the Cyber Security competitors and their contributions to the workforce and provide data for how this program can benefit the targeted industries and job profiles of the individuals involved. These competitions could also foster strong employer and industry relations with higher education institutions.

**Next Steps: Becki-** Research TRY SWVA for other models that may work. **Sam:** Spiraling Maker Space research and partnership conversations.

### **Meeting Adjourned**

**Next Meeting: November 5<sup>th</sup>, VCEDA, 2:00 p.m.**