

EDA News

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Adventure Enablers Purchases Former Town Electric Building

The Economic Development Authority announced the purchase of the former Town electric facility on 6th Street by Mark and Margo Harris, owners of Adventure Enablers (formerly Rev3 Adventure).

"We are so happy to have helped Mark and Margo secure a facility in Front Royal that met their needs," said Jennifer McDonald, Executive Director of the Front Royal-Warren County Economic Development Authority. "And, this deal helped the Town, as well."

Adventure Enablers hosts marathons, 10Ks, 5Ks, glow runs, adventure races (family races to multiple-day expedition races), mountain bike races, and trail runs—something for everyone.

With extensive event experience and the complementary equipment and logistics skills, the Adventure Enablers team partners with charities, property owners, businesses, cities, states, to bring high-quality and fun events that are family friendly, endurance based, goal achieving, and adventure enabling.

Adventure Enablers was formerly known as Rev3 Adventure. They changed the name to better encapsulate the goals and vision for the company and participants.

When the Town of Front Royal upgraded its water treatment plant, they built a new facility to replace the 6th street Town Electric Company building. The Town was looking to sell the property. It proved to be a perfect setting for Adventure Enablers.

"We are happy to have this building as our 'headquarters'. We use it as an office from about 8:00am-5:00pm and as a warehouse for all of our race equipment and supplies. The location and building are perfect for our needs, and if we are fortunate enough to continue to grow, we have plenty of space to do that.

"Jennifer and Marla, at the EDA, have been so helpful supporting our business growth and finding a local facility for our use," she went on to say.

"We have enjoyed working with Mark and Margo Harris in establishing their business here in Front Royal and in Warren County -- the Canoe Capital of Virginia. What a fitting addition to our community," said McDonald.

If you would like more information on Adventure Enablers:
www.adventureenablers.com



"What a fitting addition to our community."

EDA Proud to Serve as an Organizer of RISE

The Economic Development Authority is pleased to have served as a lead organizer of the two entrepreneurial education and competition events: Entrepreneur Café 2016 and RISE 2017 Program.

Seven small businesses from the Northern Shenandoah Valley attended six classes on marketing, finance, business plan development and sales pitch presentation. The classes were taught by seasoned local entrepreneurs, local professors from the Harry F. Byrd, Jr. School of Business at Shenandoah University and Lord Fairfax Community College and community leaders.

The classes are organized by the Lord Fairfax Small Business Development Center (who now serves as Lead Agency for the program) and are conducted at the Lord Fairfax Community College in Middletown, Virginia and offers remote learning centers in Luray, Virginia as well as Fauquier County, Virginia.

The participating businesses this year represented Clarke County, Frederick County and Warren County, and included such diverse products and services as bistro, organic farm, sign-maker, logo designer, office machine supply and maintenance, moving company and fitness center. Not only did the participants receive classroom instruction on building a strategic plan, they also learned to write a business plan, create a sales pitch presentation and they were introduced to the resources of the Lord Fairfax Small Business Development Center, a local office of the Virginia Small Business Administration.

Sponsorships were provided by local banks, local entrepreneurs, economic development agencies, news agencies and other regional organizations. Through the sponsorships, the program advisors were able to provide

educational materials, host a community competition event as well as provide a \$5,000.00 cash purse to the winner for a product or service needed in order to move the business to the next level. In addition, in-kind services of memberships to regional Chambers of Commerce, promotions package and social media packages were offered – bringing the total value of the award to \$8,000.00+.



Once the classes were completed, participants entered into the semi-finals phase to qualify for competition in the Judges' Choice event. In early April, written business plans were delivered to a panel of judges (comprised of bankers and entrepreneurs) for evaluation and then the semi-finals pitch presentations were conducted before another panel of judges. Scores from that process determined the five finalists who would go on to compete for the Judges' Choice Award.

The final Public Pitch Presentation event was held on Tuesday, April 18, 2017, from 5:00pm until 8:00pm at The Corron Center, Lord Fairfax Community College Middletown Campus. Refreshments were provided and the public was invited in for a \$10 door fee which was then awarded to one of the contestants via audience vote as the People's Choice Award winner. This year's event attracted close to 100 people.

The finalists gave their Pitch Presentations before a panel of judges and that final score determined the winner of the RISE 2017 Judges' Choice Award. "All of the

presenters were stellar," said Marla Taylor Jones, Director of Business Development at Warren County EDA and organizer/advisor to the project. "They should all be extremely proud; I know we from the advisory team were!" Other RISE Advisors are: Christine Kriz, Director of the LFSBDC and Karen Helm, Program Manager, LFSBDC.

The winner this year was Ali Haney of Shenandoah Seasonal, an organic farmer in Clarke County, Virginia, who swept both the People's Choice and the Judges' Choice Awards. "Today we are grateful," she reported on her facebook page, "grateful for the outstanding and supportive community we live in, for the opportunity to grow our small business and for our amazing moral support squad."

Haney went on to say, "The \$5,000 ++ we won through the RISE program ... will be life changing for us and we are excited for the next chapter of opening a farm store at Shenandoah Seasonal this summer!"

"Building a system for supporting our entrepreneurial, small business community has been on our radar for a long time. We're so glad to participate in this terrific emerging program," said Jennifer McDonald, Executive Director of the EDA. ○



Ali Haney (second from left) and her husband, Dan Haney (fifth from the left)

Improving Employee Engagement in Your Work Place

Ideal employee engagement is an essential component of employee management that can drive, grow and develop a business to thrive in today's hyper-paced markets.

Disengaged employees can cause strife, discord, decreased productivity and profitability, costly mistakes and employee turnover.

Employee engagement is especially critical for millennials in small businesses, where about one-third (32%) are likely to quit their jobs within six months compared with just 11% of "Gen Xer" employees.

There are five ways small businesses can improve employee engagement, according to Tammy Bjelland, President of "Learning in Bloom," an educational consultant to small businesses.

Invest in the growth of your

Employees: Companies who invest in their workforce by helping them grow professionally are more likely to retain employees; and it directly benefits the organization's bottom line and culture.

Offer Growth Opportunities: This can be accomplished through assigning additional responsibilities; giving ownership over projects or products and preparing employees for leadership roles.

Allow Flexibility: Provide options for more flexible work schedules and work spaces (including, where appropriate, work-from-home options).

Give Employees Purpose: Make employees feel good about their work; let them know they are making constant progress; give a sense of purpose; give them the feeling of being invested in the company and

the product.

Feedback: Engage with your employees regularly. A survey from Clutch shows that 42% of the sampled employees (SMEs) in small and medium enterprises received no feedback.

About one-half of the employees at SMEs who did not receive accurate and consistent evaluation said they felt "unfulfilled" in their jobs.

As the "Baby Boomer" generation ages out of the workforce, it is critical that business owner-operators embrace workforce development opportunities to keep their operations stable and well served.

For more information on employee development programs, contact Tammy Bjelland, **Learning in Bloom**, www.learninginbloom.com



VEDP VA Jobs Investment Program

The Small Business New Jobs Program supports Virginia companies which have 250 employees or fewer company-wide. In order to qualify for assistance, a company must be: Creating at least five net new full-time jobs within 12 months from the date of the first hire; making a new capital investment of at least \$100,000 associated with the start-up or expansion; paying an entry-level wage rate of at least \$9.79 per hour. In areas that have unemployment of one and a half times or more than the state level, this wage minimum may be waived.

The Workforce Retraining Program provides support for Virginia companies that are upgrading the skills of their existing workforce. Participating companies must demonstrate that they are under-

going integration of new technology into their production process, a change of product line in keeping with marketplace demands, or substantial change to their service delivery process that would require assimilation of new skills and technological capabilities by their existing labor force. To be eligible for assistance under the Workforce Retraining Program, a company must be:

Retraining at least: 10 full-time employees (for businesses with more than 250 employees company-wide); 5 full-time employees (for businesses with 250 employees or fewer company-wide); making a new capital investment associated with the retraining project, within a 12-month period, of at least:

\$500,000 (for businesses with more than 250 employees company-wide);

\$50,000 (for businesses with 250 employees or fewer company-wide) Paying an entry-level wage of at least \$9.79 per hour. In areas that have unemployment of one and a half times or more than the state level, this wage minimum may be waived. Only full-time jobs are eligible for funding, and companies can access the Workforce Retraining Program only once in a three-year period.

These are just some of the resources available through the VA Jobs Investment Program. ○

For more information and application instructions, please contact the Virginia Economic Development Partnership:

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E-mail: MRandall@YesVirginia.org

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Brown Bag Lunch

Be sure to check the schedule for the Chamber's Brown Bag Lunches held on the 3rd Wednesday of the Month at the Front Royal-Warren County Chamber offices with lunch provided by the Main Street Daily Grind. There are great topics of interest and presenters.

BBLs are suspended for July & August due to summer travel; but plan to attend in September This is a great resource! More Info: 540.635.3185 ○

Lord Fairfax Small Business Development Center

The Lord Fairfax Small Business Development Center has individual guidance and resources that can help both the prospective entrepreneurs and existing business owners. All services are provided without cost and your information is held in the strictest confidence. Some upcoming programs include:

Banking for Small Business

June 1, 7:30am-9:30am
LFSBDC, Middletown Office

Sales & Marketing for Small Business

June 23, 7:30am-9:30am
LFSBDC, Middletown Office

For information on free webinars:

<http://lfsbdc.org/workshops-and-events/online-workshops/>



Brew'n'Blues Festival



Fun abounds in downtown Front Royal, Virginia on Saturday, September 23, 2017! Bring your family and enjoy a day of fun, delicious food, great live entertainment, and of course, beer tasting. The festival gates open at noon with activities (including corn hole and yard games) and live entertainment all day until 7pm.

Come and enjoy tastings of 50+ different beers from breweries all over Virginia and elsewhere. Food trucks and vendors will be offer a myriad of tasty treats and you can always stroll downtown and enjoy one of our many fantastic local eateries.

For more information:

<http://brewandblues.com/> ○