

The Accelerator

Newsletter of the UCF Business Incubation Program
Showcasing News from Clients, Graduates and Partners

■ Volume 8 ■ Issue 15 ■ Summer 2015

UCFBIP Receives International Designation to Help Foreign Firms Expand to Central Florida

Program is the Sole Incubator in Florida to hold this Distinction

The **National Business Incubation Association (NBIA)** recently designated the UCF Business Incubation Program (UCFBIP) as a Soft Landings International Incubator. The NBIA identifies incubators that have specialized programs and/or facilities that help provide a soft landing for foreign companies looking to enter into new markets.

Since 2011, the UCFBIP has helped international firms as well as domestic companies headquartered outside the region expand their business to Central Florida. Over the past four years, the incubator's Soft Landing Program has attracted more than 20 companies from various countries throughout Europe and South America as well as from eight states throughout the U.S., including other parts of Florida.



"Our organization's mission is to help diversify Central Florida's economy by facilitating smarter, faster growth among early-stage businesses," says Thomas O'Neal, Ph.D., founder of the UCFBIP. "While we have traditionally [fulfilled] that goal by offering entrepreneurial assistance to local ventures, we recognize that more jobs and economic growth can be generated here by offering similar services that help companies from around the world establish business in Central Florida."

According to the UCFBIP's director, Gordon Hogan, the Soft Landing Program helps alleviate some of the challenges that might otherwise prevent these companies from establishing a subsidiary or division in Central Florida.

"Testing a new market can be a capital-intensive and confusing process, especially for those who are operating from abroad and who are unfamiliar with how to conduct business in the U.S.," says Hogan.

"The goal of the Soft Landing Program is really to help reduce barriers to entry. Whether it's providing sensible infrastructure, such as office space with flexible short-term leases, or helping companies transition to their new business environment by assisting with domestic market research, meeting government regulations or finding employees, we are helping these firms quickly adapt and connect to the Central Florida business community."

Freshorize, a U.K.-based company that manufactures patented soap dispensers for aircraft, is one of the many companies that have benefited from the UCFBIP Soft Landing Program.

"We had reached a point where we supplied most of the airlines in Europe and needed to look for new growth markets, with the United States being an obvious choice due to the number of airlines," said Freshorize owner and CEO Aziz Patel. "However,

CONTINUED ON PAGE 6

IN THIS EDITION

- Pages 2-3 Message From Tom, UCF Awarded Grant
- Pages 4-5 UCF Hosts International Leaders, Staff Update
- Pages 6-7 UCFBIP Receives International Designation, New Client List, UCF Prepares for Disasters
- Pages 8-9 Advisory Board Profiles, Research Park Renovations, Innovation Challenge
- Pages 10-13 Client Profiles
- Pages 14-15 Program Graduate, Kirstie Chadwick named NBIA President
- Page 16 Program Graduate: First Response Disaster

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UCFBIP Hosts International Business and Academic Leaders

Recent visits coincide with UCFBIP's designation as a Soft Landings International Incubator

Business and academic leaders from **Brazil, the Dominican Republic, Germany, India, Russia and Spain** toured UCF Business Incubation Program (UCFBIP) facilities to gain valuable insights into the university's business incubation, commercialization and accelerator programs. The visits coincided with the UCFBIP's recent recognition as the first and only incubator in the state of Florida to earn the Soft Landings International Incubator designation from the National Business Incubation Association (NBIA).

Several years ago, members of the UCF Office of Research and Commercialization and



Business leaders from Sao Paulo Brazil gain insights and best practices about the innovation ecosystem within UCF.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 4

Message From The Founder



Business incubators nurture the development of entrepreneurial companies. They help them to survive and grow during the early stages, when they are most vulnerable. Incubation programs provide their client companies with business support services and resources tailored to companies that want to grow.

The most common metrics of business incubation program impact on communities are new local jobs, enhancing its entrepreneurial climate, retaining businesses, building or accelerating growth in a local industry, and diversifying local economies.

That is just what the UCF Business Incubation Program (UCFBIP) is all about and has been doing for more than 15 years. Participating companies sustain more than 3,600 local jobs and have had a total impact of \$1.51 Billion on regional sales and \$2.48 Billion on regional economic output. During the last fiscal year, the program has returned \$7.95 for every \$1.00 invested in the program.

As an award-winning, internationally recognized program with multiple sites, the UCFBIP has earned recognition from the National Business Incubation Association (NBIA), the world's leading authority on business incubation. I'm happy to report that our team received the NBIA's official designation as a Soft Landings International program. This recognition should lead to further expansion of the awareness of support here for companies from across the globe that have a desire to have a presence and do business within the U.S., the region and the state.

This in turn, has attracted worldwide attention as the program has hosted more than six countries in the past six months with more lining up to learn about our best practices and expansive entrepreneurial ecosystem within the community.

It's important to remember that the UCFBIP is an economic development partnership between UCF, the Corridor, Orange, Osceola, Seminole and Volusia Counties, and the cities of Apopka, Kissimmee, Orlando and Winter Springs and others. We just could not do what do without this productive collaboration.

Business incubators, Small Business Development Centers, co-working spaces, accelerators, virtual incubators economic gardening, and other programs like the National Entrepreneur Center programs are all part of an entrepreneurial ecosystem. Together they represent an engine of economic growth. Maintaining and expanding these programs is even more important, to our region, state and national economy,

The businesses profiled in this issue of the Accelerator represent only a sampling of the many successful firms that are current clients or have emerged from the UCFBIP. Their stories are interesting because they illustrate the many faces of success. I encourage you to read more about them in this newsletter.

Tom O'Neal, Ph.D.

Associate Vice President

Office of Research & Commercialization

Executive Director, UCF Business Incubation Program



Visit our redesigned **incubator.ucf.edu** website for the latest news and upcoming events.

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UCF Awarded Federal Grants to Expand Entrepreneurship Outreach in Central Florida

Community Partners Rally to Generate \$1.5 Million in Matching Funding to Foster Culture of Innovation throughout Region

The **UCF College of Engineering and Computer Science (CECS)** is working with several community partners to raise \$750,000 to help propel innovation and commercialization in Central Florida.

Harris Corporation, the City of Orlando, Crossroads Investors, Canvs, Rollins College College, Starter Studio, Creative Village Orlando among others are raising the money, which will match funds the U.S. Economic Development Administration recently award to UCF. That means that together, \$1.5 million will be leveraged to help foster the culture of innovation throughout the central Florida region.

UCF was one of 24 institutions to receive the EDA money as part of the 2014 Regional Innovation Strategies (RIS) program. The program is a new initiative designed to advance innovation and capacity-building activities in regions across the country. UCF was one of only two universities to earn both an i6 Challenge Grant and Cluster Grant for Seed Capital Funds that are part of the program. UCF and its partners are eager to get started by enhancing a variety of opportunities available to the community to help create the innovation landscape.

i6 Challenge funds The i6 Challenge was launched in 2010 as part of the Startup America Initiative and is now in its fourth iteration. i6 is a national competition that makes small, targeted, high-impact investments to support startup creation, innovation, and commercialization. Now that the i6 Challenge is included in the new Regional Innovation Strategies



U.S. Sen. Bill Nelson and Secretary of Commerce Penny Pritzker announce funding two initiatives that will advance innovation and capacity-building activities in regions across the country.

Program, the funding will support more than just Proof-of-Concept Centers. Investments will also go toward the expansion of existing centers and in later-stage Commercialization Centers, which help innovators fine tune and scale their innovations to bring new products and services to the market. The total amount of funding for the i6 Challenge under RIS is nearly \$8 million.

The i6 Challenge funds will be used to extend the UCF I-Corps pilot program across the five economically challenged central Florida counties (Orange, Seminole, Osceola, Brevard and Volusia), and to help transition the region's engineering workforce into high growth technology companies that design, manufacture, and export innovative products through the Maker Spaces Proof Of Concept Center (POCC).

StarterCorps Fund The Starter

Corps Fund will directly address the critical gap in seed funding that is the largest barrier faced by the region's technology entrepreneurs. The same five counties referenced above will be directly served by the StarterCorps Seed Fund. UCF will set up the StarterCorps fund structure, in the first six months, raise a minimum of \$1,000,000, which is enough to fund 12 companies through the first year. Ultimately it will raise, deploy, and manage a \$5 million evergreen StarterCorps Seed Fund to launch innovative technology and advanced manufacturing startups based in central Florida.

StarterCorps's evergreen fund structure means all investment profits will be returned to the fund to be redeployed in future investments. StarterCorps will provide equity-based funding in a series of milestone-based investments. Milestones will be based

on a team's aggressive progress in transforming commercially viable prototypes (which were developed in Starter Studio and I-Corps programs) into viable technology companies that gain early market traction, have a complete founding team (business and technical skills), secure IP, and can prove they are addressing an urgent market opportunity.

UCF I-Corps helps teams of innovators go through all the necessary steps before taking an item to market and uses the UCF College of Engineering and Computer Science's new Maker SpaceLab Complex, created with generous industry partners to help them through idea, design and prototyping. Thomas O'Neal, director of UCF's CIE estimates that in the fifth year of the program 195 companies will be created producing 1,730 new high-wage jobs through these teams.

"The UCF Engineering Maker Spaces have already proven their value for our students in developing prototypes and testing ideas. These grants will enable us to provide this value to more students and to the community," said Michael Georgiopoulos, Dean of UCF's CECS.

"We are working with regional community partners and industry to make Central Florida an epicenter for innovation, technology, and entrepreneurship. These grants will enhance our ability to help more future entrepreneurs across five counties. The awards are a validation and recognition of the Central Florida ecosystem and UCF's role as the partnership university," said O'Neal.

UCFBIP Hosts International Business and Academic Leaders

FROM PAGE 1

other UCF program leaders began establishing a relationship with the Dominican Republic and its Ministry of Higher Education, Science and Technology. The recent visit by the Global Foundation for Democracy

and Development is an extension of this relationship. The organization is interested in UCF's support and guidance in establishing and managing its own business incubation program.

Rafael Caamaño, UCFBI-Winter Springs site manager, helped coordinate many of the visits and hosted several tours at the incubator.

"It has been an exciting few months as we've been busy hosting these business and academic international leaders," says Caamaño. "We have developed excellent research and commercialization programs and the world is taking notice."

"The Business Incubation Program is now recognized

worldwide and is looked upon by other universities as the model program to follow," says Gordon Hogan, director of the UCFBIP. "The relationships we're building on an international scale are delivering outstanding opportunities not only for our university, but the region as a whole."



BRAZIL

A delegation of ten representatives from the Sao Paulo Innovation Group from **Brazil** met with UCF representatives to learn more about Florida's Innovation System, gain practical training and observation and a plan for best practices in managing innovation developments.



DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

Former president of the **Dominican Republic**, Leonel Fernández, recently toured the UCFBIP and the UCF Venture Accelerator Lab to learn more about how to launch and manage a business incubation program and foster a successful environment to support the effort.



GERMANY

The delegation from **Germany** — a visit coordinated by UCF and the Institute of International Education and the German-American Fulbright Commission. Discussion points led by the UCF team included the importance of university technology transfer, business start-ups, commercialization, licensing, and property rights. The group also was interested in pre-incubation strategies for students.



INDIA

Three professors from India (including one from Valencia State College) met with the UCFBIP team to learn more about the incubation process and to tour the Research Park facility.



RUSSIA

A group of approximately 20 business professionals from the Baltic Business Club of **Russia** also visited UCF to better understand the UCFBIP, talk with companies in the program and explore investment and partnership opportunities. During their visit, they expressed how they were impressed by the efficiency and effectiveness of UCF's programs.



SPAIN

A group from the Escuela de Organización Industrial from Madrid, **Spain**, including several engineering students, also met at UCF, courtesy of the International Residency Program/UCF Executive Development Center. The group was interested in gaining insights into UCF's innovation ecosystem, including best practices of the UCFBIP.



Members of the UCFBIP and ORC team meet with representatives from different countries in an effort to share and collaborate best practices in entrepreneurship initiatives and business incubation.

UCFBIP Client News

UCF Rosen School graduate Julien Meyer has launched yet another online venture. **BlurtBox.com** provides restaurants and hospitality companies the opportunity to receive customer feedback via a "direct line" that is anonymous—something customers like—and private—something owners like even more.

UCFBIP Staff Update

Ricardo Garcia Government Resources Manager

Ricardo Garcia currently manages the government resources program at the UCF Business Incubation Program (UCFBIP). Garcia provides support and direction to incubator companies pursuing government business/grant opportunities.

Prior to his current position, Garcia spent two years in a related role of providing support to companies in the UCF BIP. Prior to joining UCF, Garcia specialized in health care management as a member of the U.S. Air Force. Garcia deployed to Afghanistan in support of Operation Enduring Freedom, where he enabled uninterrupted Force Protection to \$3 billion in international security assistance force resources, and coordinated medical evacuation to Landstuhl Regional Medical Center in Germany.

Whether the client company is involved in the commercialization of technologies or providing a solution to the government, Garcia leverages databases to identify opportunities and applies aeronautical fundamentals to develop process tools and checklists designed to streamline the process. Garcia also co-manages the UCF BIP's veterans program. The program assists military veterans in transitioning from active military duty to starting their own company.

Garcia graduated magna cum laude from Embry Riddle Aeronautical University with a bachelor's of science degree in technical management. In his spare time, he enjoys adventurous activities and learning new skills with his wife.



Rhonda Gomez Program Assistant

Rhonda Gomez joined the UCF Business Incubation Program (UCFBIP) team in March 2015 as the program assistant for the UCF Business Incubator Orlando. Her responsibilities are to assist incubator clients, service providers and related organizations. This includes scheduling training seminars, meetings and networking events held at the facility.

Gomez has resided in the Seminole County area for more than 40 years. Prior to joining the UCFBIP team, she worked as an operations manager with Regus Business Centers.

Gomez looks forward to playing a part in addressing the needs of the incubator's entrepreneurs and helping them to become successful.

Shirley Klein Program Assistant

Shirley Klein joined the UCF Business Incubation Program (UCFBIP) team in November 2014 as the program assistant for the UCF Business Incubator Daytona Beach International Airport.

Prior to joining the UCFBIP team, Klein worked with Daytona State College as an administrative assistant. Her responsibilities are to assist incubator clients, service providers and related organizations. This includes scheduling training seminars, meetings and networking events held at the facility.

Klein looks forward to working with a variety of businesses in diverse industries and watching them grow their companies.



Michael Weiss Site Manager

Furthering his role at the UCF Business Incubation Program, **Michael Weiss** has been selected as the new site manager for the Orlando Incubator.

Formerly, the Program Development Manager for the past two years, Weiss served as a liaison between the university, the Central Florida business community, incubator staff and client companies. In this role, Weiss advised and assisted in the planning, directing and reporting of activities, as well as assisted in the development and implementation of strategic marketing and communication initiatives.

"As the program development manager, I was supporting our client companies on a more indirect level, but it also allowed to view the program from a different perspective and gain some interesting insights," says Weiss. "I believe these insights, along with my work experience and training from the National Business Incubation Association, will serve me well in my new role as site manager, and I look forward to working with our clients on a more direct level." Prior to joining the UCF Business Incubation Program, Weiss served as the assistant director of public relations for UCF's Rosen College of Hospitality Management. Weiss also previously served as the associate director of public relations for Bonnier Corporation, one of the largest consumer-publishing groups in America. Weiss is an active member of both the Florida Business Incubation Association and the National Business Incubation Association (NBIA), and completed the NBIA's Incubator Management Certificate Program earlier this year. He is also a UCF alumnus, holding a master's degree mass communication and a graduate certificate in corporate communication.



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FROM PAGE 1

I did not know how to set up the company in the U.S. or find employees, accountants, lawyers or establish new contacts. As anyone can image, it is a lonely, daunting task to figure all this out on your own in the shortest possible time."

Patel, whose U.S. office currently operates from UCF's incubator in Winter Springs, Fla., added, "What I found indispensable was the level of resources available at my disposal through the incubator's Soft Landing Program. I was also being introduced to the right people faster than I could remember their names. The result of all the activity at the incubator helped us land the biggest contract we could have dreamed of with Delta Air Lines."

The UCFBIP — which has additional facilities in

Orlando, Apopka, Daytona Beach and Kissimmee - is the first and only incubator network in Florida to hold the Soft Landings International Incubator designation and is one of less than 30 in the world to earn this distinction.

Kirstie Chadwick, NBIA's president and CEO says, "The Soft Landings designation is awarded to outstanding incubators that have demonstrated success assisting international firms with entering into new domestic markets. The entrepreneur services offered by these facilities help cut through governmental regulations, find access to capital, and provide domestic market research and other vital business support services. We are excited to award UCF the Soft Landings designation and know they will continue to provide tremendous support for global entrepreneurs."

The NBIA's Soft Landings International

Incubator designation provides worldwide exposure and credibility to business incubators who offer programs specifically designed to meet the needs of foreign companies.

For more information about the UCFBIP's Soft Landing Program, including services and how to apply, visit incubator.ucf.edu.

About NBIA

The National Business Incubation Association is an international nonprofit organization and global advocate for incubators, accelerators, educational institutions and regional economic development stakeholders. With more than 2,200 members in over 60 nations, the NBIA provides its members with essential information, education, advocacy and networking resources to bring excellence to the process of assisting early-stage companies to succeed. Visit nbia.org to learn more.

New Clients

Career Soft LLC serves the career services market for higher education by providing. We provide an app that helps students prepare for career fairs. Career services is a small part of a much larger recruiting and hiring market that we plan to serve as we establish a critical mass of student users.

CSF Technologies Inc. is an information technology solutions company that delivers proactive management solutions and expert resources to support critical business technologies for federal and commercial customers.

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Linklite Systems Inc. is the North American arm of an industrial lighting equipment manufacturer founded in the United Kingdom in 2004. Linklite Systems is a manufacturer of heavy-duty portable floodlights that link together, providing a daisy-chain of light that makes them ideal for construction, rail and roadwork projects where linear lighting is a requirement.

Performance Value Management, LLC is a management consulting, technology, information assurance, cyber, training and strategy company whose objective is to work closely with our industry and government partners to help them meet their mission goals.

The STEM Squad specializes in professional certification programs, content development, consulting services and product designs to support 21st century learning in early childhood education.

TSOLife LLC provides an online platform where users can securely and permanently document their life stories. For a one-time fee, your life story is hosted on this platform forever through a perpetuating funding model that leverages cloud storage. On TSOLife's beautifully simple and integrated platform, you can share stories, videos, photos, and memories with future generations. Write tomorrow's history today!

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Wireless Assets LLC creates and sells syndicated quantitative wireless telecom investment research and valuation models to investment institutions and analysts involved in public and private debt, equity and derivative investments.

UCFBIP Collaborates with Disaster Awareness and Preparedness Initiative

The devastating images captured during the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina still haunt the minds of many, especially those who live in areas prone to storms. The reality is any disaster can spawn panic and turmoil, which is why careful planning and preparation is crucial.

Entrepreneur and wellness advocate Al Zow Sr., founder and president of **HEAL Global Institute (HGI)**, is spearheading an effort to promote pre-disaster awareness and preparation in Central Florida. **HEAL (Health Empowerment Access Links) Global Institute**. HGI has launched what is known as the HG360™ initiative in communities throughout Orlando and Orange County. Designed to foster collaboration, the pilot program has two main goals: to increase the number of people who are to become prepared and self-reliant in the event of a disaster, and to facilitate Orlando and Orange County being the most prepared city and county in the nation.

HG360 has received unprecedented participation from Central Florida business, academic and government communities. UCF's Venture Development manager, Chait Rendu, is working closely with HG360 to facilitate strategic venture opportunities between HGI and UCF Business Incubation Program (UCFBIP) companies as well as UCF faculty for relevant job creation, contracts, research and development, and grants. The UCFBIP also recently hosted one of HG360's Collaboration Planning Team (CPT) meetings.

The National Center for Simulation (NCS) is a key member of the CPT and is looking forward to collaborating with simulation companies involved in emergency preparedness. NCS president Lt. Gen. Tom Baptiste says, "In my opinion, the HG360 initiative addresses a longtime concern about the lack of civilian emergency preparedness, and there is no doubt there is a big role for simulation to play."

The initiative encompasses physical, emotional, financial and spiritual health while addressing pre-disaster awareness and preparation. HG360 offers a triple public benefit for individuals, families, businesses and the 62 million annual visitors within Orlando and Orange County by creating communities that are safer, healthier and more resilient.

The Emergency Management Accreditation Program (EMAP) is considered the national gold standard of accreditation for emergency management programs. EMAP is also a partner of HG360, providing them guidance and subject matter experts.

"We are very excited about the HG360 initiative and how the coalition is addressing the whole person within the whole community framework," says Christine Jacobs, assistant director of EMAP. "[HG360 is] leading the nation and the world. This is the first time we've seen an initiative such as the HEAL Global Institute initiative."

Learn more about how to get involved by visiting HG360.org.



The UCF Business Incubation Program helps facilitate forum for HEAL Global Institute (HGI). HGI is spearheading an effort to promote pre-disaster awareness and preparation in Central Florida.

UCFBIP Client News

Kia Ricchi, founder of Orlando-based iCheckContractors.com, recently marked the beginning of hurricane season by being a guest on National Public Radio's *Topical Currents* program June 1 in the station's Miami studios. Ricchi, a contributor to NPR affiliate stations, as well as *Remodeling Magazine* and *Fine Homebuilding Magazine*.

UCFBIP Advisory Board Profiles

The UCF Business Incubation Program (UCFBIP) has established an accomplished advisory board to coordinate the efforts of both UCF and the community in providing tools and resources that enhance the prospects for the commercial success of developing companies. The board serves as a liaison between the UCFBIP, UCF and the Central Florida community. Visit incubator.ucf.edu for the full board list.



Trevor Brewer

Attorney, BrewerLong

Trevor Brewer leads a private law practice in Maitland, Florida, where he primarily advises business owners on startup issues such as organizing, operating and growing their businesses, along with related sales and acquisitions.

Brewer's practice areas includes commercial transactions such as contracts, and mergers and acquisitions; business counseling services such as entity selection, owners' agreements and taxation; and personal planning services such as wills and trusts, estate and gift taxes, and probate administration.

Brewer received his B.S.B.A in

finance from UCF and is a graduate of the Emory University School of Law. He is a member of The Florida Bar and the Orange County Bar Association. He is a former board member of the UCF Alumni Association and a former president of the UCF Burnett Honors College Alumni Chapter.



Bill Martin

Executive Director, Greater Osceola Partnership for Economic Prosperity (GOPEP)

Bill Martin is a Kansas native and a second-generation economic developer. With more than 40 years of experience, Martin has specialized

in the startup or rejuvenation of local and regional economic development programs. During his career, he has assisted companies in creating more than 25,000 new jobs and \$14 billion in new investments.

Martin currently serves as executive director of the Greater Osceola Partnership for Economic Prosperity (GOPEP), a public-private partnership

formed by the cities of Kissimmee and St. Cloud and Osceola County. GOPEP opened its doors in January 2014.

Martin believes entrepreneurship is an important element in job creation. He is excited about serving on the advisory board of the UCF Business Incubation Program because it is a tremendous asset for Greater Osceola County and Central Florida.

Renovations at Research Park Incubator

The oldest facility in the UCF Business Incubation Program will soon have a new look. The 50,000-square-foot **UCF Business Incubator – Central Florida Research Park** has started a large-scale renovation that will accommodate additional client companies, enhance client amenities and expand the facilities for existing clients. The project, which began in January 2015, includes the build-out of additional offices, work spaces, and, five chemical wet labs. The incubators layout is being re-worked to help centralize kitchens and break rooms, improve traffic flow, and increase the size of the kitchens, bathrooms and conference rooms. Renovations are expected to wrap up in March 2016 and will include new roofing, Teledata infrastructure, light fixtures, electrical systems, windows, interior finishes and landscaping.



Annual Innovation Challenge Draws Students to Pitch Ideas for Commercialization

The winning team was from Stetson University.

The **Cairns Foundation** held its second **Innovation Challenge** on April 12th at the **UCF Business Incubator – Daytona Beach** International Airport. The challenge allowed student teams from local colleges and universities to pitch creative ideas with market potential.

This year, the winning team, who won a \$10,000 cash prize donated by the Cairns Foundation was from Stetson University. The team will also receive a full year of free business mentoring services and office space at the Daytona Beach incubator.

The half-day invitation-only event, attracted about 80 spectators, who had the opportunity to hear from the eight teams as they competed in the event. The panel of judges included Jim Cairns, executive director of the Cairns Foundation; Rick Fraser; executive director of the Ormond Beach Chamber of Commerce; inventor/entrepreneur Richard Madden and Connie Bernal, site manager for the Daytona Beach incubator.

"One of the purposes of the innovation challenge is to get inventions or new technologies to market and to help students become the next \$10 million company in Volusia County," Bernal said. "What I saw [at the competition] was amazing."

TSOLife, LLC comprised of Stetson students David Sawyer and Emma Campbell, and their faculty adviser, Tara Batista – was the first place winner of the competition. TSOLife provides an online platform where users can securely and permanently document their life stories. For a one-time fee the company can securely host and store the information.

"Winning the competition was a pretty big deal. For the Cairns Foundation to believe in my idea [as a student] and give me capital to help launch my business is just a phenomenal opportunity," says Sawyer.

Sawyer developed the concept for TSOLife last year while attending the funeral for one of his grandmothers. "The lightbulb moment for me came



Site manager, Connie Bernal, UCFBIP Director Gordon Hogan, Stetson University students David Sawyer, Emma Campbell, and their faculty adviser Tara Batista, win first prize at the second annual Cairns Foundation Innovation Challenge. Their startup TSOLife LLC wins the \$10,000 grand prize, which was presented by Jim Cairns, executive director of the Cairns Foundation. Photo courtesy of Lisa Yetters

when I was hearing stories about my grandmother's life and realized my grandkids would never get to hear those stories," he said.

The Stetson senior, who is majoring in finance and entrepreneurship, conducted the feasibility research for his proposed venture, while enlisting the help of Campbell, a junior at Stetson who is majoring in family enterprise and business systems and analytics.

The Stetson students teamed up to form TSOLife, where Campbell serves as the company's president and Sawyer is the CEO. The students who raised \$60,000 in seed money from family and friends, plans to launch an Internet portal later.

In addition to being the faculty adviser for TSOLife, Batista, a Stetson professor, also serves as the faculty sponsor of Enactus, a national organization that promotes social enterprises.

Another team from Stetson, Xeres, took second place in the competition. Xeres is a general-purpose reservation system that can be adapted to the needs of any business or university. Designed for ease of use, scalability and customization, the system allows users to change how and what they

are reserving, and add or remove features as they see fit.

The Xeres team includes students: Christian Micklisch, John Salis and Nathan Hilliard and a trio of professors, Becky and Gary Oliphant and Daniel Plante. The team will share a \$5,000 cash prize, donated by the Hunter Foundation, and is also eligible to receive complimentary consulting from incubator staff.

According to Bernal, "The hope is to encourage people with innovative ideas to form successful companies that can lead to the creation of jobs for others. That's the whole point of this annual competition."

The event included an update on last year's winner AquaSolve Ventures LLC from Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University. The startup, which is now a client of the Daytona Beach incubator, has developed a portable water purification system designed for disaster relief, military use, and outdoor activities.

In addition to a third Stetson team, other participants in this year's challenge included teams from Daytona State College and Embry-Riddle.

Flame Boss launches a new Wi-Fi enabled product

Although smoking and grilling meat may seem like a straightforward, uncomplicated affair, it is often a time-consuming, hands-on effort. The process, however, has recently become much smarter, precise and efficient thanks to a client company of the UCF Business Incubation Program (UCFBIP). In fact, an audience at the recent Hearth, Patio & Barbecue Expo (HPBExpo) in Nashville,

Tennessee, enjoyed a firsthand look at the smart temperature control product developed by Apopka-based company **Flame Boss**, which is making the smoking process easier for professional and weekend pitmasters.

During the HPBExpo event, the company unveiled Flame Boss 200, its second-generation, Wi-Fi enabled barbecue/smoker temperature controller. The new product allows pitmasters to monitor and control the temperature of the meat, and the temperature and flame intensity inside the smoker unit. Because the modular device uses Wi-Fi, the monitoring and control function can be conducted from a smart mobile device.

"Flame Boss 200 provides freedom and peace of mind to the pitmaster, without compromising control, monitoring and oversight," says Michael

Collins, founder and CEO of Flame Boss. "A typical smoking process is 12 to 15 hours and can be a physical and mental drain on the pitmaster as he or she continually monitors the overall smoking process while making the appropriate smoker draft adjustments. We make this process much easier and precise for the pitmaster."



The Flame Boss 200 is compatible with most all of the common smoker units.

Collins says the company already has 200 orders for the product, which is compatible with most common smoker units, including the popular Big Green Egg smoker.

Flame Boss 200 addresses a problem inherent in the smoking process — its long duration. Smoking is a drawn-out undertaking that requires constant checking and temperature regulation. That process is simple with the Flame Boss 200, a smart device the size of a cell phone that is connected to probes in the meat. The device is also connected to a modular, variable-speed fan unit on the smoker unit that controls

the flame intensity and heat. All of this makes for a predictable, easy-to-monitor operation.

"With the Flame Boss 200, the process is fully automated: plug it in and forget it. Monitoring requires nothing more than a glance at a hand-held device" Collins says.

The Flame Boss 200 is the result of extensive planning, testing and marketing, with support during the past year from the UCF Business Incubator – Apopka. According to Collins, the UCFBIP's educational programs, workshops and classes have been a considerable benefit to his company. "The coaching we've received has been invaluable, along with all the collaboration we've had with the other client companies," Collins says.

UCFBIP team members have helped the Flame Boss team craft a strategy for targeting its customers, especially in the wholesaler sector, which is a key market for the company.

"We obtained some of the most helpful information through classes on how to use social media," Collins adds. "It's been highly practical and effective. Our relationship with the [UCFBIP] has provided us an edge as we bring these products to market."

For more information, visit FlameBoss.com.

Recreating Reality

Imagine being able to create a surfing effect for a particular weather condition, time, location and wave condition. Or, picture having the ability to mimic a particular cloud formation, altitude and wind speed. One Central Florida company is doing just this and more.

Sundog Software, LLC, a client of the UCF Business Incubator – Central Florida Research Park, produces realistic, 3D environmental effects for simulation, training, and video game developers. Skies, oceans and clouds are among the most difficult elements to simulate in virtual reality environments, but, Sundog Software has developed off-the-shelf code libraries that

automatically add these customized elements into 3-D scenes.

"The effects are really fast, which is important for maintaining smooth motion in games and simulators," explains Frank Kane, founder and CEO of Sundog Software. "This is a big deal for people developing maritime and flight simulators, or anyone developing a virtual environment that features outdoor scenes."

Kane started the business as a "hobby" in 2006 while working as a manager for Amazon.com in WA. He began developing the SilverLining sky, 3-D cloud, and weather SDK in his spare time to keep his



Frank Kane



software engineering skills up to date and resolve what was an unsolved problem in computer graphics at the time. He returned to Orlando in 2012 and decided to pursue Sundog Software as a full-time venture.

"The reception of our software has been strong – hundreds of developers worldwide are licensing our technology in real training and gaming applications," says Kane. "We've landed most of the big names in simulation in both the private and government sectors around the world, including Lockheed Martin, NASA, Boeing, U.S. Navy, Federal Aviation Administration, and many more. We've also developed consumer-focused products for flight simulation enthusiasts, which has resulted in thousands more happy customers."

Kane credits the UCF Business Incubation Program (UCFBIP) with helping fuel his company's success.

"Since joining the UCFBIP, Sundog Software's revenues have tripled. Much of that money is flowing directly back into the local economy and supporting new high-tech jobs," explains Kane. "The biggest

benefit is how they connect new business owners with local experts in a wide variety of fields. Building a great product is only half the battle. I came into this knowing a lot about software development but very little about marketing, sales, PR, legal issues, accounting, and optimizing [a] website. UCFBIP offers a steady parade of local experts in these fields. I believe much of Sundog's growth is a direct result of some of the advice these local experts have provided, and I encourage other incubator clients to take advantage of as many relevant opportunities as they can."

The company recently launched version four of their SilverLining sky, cloud, and weather technology. This introduces highly realistic stratus clouds as seen in overcast conditions. The reduced visibility is important for flight and air traffic control simulation. Being as accurate as possible means better training for pilots and air traffic controllers around the world.

Sundog Software plans to stay ahead of the curve when it comes to software evolution.

"My main goal is to keep launching new products every year that build upon our existing ones, as that seems to be what generates the best new revenue streams. Getting into the world of movie computer animation pre visualization seems like the logical next step," says Kane.

For more information about Sundog Software, visit Sundog-Soft.com.

Researchers Use Gold Particles to Detect Cancer; Present at Global Conference

A Florida nanotechnology company is working to make its procedure the gold standard for early cancer detection.

Nano Discovery, Inc. is developing a process using gold nanoparticles that can help detect abnormal immune activities in the body—often telltale signs of cancer. This cancer test, which involves only \$1 worth of gold particles and a single drop of blood, promises to be far more accurate, for example, than the prostate-specific antigen blood test doctors currently use to detect prostate cancer.

"We believe this technology could lead to a universal screening test for early cancer detection," says Qun "Treen" Huo, Ph.D., CEO of Nano Discovery, who showcased the company's blood test for early detection of cancer and autoimmune diseases before an audience of potential investors and licensing partners at the TechConnect World Innovation Summit in June in Washington, D.C. "It's exciting to be developing innovative, biomedical research tools that potentially will save lives," says Dr. Huo.

The TechConnect 2015 Innovation Summit is designed to showcase new, promising technologies

in order to create opportunities for them to receive funding and commercial support. Nano Discovery's presenter status as a 2015 TechConnect Innovation Award winner put them in a distinguished class: of all those who applied to present at the event, only 20 percent are selected. Among the participants are universities, innovators, labs and leading research organizations. Nano Discovery has leveraged this opportunity as the company is seeking additional funding to further test its process, as well as partners to commercialize the procedure.



A client company of the UCF Business Incubation Program (UCFBIP), Nano Discovery develops biomedical research products and medical diagnostics through advanced nanotechnology. The company operates at UCFBIP's Central Florida Research Park location near UCF's main campus.

"Our goal is to create a simple, easy, low-cost test to accurately detect cancer at its earliest stage," says Dr. Huo, who also serves as an associate professor at the UCF NanoScience Technology Center. "It has been a significant benefit to receive the level of strategic guidance and business support provided by the [UCFBIP]."

The Nano Discovery team is able to detect



Qun Huo

the antibodies that are attacking tumors as they attach themselves to the gold nanoparticles. This technology employs optical probes that use dynamic light technology to detect the activity.

Although the gold nanotechnology is unable to specify the type of cancer a person may have, the procedure may be an important means of screening for the disease in the future. For many cancers, early detection is absolutely essential, meaning the difference between death and survival.

Dr. Huo says that the team has studied the effects of the nanoparticles on animals and on human blood, and is conducting further research to validate the procedure's efficacy.

"It is a very great honor to be selected as a participant in this important event," Dr. Huo says. "This conference will create more visibility for the work we have been doing, and we're hopeful it will bring this technology a step closer to becoming a standard diagnostic tool in a few years."

For more information, visit NanoDiscoveryinc.com.

Helping the Event and Floral Industries Bloom

Managing an event is an enormous task requiring much work and attention to detail. Anyone who has ever planned a party, wedding, conference or major event understands the magnitude of labor involved with ensuring its success.

A Daytona Beach company is helping ease planning stress by developing customer relationship management software for the floral and

event industries.

Details Flowers, a client of the UCF Business Incubator



Corrine Heck

incorporating our dream list of tools we wished we'd had. With Details, we have made businesses more profitable and enjoyable."

Although still in its infancy, Details Flowers recently won the Audience Award at the second quarter VenturePitch Orlando event. The company was also a featured startup at the Florida Venture Forum Early Stage Conference.

"Florists are saving hours and hours of time drafting contracts and also benefiting from the historical data that is collected on each and every event," says Heck.

Details Flowers is already gathering an impressive portfolio of successful clients. According to Heck, Raining Roses Productions, a recent subscriber to Details Flowers, has cut time meeting with clients in half and now generates contracts in minutes. They are saving both time and money through using the Details Flowers platform.

Heck has been able to move her company forward thanks in part to the UCF Business Incubation Program (UCFBIP). "The UCFBIP has opened our team to the Central Florida community

and given us wings to fly," says Heck. "We have spent time with wonderful mentors, coaches and business advisers

to help us reach our goals. We feel fortunate to have joined the program and [have] benefited from the ecosystem that the UCFBIP provides."

Future plans for the company include transforming the floral industry by connecting the floral supply chain. Their goal is to become the leader in event management throughout the United States and across the globe.

"Creating Details Flowers has been a lifelong dream to simplify the event industry," explains Heck. "We are so pleased to offer a product that has been admired, appreciated and renowned by industry peers and professionals for its ability to organize, inspire and connect."

For more information, visit DetailsFlowers.com.



UCFBIP
DAYTONA BEACH

Daytona Beach, was founded in 2014 to solve the daily challenges of calculating costs, producing contracts, and sourcing flowers and products. The unique, intuitive software allows florists and event coordinators to manage their clients and portfolios, customize contracts, source blooms and supplies, and track inventory and business performance, all from one simple interface.

"Details Flowers was developed to give the hardest working professionals in the floral and event [industries] a real advantage in running their businesses," says Corrine Heck, Details CEO and founder. "We designed Details to handle the many real-world scenarios of event design while

Connecting the World to Central Florida

Quickly becoming an internationally recognized hub for business and innovation, Central Florida is an open canvas for investors and new ventures. The **World Preview Center (WPC)**, a client of the UCF Business Incubator – Kissimmee, will help connect domestic and international companies with Central

Florida new business opportunities worldwide. The WPC is a hybrid of past world's fairs and today's trade/product expos, which shed light on the progress made by individuals and businesses and challenge us to look toward the future.

The WPC will act as a gateway, providing businesses with strategic planning, marketing and public relations services to create thousands of higher-paying jobs in Osceola County. The WPC's 30-acre industrial park will include a Welcome Center for international and domestic companies

and industries to showcase their products and services to the thousands of leisure and business travelers visiting the Disney/Universal Studios area each week. The WPC team will serve as ambassadors by offering strategic business and marketing services to corporations, governments and industries while helping them increase their product/service portfolios and expand into new markets. In a nutshell, WPC will



connect the world via Central Florida.

According to Buoncervello, consumers will benefit in many ways.

"First, we plan on creating 2,200 jobs in Osceola County," explains Buoncervello. "Second, we will help build partnerships to provide services that increase existing technologies, such as better waste disposal and waste management products and worldwide efforts to support green

technologies. Additionally, through the WPC, consumers will have access to organic foods and products that have been available in certain markets abroad."

WPC's soft launch was held May 13 at Osceola Heritage Park and will be followed by a ribbon cutting November 18 at their 10-acre property on U.S. 192. The WPC Expo Welcome Center will serve as the portal for the company's 60,000-square-foot pavilion, located on their 33-acre complex at the Kissimmee Gateway Airport.

Buoncervello, an active Rotarian for nearly two decades, has assembled a qualified team of advisers comprised of 64 Rotarians worldwide. Although still in its infancy, WPC already has a success story to note. Netherlands-based BouMatic Robotics, an enterprise yielding \$330 million in annual sales, has asked WPC to facilitate their expansion in Bavaria. WPC has already arranged connections into the Bavarian dairy

farmers' network through a relationship with a German businessman serving as a WPC ambassador.

WPC's future is bright, and they value their relationship with the UCF Business Incubation Program (UCFBIP). "Our WPC ambassador team has received tremendous avenues of communication, managerial assistance and door-opening as a result of our locating to the UCF incubator facility in Kissimmee," says Buoncervello. "The UCFBIP has significantly broadened our business platform."

Buoncervello says WPC has ambitious plans for the future. "We plan to offer several transportation routes for visitors to the World Preview Center's expo showcase. We also hope the majority of development on the facilities to be housed on our property will be complete within five years."

For more information, visit **WorldPreviewCenter.com**.

UCF Client News

Alma J. Coronado has been named president and chief executive officer of **RSS Logistics**, an Orlando-based technology company that has grown from two principals to 10 employees since opening in 2011.

Guiding Clients Toward Success

Wilson Giovanni Villanueva, M.A., Ed.S., LMHC, spent several years gaining firsthand knowledge of the needs of the community as a Department of

Children and Families child protective investigator, school guidance counselor and private therapist. Understanding the unique

challenges people from different viewpoints face became the driving force of his business, **North Star Counseling of Central Florida, LLC**. The company, a client of the UCF Business Incubator –

Kissimmee, offers outpatient clinical mental health therapy to clients ranging in age from 3 to over 60 years old.

The practice opened its doors in January 2015 after achieving credentials with major providers of insurance. North Star Counseling, FL is committed

to understanding and empathizing with client's needs, providing a variety of professional services geared toward helping them achieve their personal goals. Counselors provide services using a behavioral approach.



Wilson Giovanni Villanueva

North Star Counseling, FL places special emphasis on parental coaching and support as a method of assisting parents with gaining a comprehensive understanding of how to best help their children. Other areas of specialty include anxiety and panic disorders, depression, low self-esteem, grief and loss, infidelity, separation and divorce, academic learning disabilities, learning-related difficulties, section 504 plan, academic multitiered support system, exceptional special education, and career and stress management.

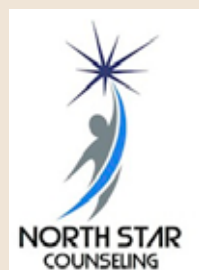
"North Star Counseling, FL serves more than 40 new patients on a weekly basis, providing strong

and steady recovery for both our clients and their families," says Villanueva. "We consider the well-being of the entire family unit in our approach, as we believe that families are all connected and should be viewed as a collective institution."

According to Villanueva, the UCF Business Incubation Program (UCFBIP) has played an integral role in the success of the practice. "The UCFBIP has provided our practice with support, coaching and mentorship," he explains. "They have guided our steps toward success not only with focused support but also on personal and individual levels."

North Star Counseling, FL is a provider for Community Based Care of Central Florida and the Florida Department of Children and Families. Opening offices in Polk and Orange counties and adding educational tutoring programs and mental health targeted case management are all part of the company's future expansion plans.

For more information, visit **NorthStarCounselingFL.com**.



Datanautix Helps Businesses Know and Understand What Their Customers *Really* Think

In today's health care environment, it's imperative for providers to know and understand as much as possible about a patient's customer experience during their stay in a hospital or for other treatment and service. It's a critical piece of information, especially in the current regulatory and payer framework, but obtaining it isn't as easy as it sounds. Multiple-choice surveys have their limits, and open-ended questions require a designated person to interpret the data, which can lead to ambiguous and inaccurate results.

Datanautix Inc., a client company of the UCF Business Incubation Program (UCFBIP) in Winter Springs, has developed a software platform that can

UCFBIP
WINTER SPRINGS

provide accurate analytics, based on open-ended written and verbal responses, about how customers feel about a business and their experience with it.

"In today's highly connected world, we hear a lot about the quantity of information now available to

us — big data — but the key is really all about big insights," says Datanautix CEO Sanjay Patel. "We extract intelligence about the customer experience and interpret the data so that businesses can enhance their business and marketing strategies based on these big insights."

After several successful pilot programs and prototype testing, Datanautix is preparing to roll out its platform, VOCL (pronounced "vocal"), and is positioning itself to enter several major market sectors. In addition to health care, Patel sees significant opportunities in telecommunications, hospitality and financial services, where there is strong competition to better serve customers.

The VOCL platform is designed to assess open-ended comments in surveys and, based on sophisticated analytics, identify the underlying sentiments of customers. Datanautix clients can even extract this information on the basis of verbal responses provided during telephone calls. "This allows companies to quickly understand what the core drivers of satisfaction and dissatisfaction are from a consumer perspective and take action to improve the overall customer experience. The best way to get insights into customers' expectations and

perceptions is by asking open-ended questions, but that has traditionally been a difficult analytics problem. Our capabilities now make that easy," Patel says.

Whereas other platforms in the market today offer broader but less detailed insights, Datanautix offers a solution that is keenly focused and delivers a significant depth of insight. "We provide a level of insight that is absolutely crucial for today's businesses," explains Patel.

One of the company's signature services is providing constructive feedback on the surveys and call-center interactions, helping businesses learn to ask the right questions. Datanautix can also analyze political speeches, calculate an "emotional signature," and predict how well people are apt to receive a particular product or company message.

Patel, who has worked with the UCFBIP in the past with another company he successfully launched, sees great benefits working with the program. The UCFBIP team has provided him with expert strategic guidance and business-related support.

For more information, visit Datanautix.com.

Innovative Platform Transforms the Management of Telecom Investments

Wireless Assets is a financial industry research and analysis company providing highly intuitive visualization dashboards for Wall Street investment banking clients

UCFBIP
WINTER SPRINGS

looking to better understand how the massive technology shifts - particularly in the wireless space - will impact the companies in which they invest. The company's unique platform articulates core industry metrics alongside cutting-edge analysis in a way that provides a distinctly powerful vantage point for their customers.

Bill Stueber, a 30+ year wireless industry veteran and senior partner at Telecom Partners Group, founded Wireless Assets as a client of the UCF Business Incubator – Winter Springs in 2014. His experience as a former CEO of public and private telecom companies, in addition to more than a decade as a Wall Street analyst, gives him a rare blend of operator/financial industry tenure.

The platform is a customizable

dashboard that offers an innovative visualization experience that the company expects will revolutionize the way Wall Street interacts with research and analysis. Features include natural language data discovery, self-service custom visualizations, dynamic analytic models, geo-mapping and access to underlying granular data. Over the past five years, the founders of Wireless Assets have performed more than 600 analysis projects for an array of Wall Street clients that represent more than 50 percent of the world's top 100 investment banks.

"Traditional analysis methods get it wrong most of the time when it comes to valuing telecom assets," explains Stueber. "The sheer impact and speed of today's technology migrations require an extremely in-depth understanding of inner mechanics at the core industry ecosystem level to fully predict scope and impact. Today the wireless segment alone represents over 4 percent of global GDP [gross domestic product]. That's larger than the transportation, hospitality, agriculture or auto industries."

According to Stueber, important

components of any valuation analysis - such as spectrum, towers and infrastructure platforms - can only be accurately assessed in the context of the value they provide going forward.

"We have seen disastrous predictive results from mainstream methods in cases like BlackBerry, Motorola, Alcatel-Lucent and Nokia," says Stueber. "Similarly, many upside movements were missed, like DISH, TV Broadcaster spectrum assets, Clearwire and Leap, from inaccurate underlying spectrum portfolio valuation assessment. Hundreds of billions were lost."

Stueber says that typically only after a massive loss in stock or debt value, an event, bankruptcy or regulatory decision does the real value of a company typically surface. In the meantime, billions are lost on unnecessary investment risk. Wireless Assets offers a more viable solution to establish insight into key metrics and valuation scenarios.

"Our unique blend of industry expertise and financial market analytics experience allows us to rapidly identify and articulate emerging trends in asset value,



ecosystem landscape changes and impact of technology," says Stueber. "We provide this well ahead of typical industry research metric platforms."

Wireless Assets considers their involvement with the UCF Business Incubation Program (UCFBIP) to be an important driving factor of their success.

Stueber and his team have ambitious plans for growth as they build out the capabilities of their analytics platform. "We are focused on providing a single-source telecom industry metrics platform that melds an extraordinarily large-scope data and perspective into an intuitive, manageable set of metric visualizations. Our goal is to help our clients mitigate investment risk while extending opportunities for profit from understanding areas where tremendous value is being created."

For more information, visit WirelessAssets.com.

Writing Code that Changes the World

Modeling and simulation development tackles many difficult problems, including processing complex data sets, rendering these into various graphics engines, and making this data available on a wide range of devices, with a focus on Web and mobile platforms. From small-scale software development efforts to designing and building end-to-end solutions, **AgileSrc, LLC** blends the right combination of quality, performance and cost to achieve optimal performance and results.

AgileSrc, a graduate of the UCF Business Incubator – Central Florida Research Park, was founded in 2006 to assist companies, the government and the military with development services that focus on environmental data access/use as well as the visual representation of data. AgileSrc is a main developer on the Department of Defense's Environmental Data Cube Support System project, which is used daily to provide realistic natural environmental data in support of military training events to improve their overall quality.

"Environmental data can play a key role in training our war fighters, from visualization to system



effects," explains AgileSrc CEO Mark Horn. "It can be a difficult problem to tackle, but AgileSrc has the expertise to make it simple for our customers."

AgileSrc was recently awarded a Phase I Small Business Innovation Research grant to design enhancements for the U.S. Navy's Advanced Climate Analysis and Forecast (ACAF) tool. According to Horn, weather is recognized across the DOD as critical intelligence and is part of the Navy Battlespace on Demand strategy. Climate analysis and forecasting can move decision-makers and war fighters from cope-and-avoid strategies to a strategic or an operational perspective that anticipates and exploits the weather. AgileSrc's design provides a robust and scalable support framework that can easily add new data resources, transform the data into actionable information,

and effectively distribute the computational and network burden among operational and tactical environments. These capabilities will allow ACAF to significantly improve meteorological and oceanographic support to the field, and better extend decision superiority to Fleet and DOD forces.

The resources and support offered by the UCF Business Incubation Program (UCFBIP) have helped fuel the company's success. "AgileSrc has benefited from meeting other like-minded entrepreneurs and building partnerships from within the incubator," says Horn. "The resources made available during our time in the Research Park incubator have been invaluable in terms of our growth and success for AgileSrc."

The company recently released BlueSkies, a Unity-based plug-in that generates realistic weather conditions for simulations. Looking toward the future, AgileSrc continues to build on its strengths in software development and modeling and simulations technologies and is currently working on exciting products for visualization of environmental data. For more information, visit **AgileSrc.com**.



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NBIA Names New President/CEO Kirstie Chadwick Rounds Out the NBIA Executive Management Team

The **National Business Incubation Association (NBIA)**, a global leader in business incubation, acceleration and entrepreneurial economic development, announced in April that **Kirstie Chadwick** was appointed as its new president and CEO. Prior to joining the NBIA, Chadwick had been a founding CEO or executive in five startups, was the founding director of the UCF Venture Lab, and led the financing and management of Florida's Igniting Innovation Accelerator program, which directly resulted in \$43 million in follow-on capital by participating companies.

With more than 25 years' experience, Chadwick will lead the NBIA's continued growth as a global leader supporting entrepreneurship and economic development. Under her leadership, the NBIA will expand its mission to support a global membership of key stakeholders within innovation-based economic ecosystems by enabling them to better serve the entrepreneurs in their respective communities.

"As an entrepreneur myself, I know the challenges that keep (entrepreneurs) them up at night — revenue growth, talent, customer acquisition and capital," says Chadwick. "The NBIA plays a vital role in enabling regional ecosystems across the globe to serve their local entrepreneurship communities. We plan on expanding the scope of our education and training portfolio to provide our members with critical tools to help them serve entrepreneurs in a range of ecosystems — rural, urban, suburban and global. We will also strive to become the



Kirstie Chadwick



John Gaset



Joy Lee

gold standard resource for entrepreneurial best practices, connect a global network of entrepreneurship centers, and provide thought leadership and advocacy for our members and the entrepreneurs that they serve."

Karl LaPan, the NBIA's interim CEO and immediate past board chair adds, "The entire NBIA board is thrilled to have Kirstie as our chief executive. We were very impressed with her background and the strategic plan she proposed during the selection process. We are confident that under her leadership, the NBIA will grow and flourish to meet the evolving needs of our valued members."

The NBIA is excited to announce that **John Gaset**, the new vice president of member services and operations, and **Joy Lee**, the new director of marketing and content, have joined Chadwick to round out the NBIA's executive team. Both are highly experienced professionals from

Orlando's technology entrepreneurial ecosystem.

Gaset, a 30-year veteran in the high tech industry, will be responsible for leading the NBIA's membership development efforts and infrastructure operations. Prior to joining the NBIA, he held senior executive business development and operations positions at Channel Intelligence, Pivotal Corporation and Seagate Technology.

In her new role, Lee will lead all aspects of the NBIA's marketing, events and content development to effectively support the organization's strategic mission and the needs of its members. Prior to joining the NBIA, she held senior management positions at KMDG, Brijot Imaging Systems, Channel Intelligence and QRS Corporation. She also led marketing programs and teams for several early-stage technology companies in the Orlando area.

"In order for me to hit the ground running and make a meaningful impact for our members within the first 60 days, I knew I had to surround myself with strong leaders who understand the world of entrepreneurs," explains Chadwick. "I am incredibly excited to have both John and Joy on my leadership team. I am confident that both our members and staff will see a renewed energy and rapid expansion of education, thought leadership and member-focused services that will expand the NBIA's role as a global leader in entrepreneurial ecosystems worldwide."

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First Response Disaster Team Earns Top “Small Business” Award in Bright House Networks First Annual Regional Business Awards in Greater Orlando Area

Volusia County-based **First Response Disaster Team** earned first place honors in the inaugural Bright House Networks Regional Business Awards in the Greater Orlando area. The 10-person company, a recent graduate of the UCF Business Incubation Program, earned the recognition in the “small business” category. The awards program honors the companies, organizations and people whose products, services, and thought leadership have impacted the community.

“It’s always an honor to see our program graduates achieve success and earn recognition for their accomplishments,” says Connie Garzon-Bernal, Site Manager, UCF Business Incubator, Volusia County. “For First Response Disaster Team, we were able to provide the company with the tools and resources it needed to compete in the market and create new jobs in the area.”

Headquartered in Edgewood, the First Response Disaster Team is a full-service restoration service company that handles water extraction, water damage restoration, mold removal, and fire and smoke damage restoration throughout Volusia, Brevard, Flagler and Seminole counties. A family-owned business, the company offers 24-hour service and a one-hour response time anywhere in its four-county coverage area. Most recently, the

company also earned recognition as the “2014 UCF Business Incubator Entrepreneur of the Year.”

“I can’t say enough on how significant of a role the UCF Business Incubation Program played in the growth and success of our company,” says Ken Poulin, First Response Disaster Team CEO. “Thanks to the program’s resources and the team’s strategic guidance, we grew from a two-to-person operation within a year, and we’re continuing to expand. In fact, we recently opened up a new office branch in Orlando.” Poulin says that a significant benefit to his company’s participation in the program was the insights he received on operations, marketing and business development strategies. In addition, participating in the UCF Business Incubation Program provided him with the opportunity to develop relationships and explore synergies with other business owners taking part in the program.

Sponsored by Bright House Networks, the Regional Business Awards for Central Florida is a joint effort with area chambers of commerce to recognize the successes of outstanding companies in Brevard, Flagler, Lake, Marion, Orange, Osceola, Seminole, Sumter, and Volusia counties.

Award categories included startup, small, medium and large business, innovation and newcomer. Winners were selected based on their



First Response Disaster Team celebrates winning first place honors in the inaugural Bright House Networks Regional Business Awards.

focus on vision, growth, stability, innovation, and community involvement. Bright House Networks awarded prizes totaling over \$1 million, including commercial TV production, air- time, customer newsletter, and cash. Florida Gov. Rick Scott served as the guest speaker for the inaugural awards gala, which was held March 19 at Rosen Shingle Creek in Orlando.

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