BARNWELL COUNTY, SOUTH CAROLINA

A Roadmap for Kickstarting Our Digital Economy Ecosystem (DEE)

JULY 2021

WE WANT TO CREATE A STRUCTURE FOR SUCCESS.

BARNWELL COUNTY AT A GLANCE

- **Population: 25,510**
- **Unemployment rate: 7.4%**
- **In-commuters 36%; Out-commuters 38.8%; Work and live in county 25.2%**
- **Racial demographics: 52.2% White; 44.9% Black**
- **Number of households: 8,360**
- **Median household income: $35,803**
- **Per capita income: $15,870**
- **People living in poverty: 24.9%**
- **Primary industries: manufacturing, retail, healthcare and social assistance, food service, agriculture**
- **Top occupational openings: maintenance, retail, nurses, truck drivers, production workers, teachers**
- **Educational attainment: 39.5% high school graduates; 8.16% bachelor's degree; 9.24% associates degree; 20.16% some college; 13.42% 9th-12th grade no diploma**
- **Digital Literacy: 60% of adults don't own a digital device or have limited use of a device**
- **Households with broadband: 65.3%**
- **Percentage of broadband coverage: 58.4%**

According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, the digital economy included 5.1 million jobs in 2017 with an average compensation of $132,223, but rural communities like Barnwell – those with a population of fewer than 50,000 people – have been largely left behind.

Like most rural counties of its size, Barnwell struggles with high unemployment, an aging population, low access to healthcare services, and poor educational outcomes. Other challenges include too few skilled workers, a lack of local jobs, and a digital literacy gap that's been holding the county and its residents back for far too long.

Sources: S.C. Department of Employment & Workforce (May 2021), BROADBANDNOW & U.S. Census Bureau (July 2019 & May 2021)

Barnwell County
South Carolina
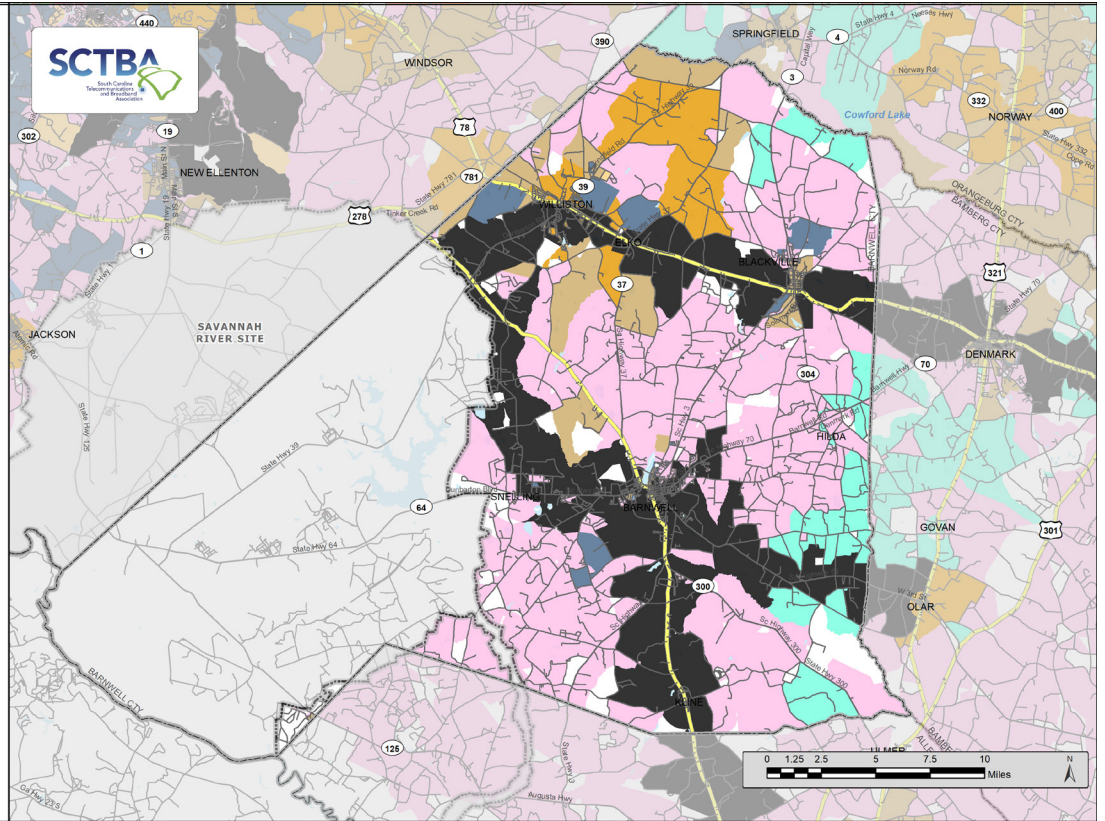## Best Available Technology
March 31, 2020

Best Available Technology (type | capability)

- ■ Fiber | Speeds >= 300 Mbps/10 Mbps
- ■ Cable (DOCSIS 3.1+) | Speeds >= 300 Mbps/10 Mbps
- ■ Cable (DOCSIS 3.0) | Speeds >= 100 Mbps/3 Mbps
- ■ Cable (DOCSIS < 2.0) | Speeds >= 25 Mbps/3 Mbps
- ■ VDSL (Fiber-To-The-Curb) | Speeds >= 25 Mbps/3 Mbps
- ■ ADSL2, ADSL2+ | Speeds >= 10 Mbps/1 Mbps
- ■ Fixed Wireless | Speeds >= 10 Mbps/1 Mbps
- ■ ADSL | Speeds >= 3 Mbps/768 kbps
- ■ No Internet Service Available
- □ Zero Households

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Barnwell County
South Carolina
Areas of Need
March 31, 2020
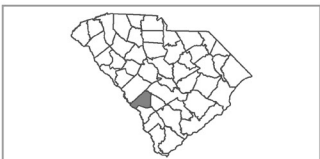
Speed Tiers (download / upload)

- ■ 300 Mbps / 10 Mbps
- ■ 100 Mbps / 3 Mbps
- ■ 25 Mbps / 3 Mbps

Density of Unserved Households (sq. mi.)

- ■ 200 or More
- ■ 25 - 199
- ■ 1 - 24
- ■ > 0 and < 1
- □ Zero Households
- ▨ Opportunity Zone

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DEFINING A DIGITAL ECONOMY ECOSYSTEM

A DEE is an interconnected system of people, programs, and structures working together to make it possible for technology-based entrepreneurs, businesses, and workers to thrive. As a result, a DEE generates good jobs, launches startup companies and builds wealth in the local community.
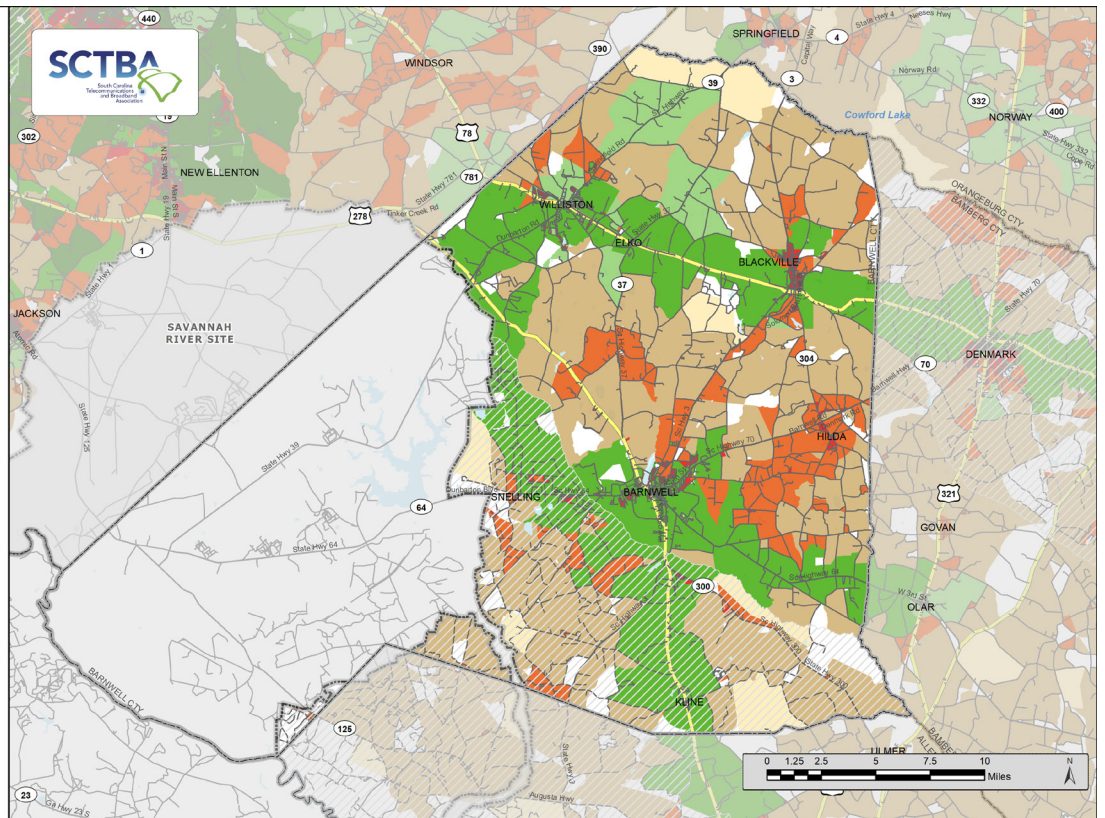
THE CRITICAL INGREDIENTS FOR BUILDING A DEE COMMUNITY ARE:

*   High-speed internet
*   Available space
*   Low cost of living
*   Attractive downtown
*   Outdoor amenities
*   Colleges and universities
*   Strong community connections

THE PRIMARY GOALS OF A DEE INCLUDE:

*   Improve digital literacy
*   Establish digital skills training
*   Introduce remote work opportunities
*   Identify and support entrepreneurial efforts
*   Change the conversation and culture around the future of work

Every community launches a DEE project from a different starting point, using a community assessment tool and identifying leading opportunity assets to guide the process. A readiness assessment leads to strategies, timelines, and an action plan that organically becomes the framework or roadmap for igniting community buy-in, attracting funding/investors, and building momentum for a new way of life.

INNOVATION HUB

HOUSING FOR YOUNG PROFESSIONALS

ENTREPRENEURSHIP CENTER

JOB SKILLS TRAINING FUTURE OF WORK

ARTS, CULTURE AMENITIES

COFFEE SHOP — GALLERY

HIGHER EDUCATION — BROADBAND NETWORK — FINANCING
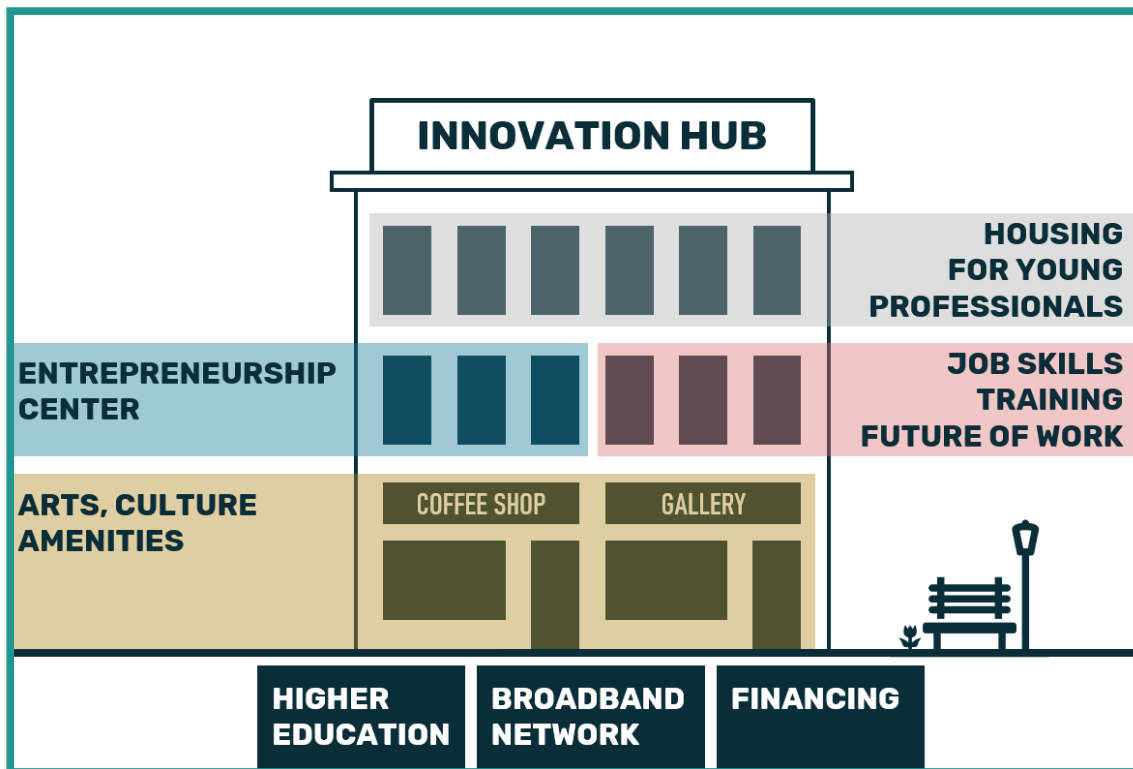
ACKNOWLEDGING THE NEED FOR DEE ROADMAPS IN RURAL SOUTH CAROLINA

The Center on Rural Innovation (CORI), headquartered in Springfield, Vermont, is an innovative non-profit committed to addressing the dramatic opportunity gap between rural and urban communities that grew out of the Great Recession. CORI empowers rural communities to build thriving digital economies that support scalable entrepreneurship and local tech job creation.

CORI founder Matt Dunne visited South Carolina in May 2018 at the request of the S.C. Rural Innovation Network (SCRIN) to discuss the possibility of utilizing CORI's model to build a statewide network of Digital Economy Ecosystem (DEE) communities across the Palmetto State. Once these communities are established, they can benefit from CORI's growing footprint and resources.

In 2019, CORI partnered with a new sister organization, Rural Innovation Strategies, Inc. (RISI), to deploy data-driven strategies, leading-edge geospatial tools, and digital economy expertise to advance its work to pursue rural equity and opportunity. Since that time, as many as 20 DEE communities have formed across the U.S.

CORI'S VISION FOR THE FUTURE

By 2030, CORI wants rural America to have 15% of the nation's digital jobs distributed equitably among each region with an emphasis on race and gender. Today, only 5% of our nation's tech employment calls rural America home. The organization plans to achieve its goal by supporting the creation of rural DEE communities and by helping to:

• Build capacity through technical assistance
• Connect communities to national caliber resources
• Deliver data-driven tools to provide insights to community leaders
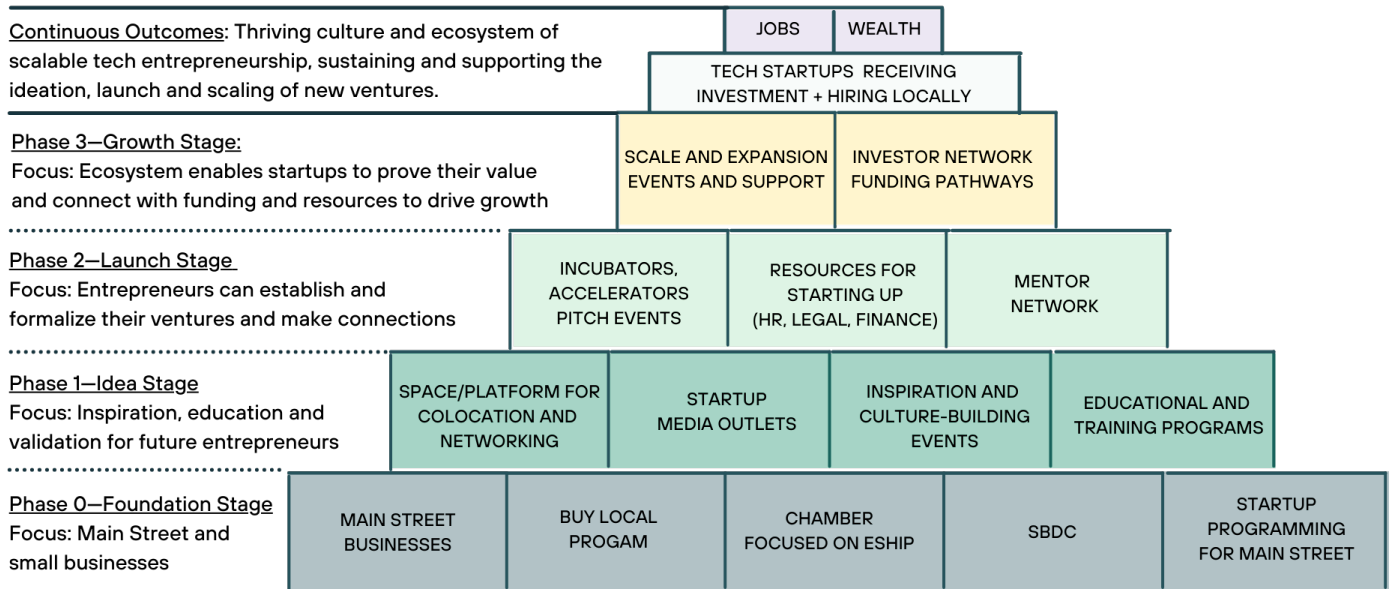• Ensure early-stage investment flows to rural entrepreneurs

> "When we talk about the digital economy, we're talking about the jobs created by automation which are largely programming-related. We believe those will be the growth sectors moving forward and skill sets that will have the most applicability even if the particular occupation might get automated itself. This skill set can continue to grow and evolve. We also talk about scalable tech companies to create that new generation of wealth that can take place anywhere as long as you have a good internet connection."
>
> - Matt Dunne, CORI Founder

CORI | Building Blocks of a Scalable Tech Entrepreneurship Ecosystem

How can rural communities create and support local scalable tech startups? By providing targeted efforts at every stage of a startup's journey, communities can elevate their startup ecosystem by focusing on key assets and initiatives to support founders through all phases of growth and maturity. The Center On Rural Innovation is a nonprofit action tank working to advance economic prosperity in rural America through the creation of inclusive digital economy ecosystems that support entrepreneurship and job creation.

Continuous Outcomes: Thriving culture and ecosystem of scalable tech entrepreneurship, sustaining and supporting the ideation, launch and scaling of new ventures.

JOBS	WEALTH

TECH STARTUPS RECEIVING INVESTMENT + HIRING LOCALLY

Phase 3—Growth Stage:
Focus: Ecosystem enables startups to prove their value and connect with funding and resources to drive growth

SCALE AND EXPANSION EVENTS AND SUPPORT	INVESTOR NETWORK FUNDING PATHWAYS

Phase 2—Launch Stage
Focus: Entrepreneurs can establish and formalize their ventures and make connections

INCUBATORS, ACCELERATORS PITCH EVENTS	RESOURCES FOR STARTING UP (HR, LEGAL, FINANCE)	MENTOR NETWORK

Phase 1—Idea Stage
Focus: Inspiration, education and validation for future entrepreneurs

SPACE/PLATFORM FOR COLOCATION AND NETWORKING	STARTUP MEDIA OUTLETS	INSPIRATION AND CULTURE-BUILDING EVENTS	EDUCATIONAL AND TRAINING PROGRAMS

Phase 0—Foundation Stage
Focus: Main Street and small businesses

MAIN STREET BUSINESSES	BUY LOCAL PROGAM	CHAMBER FOCUSED ON ESHIP	SBDC	STARTUP PROGRAMMING FOR MAIN STREET

PARTNERING FOR PROSPERITY: A NINE-MONTH COLLABORATION TO BUILD A DIGITAL ECONOMY ECOSYSTEM ROADMAP

Developing a vibrant digital economy in Barnwell County is more important today than ever before. A DEE will create digital jobs locally and through remote-work opportunities, and spark wealth creation through countywide entrepreneurship, innovation, and digital businesses.

In August 2020, the S.C. Office of Rural Health (SCORH), in partnership with the S.C. Rural Innovation Network (SCRIN), received a Rural Business Development Grant from the U.S. Department of Agriculture to provide technical assistance to Barnwell County for the development of a customized DEE roadmap.

Barnwell County was selected from a pool of more than 20 communities seeking to modernize their economic development. Barnwell County demonstrated an eagerness to support digital transformation, along with a genuine commitment from local leaders to carry it out. It was selected to become one of South Carolina's first rural communities to be DEE Certified.

Because the inaugural DEE project occurred during the COVID-19 pandemic, the need for reliable broadband connection for individual households became more evident than ever before as businesses and organizations accepted remote work, distance learning, and telehealth as the new norm. Moreover, as the pandemic unfolded and gaps widened, Barnwell County leaders increasingly recognized that long-term prosperity would be highly dependent on kickstarting and growing a digital economy.

The nine-month collaboration between Barnwell County community leaders, SCRIN and SCORH encompassed several critical steps, including 1) understanding the availability and accessibility of high-speed internet; 2) identifying leading foundational elements, direct drivers, and community assets; 3) developing key strategies and action plans, and 4) building a visionary team of leaders to carry the roadmap across the finish line and into an active implementation phase.

OUR TIMELINE

September 2020 - Broadband Champion Training
• Introducing community members to what's available and what's lacking with broadband connectivity

September-November 2020 – Interviews with 50+ Community Residents
• Gathering information and personal stories through conversations about assets, gaps, and goals

November 2020-February 2021 – Small-Group and Joint Work Sessions with Community Leaders
• Educating community members on what a DEE is and how a roadmap will guide implementation
• Exposing members to active DEE communities and leaders in other states
• Conducting a readiness assessment to evaluate existing foundational elements and direct drivers
• Performing an asset mapping exercise to highlight community strengths
• Providing resources, such as videos, one-pagers, articles, and guest speakers to educate further and engage community stakeholders

April-May 2021 – Strategy Development and Creation of an Action Plan
• Defining the challenge and opportunity
• Creating mission and vision statements
• Identifying the approach – four focus areas
• Creating a team structure
• Outlining execution plans & metrics
• Determining resources/budget
• Explaining why Barnwell County will achieve success

> **"There's a real passion here. We have people and organizations that want to help make change happen. They just need a purpose and direction."**
>
> -Magistrate Judge Jason Stapleton

THE ROAD TO A RURAL DIGITAL ECONOMY ECOSYSTEM
IN SOUTH CAROLINA

FOUNDATIONAL ELEMENTS:

Broadband infrastructure

An attractive live-work downtown with culture and entertainment options

Quality K-12 education focused on digital skills and STEM

DIRECT DRIVERS:

Access to digital jobs

Digital workforce development and support

Leadership and engagement from private sector, non-profits and higher ed

Access to capital

Co-working, networking and social spaces

Entrepreneur support and incubation

DESIRED OUTCOME:

Quality digital employment opportunities that empower local entrepreneurs to create wealth in their community.

LEADERS COMMITTED TO MAKING CHANGE HAPPEN: OUR DIGITAL ECONOMY ECOSYSTEM DREAM TEAM

> **"I love the people who live here."**
> **-**Julie Dempsey, Community Volunteer

The Barnwell County DEE Dream Team is comprised of a diverse group of 15 community champions working together toward a common goal. This small but mighty group of visionaries collectively represents many races, ages, backgrounds, occupations, skill sets, and life experiences.

Through consistent weekly and monthly virtual meetings, these individuals collaborated to create a strategic roadmap for kickstarting a new economy.

•   Don Alexander, founder & CEO, Anovotek
•   David Augustine, director, Barnwell County Career Center
•   Tommy Boyleston, Barnwell County Economic Development Corp.
•   Shelby Broomfield, program director, SC Coalition for Math & Science DIG Program
•   Steven Brown, founder, SC Coalition for Math & Science DIG Program
•   Julie Dempsey, community volunteer
•   Debbie Fickling, business manager, Barnwell County
•   Freddie Houston, Barnwell County Councilman, District 1
•   Tricia Gordon, executive director, Barnwell County Library
•   Kristin Huber, public relations specialist, SRNS
•   Harry McFadden, workforce development director, Denmark Technical College
•   James Plexico, account manager/sales agent, Southeastern Insurance Consultants
•   Pam Rush, executive director, Axis I Center of Barnwell
•   Terri Smith, executive director, Southern Palmetto Regional Chamber of Commerce
•   Crissie Stapleton, superintendent, Barnwell School District 45

HOW WILL BARNWELL COUNTY BE DIFFERENT?

Create a Center(s) of Gravity

Build a Dedicated Talent Pipeline

Establish Digital Training

Promote Digital Jobs

Open Doors to Remote Work

Support Entrepreneurism

Change the Conversation Culture Around the Future of Work

Despite our challenges, we're taking our county's future into our own hands by creating a roadmap that will leverage existing community assets to develop a strategic framework for initiating lasting and positive change through the establishment of a digital economy.

ROADMAP KICKOFF: ASSESSING OUR READINESS & MAPPING OUR COUNTY'S ASSETS

When it comes to kickstarting a digital economy, some communities have more of what it takes than others —those necessary ingredients like a stable economy and readily available, easily accessible high-speed internet. To more clearly understand Barnwell County's level of readiness, we evaluated the existing framework of foundational elements and direct drivers, which allowed for the prioritization of areas where gaps are limited and the opportunity to build momentum stood out.

Foundational elements include STEM education, public safety, and community leadership. Direct drivers encompass resources such as access to tech jobs, effective digital workforce development, and a support structure for entrepreneurs and innovation. For a community to maximize the impact of a DEE, it must develop seven critical foundational elements and five crucial direct drivers. Through a series of polls, question-and-answer sessions, worksheets, and group discussions, we narrowed the scope of our county's assets to create a starting point for strategy development.

A READINESS ASSESSMENT OF FOUNDATIONAL ELEMENTS

Certain critical elements within a community, such as an attractive live-work downtown, enable a digital economy ecosystem to thrive. The seven foundational elements are:

1) Attractive live-work downtown; 2) Culture and entertainment options; 3) Quality K-12 education focused on digital skills & STEM; 4) Broadband infrastructure; 5) Public safety; 6) Community leadership and engagement; 7) Public-sector leadership and engagement

We evaluated these seven foundational elements and identified **quality K-12 education** and **community leadership and engagement** as the highest-ranking in Barnwell County based on their capacity to accelerate efforts to develop the main drivers of our new DEE.

A READINESS ASSESSMENT OF DIRECT DRIVERS

Direct drivers enable communities to compete in a digital economy by focusing on building local capacity and successfully providing access to jobs, money, and support.

We evaluated five direct drivers: 1) Digital workforce development and support; 2) Access to digital jobs; 3) Scalable tech entrepreneur support and incubation; 4) Access to capital; 5) Inclusive tech culture building or co-working, networking, and social spaces.

We identified **digital workforce development and support,** and **inclusive tech culture building or co-working, networking, and social spaces** as the highest-ranking based on existing efforts, opportunities, and critical priorities for growth.

ASSET MAPPING OUR STRENGTHS

Hundreds of rural communities across our country are planning and implementing innovation and economic development strategies. They're leveraging their strengths to create digital economies that allow them to chart their courses toward prosperity.

Because evaluating critical assets motivates communities to acknowledge existing capabilities and competitive advantages, we utilized an asset mapping strategy to prioritize short- and long-term goals and create roadmap strategies that could leverage existing strengths.

We evaluated eight different community assets: 1) Educational and training programs, 2) Physical spaces, 3) Cultural assets, 4) Economic assets, 5) People assets, 6) Policy levers, 7) Philanthropic and funding sources, 8) Social institutions/ civic groups.

We categorized Barnwell County's primary assets into five concentrations: 1) Entrepreneurism, 2) Agriculture, 3) Business and industry, 4) Healthcare, and 5) Tourism. We highlighted leading education, cultural, and enrichment assets before determining our leading opportunity assets.

Our leading education assets include:

• School districts
• DIG Academy afterschool program & STEM Festival
• Barnwell County Career Center
• Denmark Technical College
• Barnwell County Public Library

Our leading cultural assets include:

• State and town parks
• Healing Springs
• Events on the Circle
• Sundial Festival
• Golf, tennis and Lake Edgar Brown

Our leading enrichment assets include:

• Committed group of community champions
• New interest in digital skills training, jobs and remote work
• Action-oriented Southern Palmetto Regional Chamber
• Growing energy around broadband connectivity

IDENTIFYING LEADING OPPORTUNITY ASSETS

We identified four leading opportunity assets to use in building our DEE strategies because successfully kickstarting a DEE relies on support, talent, ideas, opportunities, and a community's commitment to change. Some strategies are short-term; others may be added once roadmap implementation is underway.

1. Innovation center and co-working space in Barnwell
2. Emerging co-working and meeting space in Williston
3. Farming community, FFA and Edisto Research Center
4. Savannah River Site, Savannah Nuclear Solutions Group and manufacturing companies

ASSET MAP HIGHLIGHTS

ASSET CONCENTRATIONS
Entrepreneurism
Agriculture
Business & Industry
Healthcare
Tourism

LEADING OPPORTUNITY ASSETS
Innovation Center & Co-Working Space in Barnwell
Emerging Co-Working & Meeting Space in Williston
Farming Community, FFA & Edisto Research Center
SRS, SRNS & Manufacturing Companies

EDUCATION ASSETS
School Districts
DIG Academy Afterschool Program
Career Center
Denmark Technical College
BC Public Library

CULTURAL ASSETS
State & Town Parks
Healing Springs
Events on the Circle
Sundial Festival
Golf, Tennis & Lake Edgar Brown

ENRICHMENT ASSETS
Committed Group of Community Champions
New Interest in Digital Skill Training, Jobs & Remote Work
Action-Oriented Southern Palmetto Regional Chamber
Action-Oriented Economic Development Corporation
Growing Energy Around Broadband Connectivity

BRIDGING THE DIGITAL GAP: DEFINING OUR PROBLEM & SOLUTION

By zeroing in on the gaps preventing our community from establishing a digital economy, we were able to identify essential assets to leverage in developing one. Our weaknesses and strengths brought clarity to our aspirations and reminded us WHY we are leading a charge for change.

Working collaboratively, we assembled the county's critical challenges into a singular overarching problem and devised a robust solution to help guide future strategies and action plans.

OUR PROBLEM
Our digital economy is in its infancy; therefore, we have no framework of objectives, strategies, and metrics to guide us toward building and implementing DEE projects, opportunities, resources, and awareness.

OUR SOLUTION
To establish a framework that supports the creation and growth of a connected, cohesive DEE and consistently builds awareness and culture among residents while seeking partners, investors, and supporters.

> "There's something special about living in a small, close-knit community where people show up for each other when someone is in need. Our goal is to work with local industry to tailor courses to the skillsets they need in their workforce while also exposing students to a variety of digital and technical occupations."
>
> -David Augustine, Barnwell County Career Center

CREATING STRATEGY:
DEVELOPING OUR VISION & MISSION

A thriving digital economy is characterized by the creation of quality digital employment and wealth creation through local entrepreneurship.

Despite external barriers to creating DEE success, such as access to high-speed internet, capital, and tech talent, we are committed first and foremost to eliminating internal obstacles – like fear of change – which often cause more damage than external barriers.

Other examples of internal barriers include closed mindsets and a lack of awareness about the opportunities that can and will be made available to residents in a digital economy. These opportunities, including skills training, networking, coaching, and mentoring, change the scope of what's possible in terms of employment, employability, and building a concentration of startup companies.

We also recognize the significance of building a culture that will hold up and support a growing DEE. It's why we are striving for inclusivity, resource development, and a countywide communications plan that keeps residents interested, informed, and engaged. Our mantra is, "Creating jobs and careers you can be proud of in a community that you love."

VISION STATEMENT

To be a rural DEE development leader, uniting and elevating our community through access to information, resources, and opportunities while embracing innovation, entrepreneurism, and the future of work to create a higher quality of life for the citizens of Barnwell County.

MISSION STATEMENT

To be the fastest growing rural community in the state by creating a collaborative digital corridor with world-class programs, workers, and jobs, despite our lack of high-speed internet. We will set records in training, job creation, and entrepreneurial activity.

> **"We're trying to prepare students to avoid having a shock when they go to college. We're trying to open their eyes and broaden their horizons. We want them to be comfortable with being smart and hardworking and to think outside the box."**
>
> - Shelby Broomfield, DIG – Dreams, Imagination & Gifts

DIGITAL ECONOMY JOBS

JOBS OF THE FUTURE

- Are tech-based and often remote
- Modernize the travel, education, healthcare, housing, and agriculture industries, among others
- Integrate e-commerce, online shopping, social media marketing, and other digital advances
- Require new and evolving skills

CRITICAL SKILLS FOR DIGITAL ECONOMY JOBS

- Digital literacy
- Strong written & oral communication skills
- Eager to learn new things & interested in current events
- Strong organization & time management skills
- Problem solver, team player, creative thinker

EXAMPLES OF DIGITAL ECONOMY JOBS

- App Developer
- Cloud Computing Programmer
- Consumer Experience Manager
- Cybersecurity Specialist
- Product Designer
- Research Specialist
- Software Engineer
- Web Developer
- Bookkeeper
- Customer Service
- Data Entry Specialist
- Graphic Designer
- Medical Billing & Coding
- Search Specialist
- Social Media Manager
- Virtual Assistant

DID YOU KNOW?

More than 4.3 million people in the USA work remotely, including for these major companies:

- Amazon
- CVS
- Google
- Microsoft
- Shopify
- Walmart

Source: Guthrie Jensen Consultants

50% of jobs

are vulnerable to automation.
Food preparation is the industry most vulnerable to automation, followed by construction and cleaning jobs.

By 2030, 63%

of jobs will center on soft skills.

CREATING FOCUS AREAS: DEVELOPING OUR CORE STRATEGIES

With a well-defined problem and solution in place to explain the critical gaps facing our community, along with vision and mission statements to frame our future transformational aspirations, we took strategy development to a higher level by narrowing our scope to four primary focus areas for our roadmap strategy development.

These focus areas represent themes for short-term priority strategies and projects that will be implemented throughout 2021 and 2022. They will remain part of our core roadmap structure as new projects, plans and deadlines emerge.

In order to effectively evaluate our progress through the implementation and operation of our DEE, we also established key performance indicators (KPIs) for each focus area.

ROADMAP FOCUS AREAS

1. COHESIVE STRUCTURE

Harnessing and aligning existing and new initiatives to create a connected, cohesive approach to building a successful DEE.

KPIs: Having a DEE director in place and meeting objectives. Number of people participating. Number of training opportunities. Number of new businesses. Number of jobs filled or created.

2. CENTERS OF GRAVITY & TECHNOLOGY

Growing entrepreneurs, businesses, and people skills through technology; utilizing our centers of gravity or place and spaces that signify action, innovation, and movement toward establishing an inclusive DEE.

KPIs: Open and operational centers. Number of members. Number of participants. Number of trainings and events. Profit/Loss. Visibility (media mentions, Google alerts).

3. LEADERSHIP & SUSTAINABILITY

Building DEE sustainability through quality leadership, investments, and diverse revenue streams.

KPIs: Dollars raised. Dollars earned. Partnerships and collaborations. Community engagement and ambassadors.

4. TALENT PIPELINE, READY-TO-WORK & INCREASED INNOVATION

Creating education initiatives that expose the talent pipeline to DEE skills and careers; training initiatives that prepare our ready-to-work population for local and remote jobs; and innovation initiatives that help small businesses grow with the help of digital tools.

KPIs: Number of programs. Number of participants. Number of people trained. Number of jobs. Number of new businesses. Number of existing businesses helped.

DEVELOPING A DIGITAL ECONOMY ECOSYSTEM: STRATEGY DEVELOPMENT

A shared vision and key concepts comprising a community's strategy document are the driving forces behind developing a tech-skilled workforce, promoting innovation-based jobs, energizing entrepreneurship, and establishing an ecosystem that attracts positive attention, investment, and momentum.

Vision

How will we be different?

Mission

What's our big idea?

Challenge & Opportunity

What gaps are we filling?

Approach

What are our 3-4 focus areas, and how will we leverage existing assets?

Team

What is our team's structure, and how will we work together to position our community for success?

Execution Plan

What activities will we deploy, and what's our timeline?

Success Metrics

What are the key performance indicators (KPIs) for each focus area?

Resources/Budget

How much do we need to implement activities critical to achieving our goals?

Conclusion

Why our team and community WILL achieve success.

CREATING ACTION GROUPS: DEVELOPING A SUCCESSFUL LEADERSHIP MODEL

Using our focus areas as a guide, Barnwell County's leadership team identified nine strategies and priority projects with descriptions, action steps, budgets, and action group leaders. Our goal is to grow each action group with new members from outside the DEE Dream Team to continue enhancing the roadmap and each project's perspective, energy, and visibility.

Our action groups are:

- Framework & Leadership
- Education – K-12, adult education, continuing education
- Innovation/Business/Industry
- Telehealth
- Agribusiness
- Communication
- Fundraising & Sustainability

DEVELOPING A DIGITAL ECONOMY ECOSYSTEM: ACTION PLANNING

Community efforts toward building a digital and innovation-based economy require skilled project management, open communication lines, and an action-tracking system with regular progress reports.

Action Plan Structure

Key Themes, Focus Areas, Descriptions

Team Members, Roles/Assigned Focus Areas, Primary Responsibilities

Action Steps, Due Dates, Objectives, Notes

Phase One

Get Organized

Build Out Action Plan

Assign Roles, Actions & Deadlines

Phase Two

Exploration & Stakeholder Engagement

Example

Key Theme
Innovation Center

Focus Area
Business & Entrepreneurship

Description
Create a visible center of gravity for entrepreneurial activities, resources, and opportunities

Action Steps
Assess innovation centers in urban areas to look for patterns
Assess tech skill needs from local industry
Identify training opportunities, programs, and qualified trainers
Identify technology and space needs
Secure resources & support
Develop a calendar and communication plan
Launch training program

OUR DEE ROADMAP:
KICKSTARTING OUR DIGITAL ECONOMY

Nine strategies with aligned technical projects and a budget totaling $414,163.51 create the engine that is Barnwell County's DEE roadmap. Inclusive of critical themes such as leadership, education, skilling up, and communication, this framework of priority projects will kickstart a new economy, ignite transformation, alter mindsets, and create a welcome path to prosperity for all residents of Barnwell County.

HIRE DEE DIRECTOR/COORDINATOR

Focus Area
Leadership & Sustainability

Description
Hire a passionate, capable individual to align DEE projects, create a brand/culture for the ecosystem, and carry out roadmap objectives

Action Group
Framework & Leadership

Action Group Leader
Terri Smith

Resources Needed
Salary, laptop and other business essentials, promotional materials

Timeline
September 1

Budget
$46,275

Action Steps
Create job description and expectations, raise funds for salary and expenses for two years, recruit and hire

LAUNCH DEE COMMUNICATIONS: WEBSITE, NEWSLETTER, SOCIAL MEDIA & OTHER MARKETING PROMOTIONS

Focus Area
Cohesive Structure

Description
Create a DEE presence on the Chamber's website, launch social media platforms, and implement a bi-monthly newsletter to share information about training opportunities, events, and resources, plus present to local clubs and organizations and offer lunch-and-learn educational sessions to county businesses

Action Group
Communication

Action Group Leader
Kristin Huber

Resources Needed
Graphic designer; web developer; writer; subscriptions to Canva, Mailchimp, Hootsuite, and other marketing essentials; printing of posters, mailers and rack cards

Timeline
July 2021

Budget
$40,975

Action Steps
Secure funding, secure talent, develop content and design, develop content calendar, create branded materials

ACTIVATE BARNWELL'S INNOVATION CENTER

Focus Area
Centers of Gravity & Technology

Description
Outfit the innovation center with essential elements for incorporating remote workers and DEE activities; host a formal grand opening to introduce the center to the community, where it can begin sharing information about resources, training, and networking opportunities

Action Group
Innovation/Business/Industry

Action Group Leader
Terri Smith

Resources Needed
Furnishings, equipment, signage, marketing

Timeline
Fall 2021

Budget
$40,012

Action Steps
Secure funding; purchase furnishings for offices and open work spaces; create signage, marketing materials and invitations; develop invitation list; set event date

ACTIVATE WILLISTON'S CO-WORKING SPACE

Focus Area
Centers of Gravity & Technology

Description
Outfit the co-working space with furnishings and equipment, and host a grand opening event to share information about the space and its DEE-related resources

Action Group
Innovation/Business/Industry

Action Group Leader
Steven Brown

Resources Needed
Carpentry, flooring, glass wall, paint, electrical, furnishings, technology, kitchen items, décor, marketing, invitations

Timeline
Fall 2021

Budget
$50,631.81

Action Steps
Secure funds, hire contractors, purchase materials and furnishings, develop brand and marketing materials, set date, create invitation list

LAUNCH SUMMER TECH INSTITUTE FOR RISING 8-9TH GRADERS

Focus Area
Talent Pipeline & Increased Innovation

Description
Plan and implement a three-day summer camp experience (pilot) to introduce students to digital skills and careers, such as cybersecurity, agribusiness and CAD

Action Group
Education, K-12

Action Group Leader
David Augustine

Resources Needed
Teacher salary, snacks, marketing

Timeline
July 13-15, 2021

Budget
$2,928.70

Action Steps
Determine curriculum, create promotional flyer, market the camp, evaluate and plan for year two

LAUNCH DIGITAL SKILLS TRAINING

Focus Area
Ready To Work & Increased Innovation

Description
Develop and deliver training opportunities to help community members grow their digital skills to position themselves for local and remote jobs, or position their new or small businesses for growth via technology

Action Group
Innovation/Business/Industry

Action Group Leader
Don Alexander

Resources Needed
Trainers, marketing, online registration

Timeline
September 2021

Budget
$58,431

Action Steps
Develop course list and calendar, determine fees, hire trainers, develop marketing campaign, secure funds, purchase technology

LAUNCH DIGITAL PIPELINE PROGRAMS FOR ELEMENTARY AND MIDDLE SCHOOL STUDENTS

Focus Area
Talent Pipeline & Increased Innovation

Description
Create a countywide think tank of educators, school counselors, and career specialists to develop an action plan for exposing and connecting youth to digital jobs, skills, and careers through lesson plans, virtual field trips, and more

Action Group
Education, K-12

Action Group Leader
Crissie Stapleton

Resources
Provided by school districts

Timeline
Fall 2021

Budget
Provided by school districts

Action Steps
Assemble think tank for planning meeting, develop a fall roll-out plan

HOST A BUSINESS & EDUCATION BRIDGE EVENT

Focus Area
Talent Pipeline & Increased Innovation

Description
Host an annual event for the business community to educate people on what our schools are doing to build a talent pipeline and create technology workers of the future

Action Group
Education, K-12 and Innovation/Business/Industry

Action Group Leaders
Crissie Stapleton & Terri Smith

Resources Needed
Graphic design, printing, postage, décor, signage, marketing, refreshments

Timeline
August 2021

Budget
$2,910

Action Steps
Determine date, guest list and itinerary; design invitations and brochure; order printing and signage

ESTABLISH A TELEHEALTH PARTNERSHIP

Focus Area
Centers of Gravity & Technology

Description
Work with HEALing Partners Coalition and Bringing Our Best Care (BOBC²) to increase access to behavioral health services, including telehealth and the development of a planned mobile unit to serve young adults in Barnwell, Orangeburg, Bamberg, and Calhoun counties.

Action Group
Telehealth

Action Group Leader
Pam Rush

Resources Needed
ATOD staff, healthcare provider, telehealth equipment, gas, continuing education

Timeline
2022

Budget
$172,000

Action Steps
Finalize collaboration, determine available equipment (already in RV), identify and hire behavioral health staff.

OUR FORMULA FOR SUCCESS:
THE WHY BEHIND OUR ROADMAP

"We won't stop until we achieve success. We are a dedicated, passionate 'dream team' of community champions who won't stop until we ensure long-term prosperity for all residents of Barnwell County. Working together, we will drive transformation through the active implementation of a strategic DEE roadmap, utilizing the right tools to kickstart a digital economy ecosystem and create an inclusive culture of collaboration and innovation."

-   Barnwell County Dream Team

SOUTH CAROLINA OFFICE OF
RURAL HEALTH
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SOUTH CAROLINA'S
**RURAL
INNOVATION**
NETWORK