GREENWOOD COUNTY, SOUTH CAROLINA

A Roadmap for Kickstarting Our Digital Economy Ecosystem (DEE)

AUGUST 2023

"WE CAN SEE OUR POTENTIAL."

GREENWOOD COUNTY AT A GLANCE

- Population: 69,351 (2020)
- Unemployment Rate: 3.7% (2022 SCDEW)
- In Commuters: 43.8% Work/Live in County: 56.2%
- Racial Demographics: 32.1% Black; 64.2% White
- Number of Households: (2017-2021): 27,403
- Median Household Income: (2017-2021): $44,513
- Per Capita Income: (2071-2021): $28,402
- People Living in Poverty: 15.9%
- Primary Industries: Healthcare, Manufacturing, Retail, Education, Accommodation & Food Service (SCDEW 04/01/23)
- Top Occupational Openings: Retail Sales, Nursing, Administrative, Production Labor (SCDEW 04/01/23)
- Education: 32.3% High School Graduates; 8.7% Post-Graduate Degrees; 14.9% Bachelor's Degrees; 32.8% Some College; 13.5% 9-12 Grade No Diploma (Census Reporter 2021)
- Households with a Computer (2017-2021): 89.6%
- Households with Broadband Internet Subscription (2017-2021): 78.2%
- Broadband Coverage: 94.7% (Broadband Now)

Greenwood County
South Carolina

Areas of Need
March 31, 2023

Speed Tiers (download / upload)
- >= 100 Mbps / 100 Mbps (symmetric)
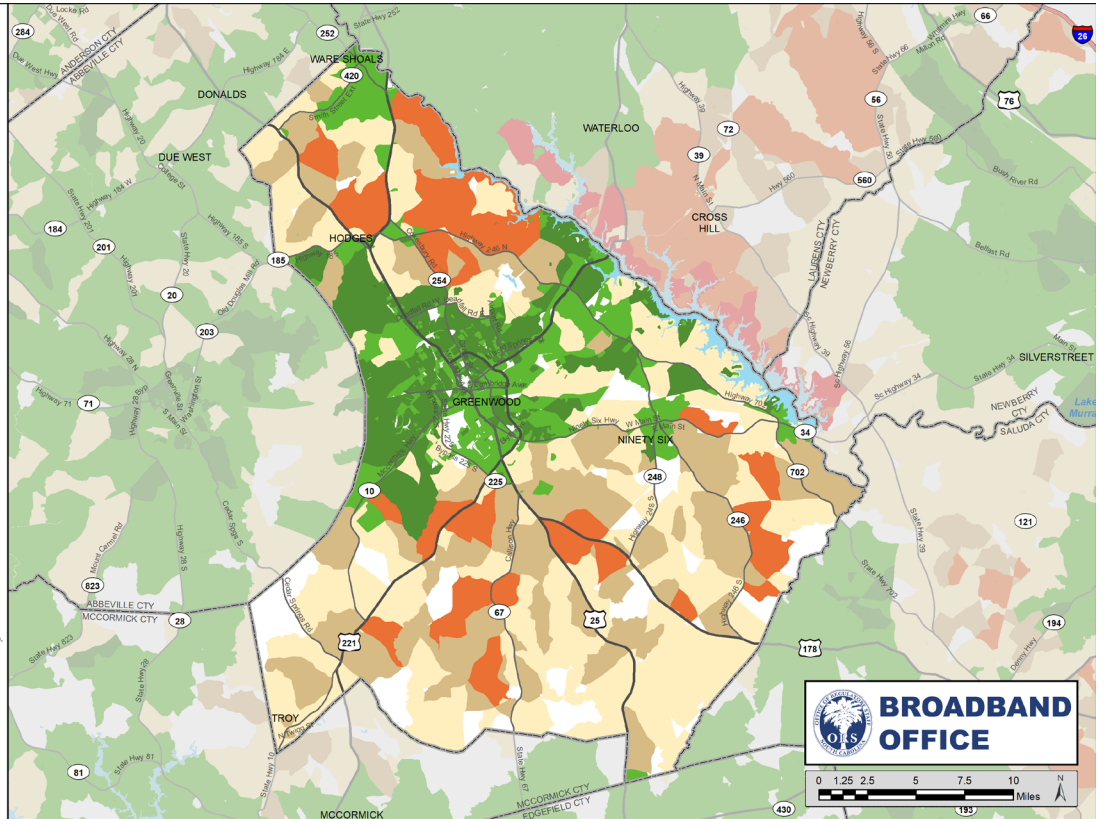- >= 100 Mbps / 20 Mbps

Unserved Housing Units
- 100 or More
- 26 - 99
- 11 - 25
- 1 - 10
- Zero

Data Sources: Based on SC Broadband Office (SCBBO) analysis of FCC Broadband Data Collection, Dec. 31, 2022 submissions that were provided directly to our office by Internet Service Providers. In addition, SCBBO May 2023 Availability Challenge information has also been used to augment and update the base location data. Satellite and mobile broadband services are excluded. Ookla® Speedtest Intelligence® data from Jan. 1, 2019 through Mar. 31, 2023 combined for analysis in the region.

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Submit comments or questions to maps@ors.sc.gov

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BROADBAND OFFICE

0 1.25 2.5 5 7.5 10 Miles

Greenwood County
South Carolina
Majority Best Available Technology
March 31, 2023

Best Available Technology (type | speed)
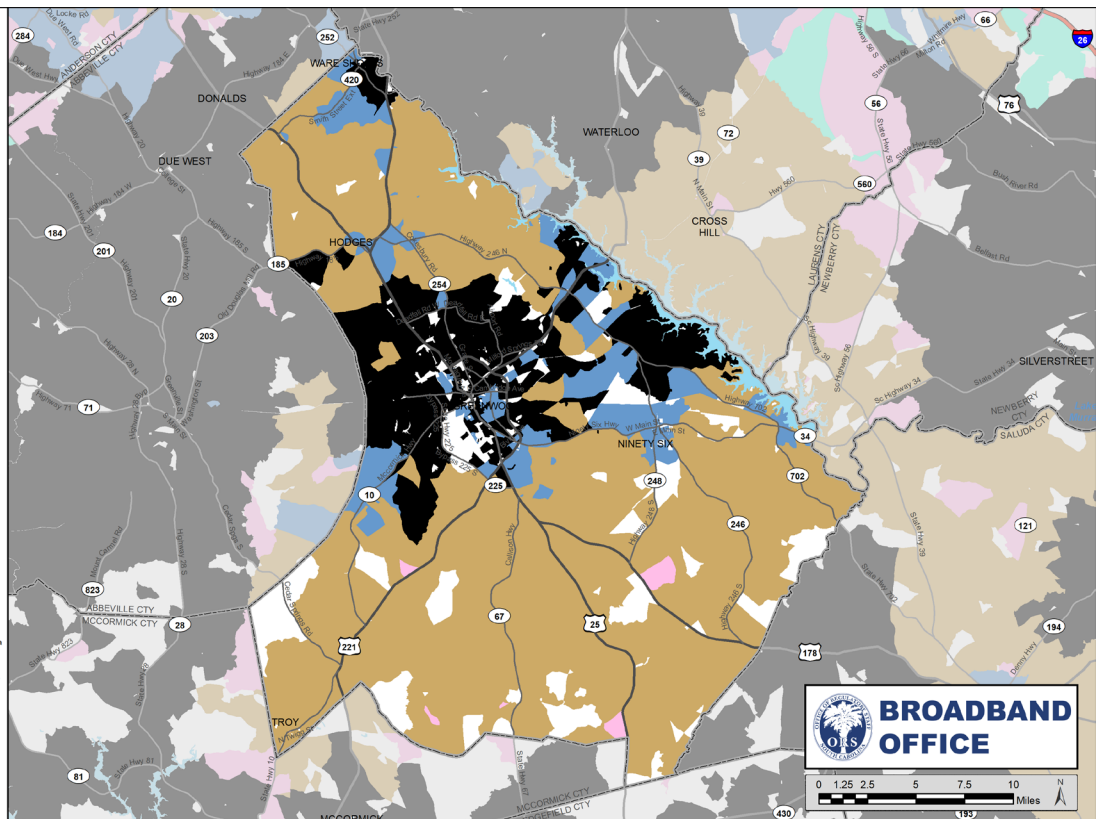- Fiber | Speeds >= 100 Mbps/100 Mbps (symmetric)
- Cable (DOCSIS X.X) | Speeds >= 100 Mbps/20 Mbps
- xDSL | Speeds < 25 Mbps/3 Mbps
- Fixed Wireless | Speeds >= 10 Mbps/1 Mbps
- No Internet Service Available
- Zero Households

Data Sources: Based on SC Broadband Office (SCBBO) analysis of residential FCC Broadband Data Collection, Dec. 31, 2022 submissions that were provided directly to our office by Internet Service Providers. In addition, SCBBO May 2023 Availability Challenge information has also been used to augment and update the base location data. Satellite and mobile broadband services are excluded. Ookla® Speedtest Intelligence® data from Jan. 1, 2019 through Mar. 31, 2023 combined for analysis in the region.

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BROADBAND OFFICE

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DEFINING A DIGITAL ECONOMY ECOSYSTEM (DEE)

A Digital Economy Ecosystem is an interconnected network of people, programs, and structures working together to enable technology-based entrepreneurs, businesses, and individual workers to thrive. It generates new talent, jobs, remote work opportunities, entrepreneurial activities, and start-up companies. A DEE builds local wealth for strategically engaged communities.
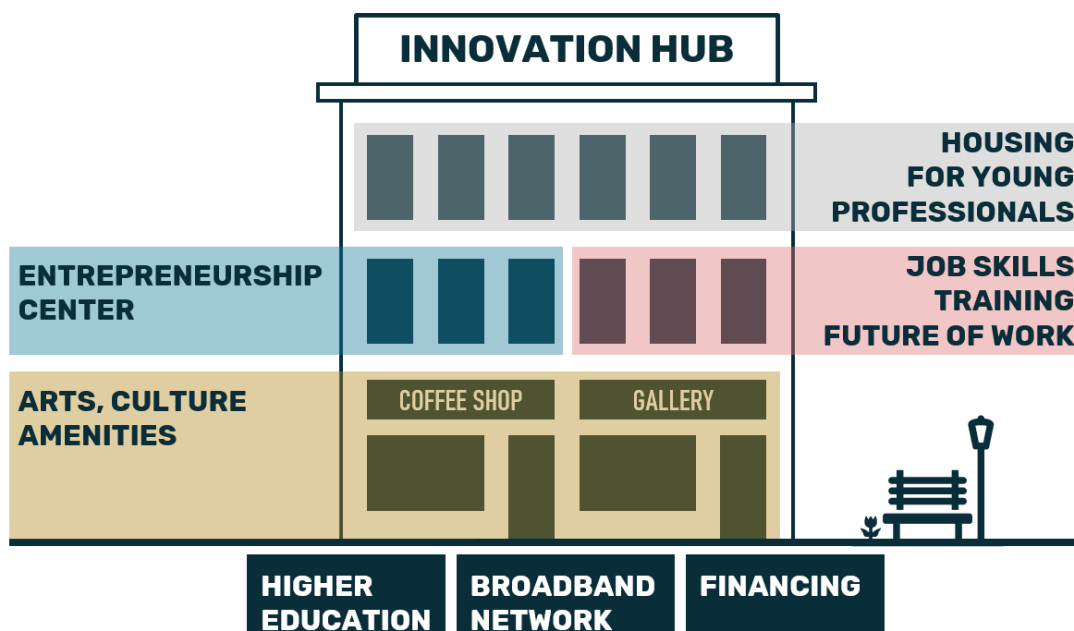
THE PRIMARY GOALS OF A DEE:

- 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

CRITICAL INGREDIENTS FOR BUILDING A DEE COMMUNITY:

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

Every community kickstarts the DEE revitalization process from a different starting point, using a formal readiness assessment as a guide. Leading opportunity assets surface to spark the creation of a strategic action plan that becomes the framework - or roadmap - for igniting community buy-in, attracting funding/investors, and building momentum for a new economy and culture.

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

UNDERSTANDING DIGITAL ECONOMY JOBS

Google. Uber. Amazon. Airbnb. PayPal. TikTok. LinkedIn. YouTube. Slack. Asana.
The digital economy is the financial output of the worldwide network of economic activities, commercial transactions, and professional interactions enabled by information and communications technologies. If you purchase groceries online, pay your water bill, or download a yoga app, you participate in the digital economy.

While technology is making some jobs obsolete, many never-before-imagined jobs continue to emerge, forcing companies of all sizes and types to change how they do business. This shift causes people of all ages to keep honing their skills to seek remote and flex-work digital job opportunities.

In a February 2023 remote work survey, the Pew Research Center found that approximately 35% of U.S. employees work remotely 100% of the time.

A sampling of digital job opportunities in the Palmetto State includes:

- App designer
- PR and social media manager
- Digital content creator
- Virtual assistant
- Web designer
- Transcriptionist
- Search engine evaluator
- Virtual recruiter
- Paid search specialist

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.

ACKNOWLEDGING THE NEED FOR DEE ROADMAPS IN RURAL SOUTH CAROLINA

The Center on Rural Innovation (CORI), headquartered in Springfield, Vermont, launched in 2017 to address the dramatic opportunity gap between rural and urban communities. Since then, CORI has empowered rural communities to build thriving digital economies supporting scalable entrepreneurship and local tech job creation.

In 2018, South Carolina's Rural Innovation Network (SCRIN) invited CORI founder Matt Dunne to visit the Palmetto State to discuss utilizing CORI's model to build a statewide network of Digital Economy Ecosystem (DEE) communities. CORI gave SCRIN the green light.

In 2019, CORI partnered with a taxable nonprofit, Rural Innovation Strategies, Inc. (RISI) and a seed fund, CORI Innovation Fund (CIF), to deploy data-driven strategies and digital economy expertise to advance its rural equity and opportunity work and invest in early-stage companies. Today, nearly 40 DEE communities have formed across the U.S., not including the five originating in South Carolina or others in the pipeline.

By 2030, CORI wants 12% of the nation's digital jobs to match each rural region's race & gender demographics.

> **"Technology talent can be found everywhere. And now is the time we must invest in rural America to ensure rural people can get high-paying, resilient jobs and, in doing so, bring our nation back together in the digital age."**
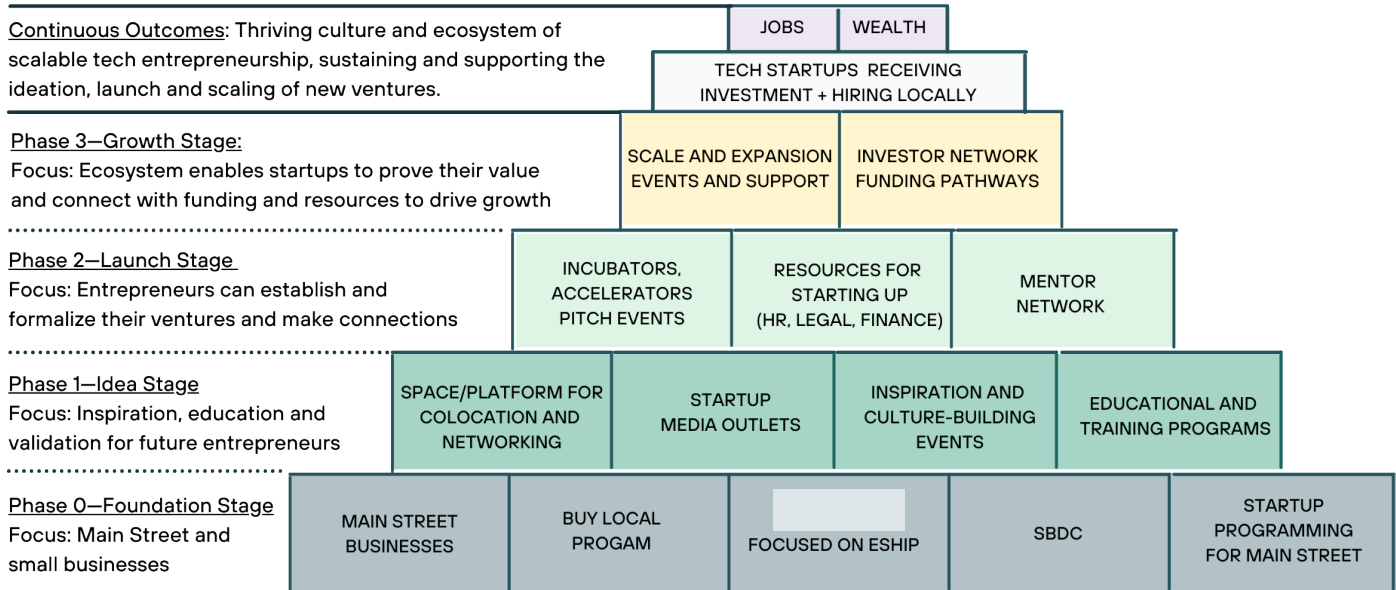>
> — Matt Dunne, CORI Founder

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	FOCUSED ON ESHIP	SBDC	STARTUP PROGRAMMING FOR MAIN STREET

SOUTH CAROLINA'S GROWING DIGITAL ECONOMY SUCCESS

South Carolina's Rural Innovation Network (SCRIN) and the South Carolina Office of Rural Health (SCORH) joined forces in 2019 to close the digital equity gap, increase digital skills and jobs, and create healthier rural communities. With financial support from USDA, the organizations assessed 20 prospective communities before selecting Barnwell and Williamsburg Counties as the state's inaugural DEE communities to develop custom DEE Roadmaps to guide local transformation through economic and workforce development.

Today, there is a growing network of DEE Roadmap Communities across South Carolina and a waiting list of others eager to join.

In each community, groups of 10-20 diverse thinkers and leaders converge to form what is known as the local "DEE Dream Team." The Dream Team meets regularly for ten months to address the challenges and opportunities in building a digital economy and to create a custom Roadmap with action plans specific to their community's unique needs and goals. The Roadmaps encompass strategic projects to kickstart a digital economy and build momentum for a sustainable ecosystem.

BARNWELL COUNTY'S DEE ACCOMPLISHMENTS:

- The Palmetto Innovation Center in downtown Barnwell with co-working, training, and memberships programs
- Just Co-Work co-working center in Williston
- New staff: director of programs and a membership coordinator
- DEE communications plan
- Telehealth partnership
- Annual bridge event for public schools to showcase academic progress, including digital and STEM programs, to the business and manufacturing communities
- Summer Tech Institute for rising 7th-9th graders

BARNWELL COUNTY'S DEE ACCOMPLISHMENTS (CONTINUED):

•   Digital skill training courses for adults
•   Digital pipeline programs for elementary and middle schools
•   Power Call, a monthly digital meeting for women leaders
•   Propel Business Lab, a 12-week business accelerator

"The groundwork for our DEE roadmap in Barnwell was laid before I joined the Southern Palmetto Regional Chamber in 2022, but it has nonetheless been a crucial document for shaping the work I've done in building the Palmetto Innovation Center and subsequent programming. DEE helped our town prioritize work around the digital economy, and the roadmap gave us a way to easily articulate goals for an effort that can sometimes feel amalgamous. Now three years into our DEE work, we've made headway on every goal of our roadmap and are seeing excitement and growth with the work and organization as a whole. For instance, our organization has grown its budget from $30k a year to just over $400k in the last two years, largely due to creating programs through a DEE lens. The roadmap gave us a way to get county and city stakeholders (like County Council and the EDC) involved and demonstrated the importance of this work. Ultimately, their investments paired with grant dollars from the USDA and great programs have made our rapid growth possible."

- Bob Snead, President, Southern Palmetto Regional Chamber

WILLIAMSBURG COUNTY'S DEE ACCOMPLISHMENTS:

•   Digital Lane Innovation, Co-Working & Training Center in the Town of Lane
•   Telehealth Center in Lane
•   Farmer's Market in downtown Kingstree
•   New drone courses at Williamsburg Technical College
•   New website design course at Williamsburg Technical College
•   SC Great Community Award 2023 + $100,000 for Lane
•   Summer Tech Institute for rising 7th-9th graders
•   Digital skill training courses for adults
•   Tech Connects networking program
•   Tech support programs for farmers
•   Introductory work-from-home training programs

"Digital Lane is creating opportunities to improve the lives of our citizens. We offer support services to low-income and disadvantaged individuals that improve their quality of life. We bring tomorrow's work opportunities to today."

-Mayor Charlie Fulton, Town of Lane

ORANGEBURG COUNTY'S DEE ACCOMPLISHMENTS:

•   Apprenticeship program for college students
•   Apprenticeship program for high school students
•   DEE advisory council
•   Digital skills training courses for adults
•   IT management services for the local business community
•   Crowdfunding Invest League

NEWBERRY COUNTY'S DEE PLANS - LAUNCHING FALL 2023

- Create an Innovation, Co-Working & Training Center
- Hire a Part-time Program Director (Phase 1) & Full-time Director (Phase 2)
- Launch a Co-Working Program
- Launch a Digital Skills Training Program
- Launch an Entrepreneur Support Program
- Create a Summer Tech Institute for Rising 8th & 9th Graders
- Partner with Newberry County Hospital to Create Non-Traditional Training Programs for Digital & Tech Skill Workforce Needs
- Create a Tech Talk Networking Program
- Create a Marketing & Communications Plan

PARTNERING FOR PROSPERITY IN GREENWOOD COUNTY: A COLLABORATION TO BUILD A DIGITAL ECONOMY ECOSYSTEM ROADMAP

Developing a vibrant Digital Economy Ecosystem is critical to the future of Greenwood County. A DEE will expand the workforce, create local digital jobs and remote-work opportunities and spark wealth creation through countywide efforts focused on entrepreneurship, innovation, and the launch of tech-based businesses.

In August 2022, 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 Greenwood County for the development of a customized DEE Roadmap.

Collaboration among community leaders encompassed four crucial steps: 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.

TIMELINE

August 2022 - Broadband Champion Training
- Introducing community members to what's available and what's lacking with broadband connectivity

September - November 2022 - Interviews with Community Residents
- Gathering information, history and personal accounts of community strengths and weaknesses through conversations about assets, gaps, and goals
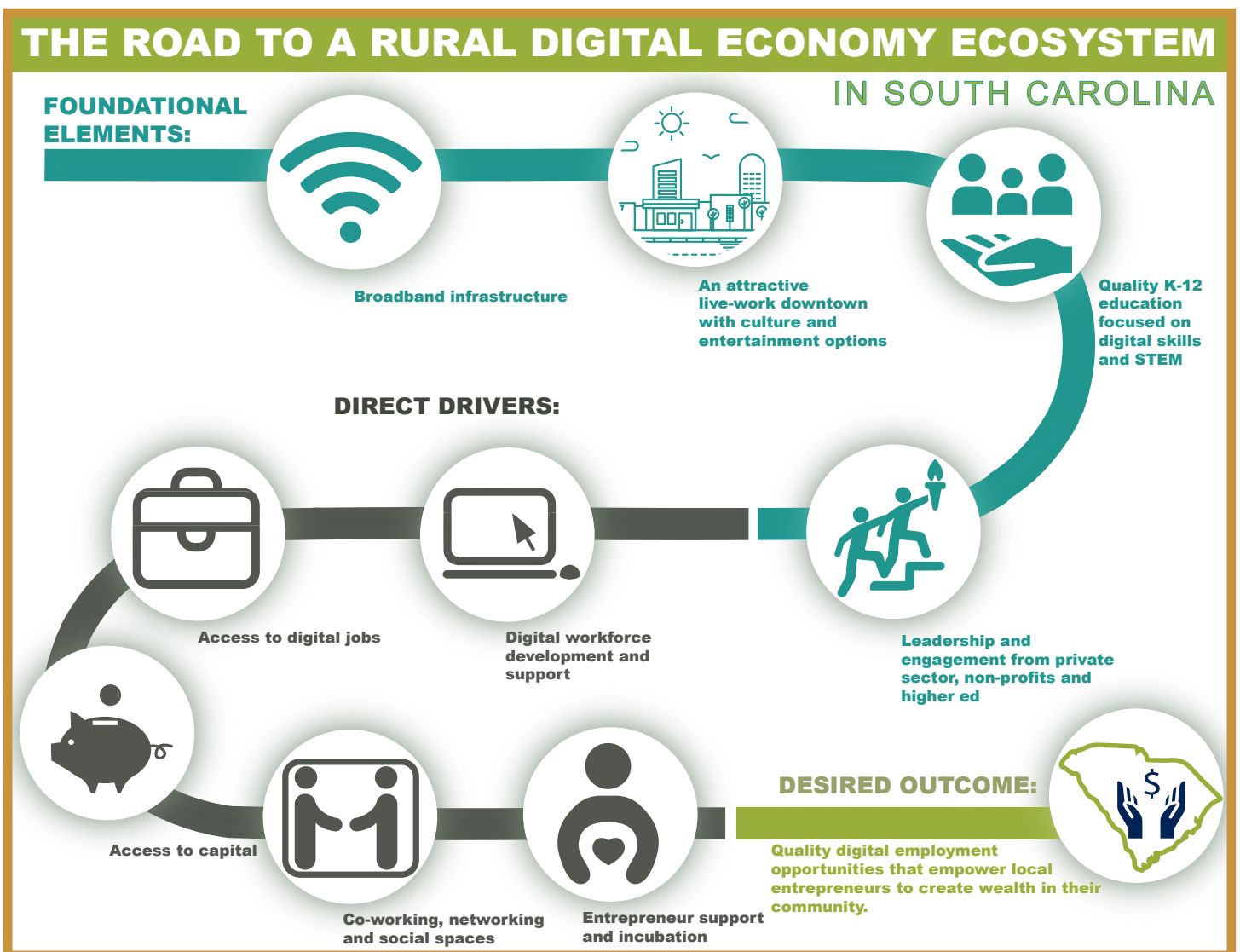
November 2022 - April 2023 - Small Group Work Sessions
- Educating community members on what a DEE is and how a roadmap will guide implementation
- Exposing members to active DEE communities and leaders in South Carolina and other states
- Conducting a readiness assessment to evaluate existing foundational 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 and further engage community stakeholders

TIMELINE (CONTINUED)

May-June 2023 - Strategy Development and Creation of an Action Plan

- Defining the challenge and opportunity
- Creating mission and vision statements
- Identifying the approach and focus areas
- Creating a team structure
- Outlining execution plans and metrics
- Determining resources/budget
- Explaining why Greenwood County will achieve success

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

The Greenwood County DEE Dream Team comprises a diverse group of 14 community champions. This committed group of visionary leaders collectively represents an inclusive assortment of individuals of different ages, backgrounds, occupations, skill sets, and life experiences working together toward a common goal.

Through a combination of regular bi-monthly and weekly work sessions, the Dream Team collaborated to create a strategic Roadmap for kickstarting a new economy and ecosystem.

- Archie Booker, Retired Sales, Marketing & Business Development Manager, Milliken & Company
- Paul Ceunin, Software Developer, Fujifilm
- Rick Green, Government Services Director, Upper Savannah Council of Governments
- Abdallah S. Haddad, Chief Information & Technology Officer, Lander University
- Lara Hudson, Community Development Director, City of Greenwood
- Mamie Nicholson, President, Self Family Foundation
- Laura Padgett, Education and Career Specialist
- Paul Pridmore, Chief Operating Officer, Greenwood Genetic Center
- Shelby Reed, Regional Workforce Advisor, Upper Savannah Council of Governments
- Kay Self, Executive Director, VisionGreenwood
- Brandon Smith, Mayor, City of Greenwood
- David Tompkins, Senior Vice President, Countybank
- Matt Wiggins, Dean of Workforce Innovation, Piedmont Technical College
- Cason Wright, Government Services Project Manager, Upper Savannah Council of Governments

"It was a pleasure working with the South Carolina Office of Rural Health (SCORH), the South Carolina Rural Innovation Network (SCRIN), and the Greenwood community to bring this government grant-funded Digital Economy Ecosystem (DEE) program to Greenwood County. This initiative required an all-hands-on-deck team effort, and its success resulted from a one-team mindset demonstrated by everyone throughout this critically important project."

- Kay Self, DEE Dream Team Member

HOW WILL GREENWOOD COUNTY BE DIFFERENT?

Create a Center of Gravity

Build a Dedicated Talent Pipeline

Launch Digital Training

Promote Digital Jobs

Open Doors to Remote Work

Support Entrepreneurism

Change the Conversation Culture Around the Future of Work

ROADMAP KICKOFF: ASSESSING OUR READINESS AND MAPPING OUR COMMUNITY'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, local champions, and readily available, easily accessible high-speed internet. To better understand Greenwood County's position of readiness, we evaluated the framework of existing Foundational Elements and Direct Drivers. This exercise guided the Dream Team on where to prioritize opportunities to build momentum based on areas where gaps are limited.

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 Greenwood County to maximize the full impact of a DEE, it must develop seven critical Foundational Elements and five Direct Drivers. Through a series of question-and-answer sessions, worksheets, and group discussions, we narrowed the scope of the 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 essential to creating a DEE are 1) Attractive Live-Work Downtown; 2) Culture & Entertainment Options; 3) Quality K-12 Education Focused on Digital Skills & STEM; 4) Broadband Infrastructure; 5) Public Safety; 6) Community Leadership & Engagement; 7) Public-Sector Leadership & Engagement.

We evaluated these elements and ranked them in order of their capacity to accelerate efforts to develop the main drivers of our DEE. Our top three include **Broadband Infrastructure, Attractive Live/Work Downtown, and Culture & Entertainment.**

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.

The five Direct Drivers critical to creating a DEE are 1) Digital Workforce Development & Support; 2) Access to Digital Jobs; 3) Scalable Tech Entrepreneur Support & Incubation; 4) Access to Capital; 5) Inclusive Tech Culture Building or Co-Working, Networking, and Social Spaces.

We evaluated these drivers and ranked them in order of existing efforts, new opportunities, and critical priorities for growth. Our top three include **Scalable Tech Entrepreneur Support & Incubation, Digital Workforce Development & Support, and Inclusive Tech Culture Building, also known as Co-Working, Networking, and Social Spaces.**

ASSET MAPPING OUR STRENGTHS

Across the U.S., rural communities are planning and implementing innovation and economic development strategies and leveraging their strengths to create digital economies. They're charting a new course to prosperity.

Because evaluating critical assets motivates communities to acknowledge existing capabilities and competitive advantages, we utilized Asset Mapping to help prioritize short and long-term goals and create Roadmap strategies and projects.

We evaluated eight 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 Greenwood County's primary assets into these concentration clusters:

Leading Education Assets
Lander University, Piedmont Technical College, Russell Technology Center, K-12 STEM Magnet Programs + FIRST Lego Robotics, Greenwood Promise, The Navigator's Program, Main Street Digital Coaching Program, Library, SCWorks

Leading Cultural Assets
Festivals & Uptown Events, Museums & Arts Organizations, Parks, Lake & Trails, Lander University Sports

Leading Enrichment Assets
Committed Group of Community Champions, VisionGreenwood, Uptown Greenwood Development Corp., Chamber, Private Foundations, Engaged Financial Institutions, Upper Savannah COG, Discover Greenwood

IDENTIFYING LEADING OPPORTUNITY ASSETS

We identified eight leading Opportunity Assets to use in building our DEE strategies and action plan because successfully launching a DEE depends on access to support, talent, ideas, opportunities, and a community's commitment to change. These assets represent projects already in motion with growing visibility.

1. Greenwood Genetic Center + Self Regional Healthcare
2. Lander University + Piedmont Technical College + G. Frank Russell Technology Center
3. City Leadership Support + VisionGreenwood
4. Uptown Greenwood Development Corp.
5. Broadband
6. Vacant/Available Uptown Buildings
7. Regional Airport
8. Manufacturing: Automation & Fabrication

ASSET MAP HIGHLIGHTS

ASSET CONCENTRATIONS

Healthcare
Education
Industry/Manufacturing
Small Business
Recreation & Tourism

LEADING OPPORTUNITY ASSETS

Greenwood Genetic Center + Self Regional Healthcare
Lander University + Piedmont Technical College
G. Frank Russell Technology Center
City Leadership Support + VisionGreenwood
Uptown Greenwood Development Corp.
Broadband + Available Uptown Buildings
Regional Airport
Manufacturing Automation & Fabrication

EDUCATION ASSETS

Lander University
Piedmont Technical College
G. Frank Russell Technology Center
K12 STEM Magnet Programs + FIRST Lego Robotics
Greenwood Promise
The Navigator's Program
Main Street Digital Coach
Library, SCWorks, WCTEL SC Codes

CULTURAL ASSETS

Festivals & Uptown Events
Museums & Arts Organizations
Parks, Lakes, Trails
Lander University Sports

ENRICHMENT ASSETS

Committed Group of Community Champions
VisionGreenwood
Uptown Greenwood Development Corp.
Chamber + Private Foundations + Engaged Financial Institutions
Upper Savannah COG + Discover Greenwood

SOUTH CAROLINA'S
RURAL INNOVATION
NETWORK

VG
VISIONGREENWOOD

SOUTH CAROLINA OFFICE OF
RURAL HEALTH
Investment. Opportunity. Health.

scruralinnovation.org

BRIDGING THE DIGITAL GAP:
DEFINING OUR PROBLEM AND SOLUTION

By zeroing in on the gaps holding us back, we identified essential assets to leverage in developing our DEE. A better understanding of our weaknesses and strengths clarified our aspirations and reminded us WHY we are leading a charge for change.

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

OUR PROBLEM
Greenwood County is on the cusp of developing a thriving digital economy ecosystem. Our assets are substantial, but we need a centralized hub to support tech innovation, skilling up, and creating a culture of connectivity built on awareness, communication, and attracting new and existing residents, businesses, and organizations.

OUR SOLUTION
To create a thriving digital economy ecosystem, we will establish a Center of Gravity - a nucleus that sparks creativity, connectivity, collaboration, communication & innovation. We will develop a master plan for deploying key objectives and recruit champions from across the county to engage and help.

> "Developing a Digital Economy Ecosystem (DEE) is vital for a community like Greenwood. It builds off the work of the Broadband Infrastructure expansion occurring in South Carolina, providing everyone with fast, reliable internet access. DEE will provide the tools and space for jobs, training and entrepreneurial activity needed for job growth in the digital world. This framework will keep Greenwood a vibrant and growing community where people want to stay and locate."
>
> - Archie Booker, DEE Dream Team Member

CREATING STRATEGY:
DEVELOPING OUR VISION AND MISSION

The successful development of workforce talent, quality digital employment, and wealth creation through local entrepreneurship characterizes a thriving Digital Economy.

Despite external barriers to creating DEE success, such as access to tech talent and capital, we are committed to eliminating internal obstacles first, like fear of change, lack of knowledge or understanding, perceived competition, organizations working in silos, and poor communication.

Other internal barriers include closed mindsets and a lack of awareness of the opportunities that can and will be available to residents in a digital economy, such as skills training, networking, coaching, and mentoring, plus changing the scope of what's possible regarding employment, employability, and building a concentration of start-up companies.

Referencing the mantra "Creating jobs and careers you can be proud of in a community that you love", we recognize the significance of building a culture that will grow and support a DEE. It's why we strive for inclusivity, resource development, and a countywide communications plan that keeps residents interested, informed, and engaged.

VISION STATEMENT
We will be a premier digital economy community and a beacon of transformation, recognized statewide and beyond for embracing innovation, entrepreneurship, and the future of work while sustaining our unique quality of life.

MISSION STATEMENT
To be an inclusive first-choice digital economy community with a thriving innovation culture and a center of gravity that is appealing, accessible, affordable, and celebrated by all.

"When we succeed at bringing an innovation center and quality programming to our community, we will be extremely proud of the positive changes that follow."

- Kay Self, DEE Dream Team Member

CREATING FOCUS AREAS:
DEVELOPING CORE STRATEGIES

With well-defined problem and solution statements to explain the critical gaps facing our community and vision and mission statements to frame our aspirations, we took strategy development to a higher level by narrowing our scope of concentration clusters and primary focus areas for Roadmap strategy development.

These Focus Areas represent themes for short-term priority projects that we will begin implementing in fall 2023. As other projects emerge, they will become part of our core Roadmap structure.

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 CONCENTRATIONS CLUSTERS

COHESIVE STRUCTURE
Harnessing and aligning existing and new initiatives to create a connected, cohesive approach to building a successful DEE while leveraging our high-speed broadband capabilities.

KPIs: Organizational and operational structure; Qualified and effective leadership team; Network of community partners and supporters; Number of programs we offer & the number of participants benefitting; Number of training opportunities we make available; Number of jobs filled or created; Number of new businesses; Consistent countywide communication

CENTER OF GRAVITY
Creating a primary center of gravity with other spaces and/or satellite locations that signify action, innovation, and movement toward establishing an inclusive DEE with opportunities to participate, benefit, lead, and succeed.

KPIs: Secure short-term rental spaces for Phase 1 and long-term ownership space for Phase 2; Be operational, effective & sustainable; Number of members, participants, sponsors & supporters; Number of training courses, programs & events; Community visibility & media mentions; Budget, staff & sustainability

LEADERSHIP & SUSTAINABILITY
Establishing quality leadership to sustain the DEE initiative through fundraising, grant writing, special events, networking, and other diverse revenue streams, such as memberships, rentals, and unique programs.

KPIs: Hiring a talented leader; Amount of dollars raised and earned; Number of successful partnerships & collaborations; Community engagement & DEE ambassadors

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, innovation initiatives that help small businesses grow with the help of digital tools, and encouraging an expanding entrepreneurial culture.

KPIs: Number of programs; Number of participants; Number of people trained; Number of jobs secured; Number of new businesses; Number of existing companies helped; Countywide reach

COMMUNICATION & CONNECTIVITY
Developing strategies for sharing news, information, opportunities, and successes across various platforms, including email, social media, website, word-of-mouth, public relations, and print assets like flyers and posters.

KPIS: Number of posts & followers; Number of emails & opens; Number of website visits and clicks; Number of participants via print assets; Number of media mentions; Number of survey takers

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?

We will be a premier digital economy community and a beacon of transformation, recognized statewide and beyond for embracing innovation, entrepreneurship, and the future of work while sustaining our unique quality of life.

Mission

What's our big idea?

To be an inclusive first-choice digital economy community with a thriving innovation culture and a center of gravity that is appealing, accessible, affordable, and celebrated by all.

Challenge & Opportunity

What gaps are we filling?

Our Challenge: Lack of a centralized hub to support tech innovation, skilling up, and creating a culture of connectivity.

Our Solution: Establish a center of gravity and a master plan for deploying critical economic and workforce development objectives related to a digital economy.

Approach

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

Cohesive Structure, Center of Gravity, Leadership & Sustainability, Workforce Development, Talent Pipeline, Communication

Team

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

The DEE Dream Team will recruit a community of volunteers to help implement strategies and increase awareness. We will eventually hire a full-time employee to manage ongoing implementation.

Execution Plan

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

Eight strategic projects are outlined in our Roadmap, with the initial phase launching in late 2023/early 2024.

Success Metrics

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

Each strategic project outlined in our Roadmap contains specific KPIs for achieving goals related to our core focus areas.

Resources/Budget

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

Implementing eight strategic projects is estimated at $540,286, not including a permanent space for our innovation center. Phase one is estimated at $185,135.

Conclusion

Why our team and community WILL achieve success:

Technology talent can be found everywhere, including in Greenwood County. We will successfully invest in strategies that ensure residents benefit from the growing digital/tech economy through skills, jobs, and access to new opportunities.

CREATING ACTION GROUPS: DEVELOPING A SUCCESSFUL LEADERSHIP MODEL

Greenwood County's leadership team identified eight strategies and priority projects with descriptions, budgets, and action plans using our Focus Areas as a guide. We aim to grow each Action Group with new members from outside the DEE Dream Team to continue enhancing our Roadmap with fresh perspectives, energy, and programs while expanding visibility and buy-in.

OUR ACTION GROUPS:

- Cohesive Structure &Framework
- Center of Gravity
- Leadership & Sustainability
- Education: Training & Innovation
    - Adults
    - Youth
    - Job Access & Networking Support
- Education: Entrepreneurs
    - Business & Industry
    - Research & Healthcare
    - Quality of Life
- Communication & Connectivity

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
Tech-Skilled Workforce, Innovation-Based Jobs, Digital/Tech Support for Entrepreneurs & Small Businesses, SpinLab Innovation Center

Team Members, Roles/Assigned Focus Areas, Primary Responsibilities

Center of Gravity – Kay Self, David Thompkins, Lara Hudson, Rick Green
DEE Director – Kay Self, Shelby Reed, Paul Pridmore
Co-Working – Paul Cuenin
Digital Training – Matt Wiggins

Action Steps, Due Dates, Objectives, Notes

Outlined in the Completed Roadmap

Phase One

Get Organized
Prioritize Implementing Digital Training Courses & Community Awareness Campaign

Build Out Action Plan
Community Presentations, Roadmap Distribution, Partnerships, Programs, Funding, Milestones

Assign Roles, Actions & Deadlines
Volunteers to Manage in Short-Term; Part & Full-Time Staff to Manage Long-Term

SOUTH CAROLINA'S **RURAL INNOVATION** NETWORK

VISIONGREENWOOD

SOUTH CAROLINA OFFICE OF **RURAL HEALTH**
Investment. Opportunity. Health.

Phase Two

Secure Permanent Location for SpinLab Innovation, Co-Working & Training Center

Build Sustainability via Diverse Revenue Streams & Program Offerings

Increase Visibility, Partnerships & Access to Capital

Exploration & Stakeholder Engagement

Public Presentations to Community Leaders and Potential Partners

Community Awareness Campaign

Special Events & Communication Strategies

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

SOUTH CAROLINA'S
RURAL INNOVATION NETWORK

VISIONGREENWOOD

SOUTH CAROLINA OFFICE OF
RURAL HEALTH
Investment. Opportunity. Health.

OUR DEE ROADMAP:
KICKSTARTING OUR DIGITAL ECONOMY

Eight strategies with aligned technical projects and an estimated budget of $540,286 comprise Greenwood County's inaugural DEE Roadmap. Throughout the Roadmap, critical themes of workforce development, entrepreneurial support, and community innovation emphasize the importance of our priority projects and short and long-term goals. By implementing this custom framework, we will kickstart a new economy, ignite transformation, alter mindsets, and build a modern path to prosperity for all residents of Greenwood County.

Our DEE budgets reflect a combination of Phase 1 and 2 expenses, with some project budgets still under development.

CREATE THE SPINLAB INNOVATION, CO-WORKING & TRAINING CENTER

Focus Area
Center of Gravity + Cohesive Structure

Description
In Phase 1, we will kick off our digital skills training courses at temporary locations throughout the community, such as the Greenwood Arts Center and Piedmont Technical College, to begin engaging the community with opportunities and information about our plans for developing a center of gravity or the SpinLab Innovation Center. We will use this phase to conduct surveys, secure funding for a permanent location, and finalize the operational structure of Phase 2.

In Phase 2, we will provide a space where people can 1) discover opportunities to grow their digital & tech skills to position themselves for higher-paying local or remote jobs, 2) find inspiration for creating a new business or launching a new venture, and 3) establish a community presence for an existing small business.

Action Group
Center of Gravity

Action Group Leaders
Kay Self, David Tompkins, Lara Hudson, Rick Green

Resources
Funding, Temporary Training Spaces, Partner Agreements, Teachers and Facilitators, Technology, Pitch Deck, Marketing Support

Timeline
6-8 Months

KPIs
Number of Training Courses Offered, Number of Paying Members, Number of Survey Participants, Amount of Dollars Raised, Deadlines/Timelines Met or Exceeded, Number of Community Presentations, Public Visibility

Action Steps
Finalize Training Locations and Partner Agreements, Build an Operating Budget & Staffing Structure, Determine Course Offerings, Create a Pitch Deck, Raise Seed Funds, Purchase Technology, Launch Public Relations, Launch Training Sessions and Networking Events, Survey and Evaluate

Budget
$207,315 - Phase 1, Year 1

HIRE A DEE DIRECTOR

Focus Area
Leadership & Sustainability + Cohesive Structure

Description
Hire a capable professional to serve as the director of the new SpinLab Innovation Center, someone with skills to fundraise and present publicly, coordinate training and other related programs and special events, and manage staff and an operating budget. This individual will help to create a brand and culture for our new ecosystem.

Action Group
Leadership & Sustainability

Action Group Leaders
Kay Self, Shelby Reed, Paul Pridmore

Resources
Funding, Job Description + Expectations, Talented Candidates, Community Interest, Word-of-Mouth Support, Onboarding, Reporting Structure, Office Space, Laptop

Timeline
6-8 Months

KPIs
Number of interested candidates; Number of interviews, Time it takes to hire; Time it takes to raise money for a salary

Action Steps
Develop job description; Raise seed money; Post job opening; Identify and interview candidates; Hire and evaluate; Onboard director

Budget
$67,307, Phase 1, Year 1

CREATE A THRIVING CO-WORKING PROGRAM

Focus Area
Digital Training + Innovation Culture

Description
Create a co-working program for our SpinLab Innovation Center targeted at individual business owners, remote workers, aspiring entrepreneurs, and visiting professionals from in and outside the county. The program will include office and desk rental, education and networking opportunities, and a culture of innovation that inspires higher levels of creativity and collaboration.

Action Groups
Center of Gravity + Cohesive Structure + Education

Action Group Lead
Paul Cuenin

Resources
Funding, Program and Memberships Models, Sustainable Operating Structure and Budget, Space, Furnishings, Technology, Membership App, Access System, Programming, Marketing

Timeline
6-8 Months

KPIs
Amount of money raised; Level of community interest; Number of sponsors; Number of co-workers and members; Number of programs; Publicity; Sustainability and growth

Action Steps
Review other co-working models and budgets; Identify membership apps and access systems; Survey the community for interest; Hire a program manager; Create staffing and programming plans; Create an event calendar; Create a marketing and PR plan

Budget
$100,396 - Phase 2, Year 2

CREATE A THRIVING DIGITAL SKILLS TRAINING PROGRAM

Focus Area
Center of Gravity + Digital Training & Innovation Culture

Description
Create a Phase 1 digital skills training program that addresses the community's diverse needs with an eclectic selection of course offerings such as Digital Literacy 101, eCommerce for Rural Businesses, and software developer training. Our program will fill existing gaps and zero in on the specific needs of healthcare, small businesses, non-profits, and aspiring entrepreneurs. We will test several course offerings in Phase 1 and make adjustments and additions in Phase 2. Ultimately, we will align current and future strategies with the local labor market's digital/tech workforce development goals and the aspirations of local citizens to create a thriving innovation culture with top-tier talent.

Action Groups
Education: Training & Innovation

Action Group Leader
Matt Wiggins and Laura Padgett

Resources
Funding, Short-Term Training Space(s) + Agreements, Technology/Software, Trainers and Facilitators, Marketing

Timeline
6-8 Months

KPIs
Number of courses offered in Phase 1; Number of participants in Phase 1; Amount of funds raised; Community Engagement; Publicity; Revenue

Action Steps
Finalize short-term training locations and agreements; Research courses offered at other innovation centers; Determine training course menu, frequency and cost; Hire teachers and facilitators; Market, promote and gather feedback; Survey community regarding interests

Budget
$64,298 - Phase 1, Year 1

CREATE A THRIVING ENTREPRENEURIAL SUPPORT PROGRAM

Focus Area
Center of Gravity + Digital Training & Innovation

Description
Design a niche program that supports the needs of current and aspiring digital and tech entrepreneurs and builds a community of scalable digital and tech companies. Our agenda will assist individuals through one-on-one consultations and mentoring programs, training classes and workshops, and other incentives like boot camps, pitch competitions, and access to capital. We will collaborate with like-minded partners like the Navigator Program to provide additional resources and opportunities.

Action Group
Education: Entrepreneurs

Action Group Leaders
Lara Hudson and Abdallah Haddad

Resources
Space, Technology, Talent to Run the Program, Community Buy-In, Collection of Engaging and Beneficial Programs, Mentors and Coaches, Special Events, Marketing

Timeline
6-8 Months

KPIs
Number of participating entrepreneurs; Number of coaches and mentors; Number of new companies started; Number of employees hired; Number of training programs; Amount of money raised; Access to capital & investors

Action Steps
Research other entrepreneurial programs; Create a final list of course and program offerings; Build an events calendar; Establish a growth budget; Survey the community for feedback; Develop a job description for a manager; Identify mentors and coaches; Develop a Marketing and PR plan, Launch, evaluate & seek feedback

Budget
$18,970, Phase 2, Year 2

PARTNER WITH SELF REGIONAL HEALTHCARE AND/OR THE GREENWOOD GENETIC CENTER TO CREATE NON-TRADITIONAL PROGRAMS FOR DIGITAL & TECH SKILL WORKFORCE NEEDS

Focus Area
Digital Training & Innovation Culture

Description
Partner with Self Regional Hospital to identify digital workforce needs and design a training and mentoring program that aligns to meet those needs.

Action Group
Education: Training & Innovation

Action Group Leaders
TBD

Resources
TBD

Timeline
6-8 Months

KPIs
TBD

Action Steps
Meet with hospital officials; Develop a course list; Identify Instructors; Develop a marketing plan

Budget
TBD

CREATE A COMMUNICATIONS & MARKETING PLAN

Focus Area
Communication & Connectivity

Description
Develop a comprehensive communications and marketing plan that addresses the importance of the new SpinLab Innovation Hub and our expectations for Phases 1 and 2. The plan will include creating and delivering presentations to the community, public relations, email marketing, social media, advertising, graphic design, photography, videography and copywriting.

Action Group
Communication

Action Group Leader
Paul Cuenin

Resources
Funding, Marketing and Design Talent, Brand Identity, Promotional Materials, Website, Social Media Presence, Programs like Mailchimp, Hootsuite, and Canva

Timeline
3 Months for Phase 1

KPIs
Community awareness; Community participation; Number of presentations; Volume of online engagement via web, email, and socials; Media mentions

Action Steps
Finalize plans for Phase 1; Create rollout calendar; Create brand identity + assets; Develop website landing page; Launch social media presence; Create news releases, flyers, posters, and giveaways; Create pitch deck; Launch public presentations

Budget
$79,700 - Phases 1 & 2, Year 1 & 2

CREATE A TECH THREADS NETWORKING PROGRAM

Focus Area
Communication & Connectivity

Description
Create a program that offers regular gatherings and educational opportunities for individuals interested in digital skills, remote work, entrepreneurship, and growing our digital economy ecosystem.

Action Group
Communication

Action Group Leader
Kay Self

Resources
Funding, Speaker and Mileage Stipends, Operational Model and Budget; Meeting Locations; Calendar of Events and Speakers

Timeline
3 Months

KPIs
On-Time Launch, Local Publicity, Amount of Money Raised, Number of Sponsors, Number of Members, Number of Programs, Feedback and Evaluation, Plan for Growth

Action Steps
Develop a calendar of topics and potential speakers; Identify locations and a regular meeting time; Determine the cost to participate; Develop a sponsor plan; Develop a marketing plan, Launch and evaluate

Budget
$2,300 - Phase 1, Year 1

OUR FORMULA FOR SUCCESS
THE WHY BEHIND OUR ROADMAP

> "Technology talent can be found everywhere. And now is the time we must invest in rural America to ensure rural people can get high-paying, resilient jobs and, in doing so, bring our nation back together in the digital age."
>
> - Greenwood County Dream Team