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Virginia's first Economic Gardening program: Seeds taking root in Hampton Roads

The first five companies selected to participate in the Hampton Roads' Economic Gardening Network Technical Assistance Pilot Program are ready to get to work.

Economic Gardening is part of the "grow-your-own" economic development cluster strategy for *Innovate!Hampton Roads*TM, a program of the Hampton Roads Partnership and a vital component of the first region-wide Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy, *Vision Hampton Roads*. A product of strategic inputs from hundreds of community leaders and citizens, this is the region's roadmap to help navigate its course to the future – "Plan B" as it's been referenced in many recent newspaper columns and editorials.

Vision Hampton Roads, adopted by the region's municipalities on February 19, 2010, received approval by the U.S. Economic Development Administration on November 23, 2010. The first annual report, submitted September 30, 2011, received immediate approval.

*Innovate!HamptonRoads*TM is about connecting entrepreneurs, ideas and investment. The goals of *Innovate!HamptonRoads*TM are to stimulate high growth-potential new business formation, accelerate the growth of existing tech businesses and ignite the commercialization of research innovation. More InnovateHamptonRoads.com.

Economic Gardening services target growth-oriented companies and provide a suite of high-end, high-speed business growth resources. The services available in this Pilot program include technical assistance from a Strategic Research Team (SRT) from the National Center for Economic Gardening at the Edward Lowe Foundation. In order to participate in the program, companies are required to meet eligibility criteria (medium-size growth companies – those in the range of 10-99 employees and revenue \$1-\$50 million), complete an application and receive approval by the selection team in Hampton Roads.

The selection team was composed of business entrepreneurs and internationally renowned consultants evaluating applicants based on the best opportunities to influence growth of business into commercial areas. Benchmarks for success, based on CEO interviews one year after initial pilot, will focus on job and sales growth.

The following companies have been accepted into the pilot program for the *Innovate!HamptonRoads Economic Gardening Network*TM :

Company Name: Unity Business Systems (HQ-Poquoson, Virginia)
Head of Organization: Mr. Carl Long, President
Website: www.unityecm.com

Company description: Provider of enterprise content management software solutions to organizations such as local governments to help them improve operational efficiencies and provide better service to their constituents.

Company Name: SimIS Inc. (HQ-Portsmouth, Virginia)

Head of Organization: Dr. Johnny Garcia, CEO

Website: www.simisinc.com

Company description: Provider of modeling & simulation, information security and software system solutions to federal and commercial customers.

Company Name: ESRG, LLC (HQ-Virginia Beach, Virginia)

Head of Organization: Mr. Kenneth Krooner, President

Website: www.esrgtech.com

Company description: Provider of leading-edge data analysis and remote monitoring technology solutions. ESRG supports the remote condition monitoring of U.S. Navy surface fleet ships and provides its OstiaEdge™ Monitoring Suite to a range of industries in the commercial sector.

Company Name: E&E Enterprises Global, Inc. (HQ-Hampton, Virginia)

Head of Organization: Mr. Ernest Green, President CEO

Website: www.eeenterprisesinc.com

Company description: Provider of information technology, cyber security, professional staffing, and satellite and terrestrial telecommunication services offering managed and unmanaged services to government and commercial customers and a complete suite of broadband and IT Solutions.

Company Name: Citadel Logic, LLC (HQ-Hampton, Virginia)

Head of Organization: Mr. Tevan Green, CEO/President

Website: www.citadellogic.com

Company description: Provider of professional services supporting the Department of Defense as well as other federal and state agencies including IT, cyber security, energy management/security, emergency management, medical services and logistics.

Graphics may be found at: <http://www.flickr.com/photos/hamptonroadspartnership/>

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The Hampton Roads Partnership represents ten cities, six counties, one town and their citizens in Southeastern Virginia, "America's First Region," providing strategic leadership and improving Hampton Roads' competitive position in the global economy.

Learn more at <http://VisionHamptonRoads.com>.