HAPPY VALLEY: Rankings That Recruit
Innovation Park welcomes agency with a goal of seeing students succeed

PHEAA grows into a new space, just in time for the spring semester

One of the newest additions to Innovation Park, the Pennsylvania Higher Education Assistance Agency (PHEAA) is one of the country’s premier student aid organizations. Offering loan servicing, aid processing, and other types of assistance for college students, PHEAA operates beyond the state level as American Education Services and FedLoan Servicing nationwide. Created in 1963, PHEAA was founded by the Pennsylvania General Assembly, and today provides its services to millions of students attending thousands of schools.

Headquartered out of Harrisburg and with five total branches around Pennsylvania (other locations include Pittsburgh, Delaware County, and Mechanicsburg), State College was home to the very first PHEAA satellite call center, opening in 2006. At that time, the offices were located right across from Penn State’s campus, inside the renovated movie theater at 116 West College Ave. With room for 88 professionals to work within the building, this address served PHEAA well at the time.

However, after approximately a decade at the location, PHEAA has experienced substantial growth, increasing its needs for expanded workspace and new facilities. Currently, the organization has almost 150 employees in State College alone, with more than 3,500 employees across the state. The search then began for a new, accommodating location, perfectly accessible for regional employees, college students, and prospective beneficiaries. After finding its home at Innovation Park, PHEAA left its College Avenue location in October of last year.

The response to the new location from both employees and visiting students alike has been positive. Keith New, director of public relations and communications for PHEAA and American Education Services, says the employees love that the Innovation Park location offers ample free parking, a daycare within the park itself, and convenient access to bike trails. Transportation is additionally a breeze, as CATA bus service runs to and from University Park and the surrounding area every 15 minutes, and Innovation Park offers direct access to both the I-99 interchange and SR-322.

The majority of the employees working at the PHEAA Innovation Park location are loan counselors. These professionals assist student loan borrowers in both overseeing their student loan accounts and making payments, so that they successfully manage their college debts in an efficient manner.

This work contributes to PHEAA’s overall mission—to create higher education affordability for both students and their families in Pennsylvania. Business earnings go to furthering this aim also, with funds paying first for operating costs, and then the administration of the Pennsylvania State Grant and state-funded student aid programs. As a result of PHEAA’s work, taxpayers are saved millions of dollars annually.

Just during the last full academic year, the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania provided a $266-million appropriation for the State Grant program, with the PHEAA Board of Directors designating $125 million of its earnings to benefit the program as well. Because of this, students were able to receive a maximum State Grant award of $4,340. Other assistance provided by PHEAA went to the Distance Education Pilot Program, to the tune of $10 million, and also to the Pennsylvania Targeted Industry Program, with a gift of $6 million. All of this PHEAA generosity has amounted to approximately $141 million in direct funding for student aid programs in 2015–16, and more than half a billion dollars since 2011.

In addition to monetary assistance, PHEAA also supports outreach initiatives targeting smart student spending and the avoidance of unnecessary student loans.

The employees love that the Innovation Park location offers ample free parking, a daycare within the park itself, and convenient access to bike trails.

In addition to monetary assistance, PHEAA also supports outreach initiatives targeting smart student spending and the avoidance of unnecessary student loans. PHEAA provides more than a dozen Higher Education Access Partners across the state, who provide hands-on, informative, and educational services to students and their families, educators, and community partners. The organization similarly offers interactive, online resources, such as the Pennsylvania Student Aid Guide, which provides information on the various forms of student aid, eligibility, timelines, and career planning, among other helpful topics.

From the work being performed right here in State College, to the assistance provided by PHEAA on the national stage, all of it goes back to reaching the key goal of helping students receive the education they deserve, at an affordable cost that works for their short- and long-term plans.
PENNTAP GIVES LOCAL COMPANIES TECH, ENERGY ASSISTANCE WITH A COMPETITIVE EDGE

LOCAL EXPERTS AND PENN STATE STUDENTS COME TOGETHER TO GIVE SMALL- TO MID-SIZE COMPANIES THE HELP THEY NEED

Started in 1965, the Pennsylvania Technical Assistance Program, PennTAP, is just one of many resources within Centre County and the surrounding region with the goal of seeing small- and mid-size businesses grow and flourish. A tenant at Innovation Park, they fit right along with the park’s mission of entrepreneurial and start-up support, by providing free tech assistance and a competitive edge. Part of the Penn State Outreach organization, they also offer guidance from world-class faculty, staff, and students, alongside modern tools and information on best practices.

“Many organizations in Pennsylvania are trying to remain competitive during a time when budgets are tight, competition is fierce, and technology is ever-changing. PennTAP has provided over a half-century of value to the business community through technical services and educational programming,” said PennTAP director Tanna Pugh. “Serving small and mid-sized businesses who have limited resources, PennTAP has enhanced the entrepreneurial spirit across the Commonwealth while fostering innovation in the economy.”

One of the most popular services PennTAP offers is their array of educational tools. Online training is provided via webinars, which can be found on the organization’s site long after an event takes place. In-person learning events and conferences are also available. Every event, whether online or live, encompasses one or more of the PennTAP pillars of advanced IT solutions, energy and environmental services, and innovation services.

However, Pugh stresses that these training opportunities are vitally important to not only clients, but also students. “We are educating our clients on new technology and funding mechanisms [and] at the same time providing field experience (engaged scholarship) opportunities to the many students we interact with. Students working with PennTAP have the opportunity to experience a real-world practical application of their education, as well as make connections within the community.”

Penn State students can be found in just about any area of PennTAP. There are three graduate assistants on the energy team, conducting energy assessments and assisting with technical assessment reports. Additionally, energy engineering students within the College of Earth and Mineral Sciences observe two energy assessments as part of their classes, conduct research, and provide written technical reports to clients. When funding is available, IST students assist small companies and start-ups with website assessments and development, and search engine optimization (SEO). A step further, PennTAP promotes undergraduate student entrepreneurship competitions, in what Pugh calls a “shark-tank-like atmosphere.”

In nearly every project it takes on, PennTAP also pushes its environmental initiatives. “PennTAP has had a focus on pollution prevention for many years,” says Pugh. “Our focus is on source reduction of hazardous waste; identifying more efficient use of raw materials, energy, and water; and conserving natural resources.”

This aim played a large role in what Pugh considers to be one of PennTAP’s best successes. In the case of Kurtz Bros., a paper product manufacturer located in Clearfield, PennTAP was able to successfully reduce energy costs caused by coal-fired burners and rising coal prices, while also minimizing wasted energy. Two PennTAP advisors and Penn State engineering students collected on-site data, using infrared cameras to determine areas of heat loss. Using this and additional information, they were able to determine the best short-term opportunities for decreased energy usage, while creating long-term plans to replace the coal-fired boilers with natural gas. Because of PennTAP’s involvement, Kurtz Bros. was able to achieve a short-term annual savings of approximately $12,000, with a goal of $86,500 in long-term savings.

“Serving small- and mid-sized businesses who have limited resources, PennTAP has enhanced the entrepreneurial spirit across the Commonwealth while fostering innovation in the economy.”

PennTAP’s focus is any small- or mid-size manufacturers throughout the state, however, through one of their grants there is an emphasis on the food processing industry. Currently, the organization has five full-time staff members, two part-time staff members, three graduate student assistants, and one student volunteer at Innovation Park. There are two additional staff members who are located in northern and western PA, as well as one open position. Their location at Innovation Park allows them accessibility and convenience when working alongside their partners, colleagues, and peers, both in the park (current partners include other tenants such as Invent Penn State and Ben Franklin Technology Partners) and on campus.

SINCE 2010, PENNTAP HAS...

Assisted more than 2,000 Pennsylvania organizations
Served dozens of counties
Engaged thousands of Penn State students
Created millions of dollars of economic benefits
A graduate of the Ben Franklin TechCelerator Program and runner-up at the Invent Penn State Venture & IP Conference’s Tech Tournament, AvoColor is one of State College’s most promising start-ups in the world of food science.

AvoColor is an all-natural and water-soluble food colorant that produces red, orange, and yellow hues to be used in a variety of food products. Not only is the product safe and simple to process, it’s also quite affordable, as it takes advantage of the avocado pit, typically thought of as a waste product.

Testing of AvoColor has been overseen by Dr. Gregory Ziegler, a professor of food science at Penn State, who formed Persea Naturals, AvoColor’s parent company, last summer. Dr. Ziegler has been mulling over the usefulness of the avocado pit for years (he published an academic paper on the subject in 2011, in the *Journal of Food Science*, and additional writing in 2013 in *Current Pharmaceutical Design*), and his discovery was sparked when he noticed the large differences between the chemical reactions an avocado pit undergoes, and those that occur in separate fruits and vegetables. While most turn an unsightly brown when exposed to oxygen, the avocado seeds turn bright orange.

Now, it definitely seems that Dr. Ziegler’s long history with the concept is paying off. The product has been highly successful in nearly every test that it’s up against, whether it’s being added to dairy products, baked goods, or beverages.

AvoColor is more than just an innovative and affordable new way to color food products, however. It also addresses a relevant market demand, as more consumers look for natural alternatives to synthetic food additives. While many natural color additives have a short shelf life, or low aesthetic appeal, AvoColor experiences neither of these issues, as it has both a high stability and high vibrancy.

Current natural color additives on the market are often sourced from ingredients that impact flavor or diet requirements. For example, saffron, paprika, and turmeric can be used for their colors, but can potentially change a food item’s flavor. Additionally, carmine is a popular natural color additive, but it’s an insect byproduct, making it non-kosher and unsuitable for vegetarians.

AvoColor, a totally natural, bright, and stable additive choice that’s suitable for vegetarians, and kosher and halal diets, believes it can revolutionize this $2-billion food colorant market, and that it fits nearly half of all food colorant additive demands. Down the road, it could even be considered as an additive for the cosmetics market.

For the time being, however, the company is continuing its testing using standard food processing methods, and expanding research to fully understand the potential of their new discovery.
Keystone Nano is targeting a killer that claims approximately 700,000 lives each year, with no effective treatment—liver cancer. With the company's recently unveiled Ceramide NanoLiposome (CNL), they expect to be able to effectively kill cancer cells, while leaving normal cells unharmed, a process nearly unheard of in the world of cancer therapies. This means great things for cancer patients, including reduced negative side effects that result from most traditional cancer treatments, as well as a greater likelihood of treatment success.

Of course, Keystone Nano may have never gotten to where they are today without the assistance of one of our Innovation Park residents. "Ben Franklin Technology Partners has been extremely important to Keystone Nano, providing some of our earliest funding and supporting the growth of our company with a range of strategic service. Ben Franklin funding primed the pump, allowing Keystone to secure grants, Pharma-sponsored research, and equity investments of $12 million, and is facilitating the development of a therapeutic which could have sales of many hundreds of millions of dollars," says Jeff Davidson, Keystone Nano founder and CEO.

Davidson has an impressive resume under his belt, with years of vital experience preceding his venture into the world of cancer treatments. With degrees from Purdue and the University of Minnesota, he went on to establish more than 30 years of experience in the industry, including stints as the executive director of the Penn State Bioprocessing Resource Center; founder of the Pennsylvania Biotechnology Association; publisher of a biotechnology applications magazine; and founder of a national biotechnology education nonprofit.

It was in 2005 that he turned his attention to Keystone Nano, a company which has spent the last 11 years or so working toward their goals of fighting cancer. It was Dr. Mark Kester, Keystone Nano's chief medical officer and director of NanoSTAR at the University of Virginia, who first developed the Ceramide NanoLiposome. Now, Dr. Kester is publishing extensively on its existence, allowing others to study his findings around the world. Keystone Nano has taken his work, scaled up production, conducted 13 large-scale safety studies and submitted an Investigational New Drug application to the FDA.

While the substance has shown positive results in animal models of cancer, the next step is to conduct a Phase I trial of Ceramide NanoLiposome, to discover what would be the most appropriate human dosage. The FDA gave Keystone Nano approval to begin their human trials at three universities, and the trials are set to take place at the University of Maryland, University of Virginia, and Medical University of South Carolina.

"Patients will be recruited and a dose escalation trial will be conducted to find the appropriate dose. Somewhere between 18 and 48 patients will participate in this study, and we anticipate the number will be closer to the minimum than the maximum. The study is expected to take 18 months; however, we will learn a great deal in the first six months of clinical testing," says Davidson.

After discovering the further effects that Ceramide NanoLiposome has on patients, it’ll be easier to format the product for an entirely new type of cancer treatment, specializing it for cancer types beyond liver. Already, the prior animal models have proven positive for breast cancer, pancreatic cancer, melanoma, and leukemia.

However, Ceramide NanoLiposome isn’t the only impressive project currently underway at the company. They’ve also developed what they call NanoJackets, which are created to improve the delivery of a wide array of anti-cancer compounds. Composed of materials that are generally well-tolerated by the human body, such as calcium and phosphate, the NanoJacket protects active, anti-cancer compounds during their delivery through circulation. In addition, the NanoJackets can target specific organs, or be actively guided to organs through precision therapy. This project is supported by grants from the National Cancer Institute for Oncology, and the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases.

"Keystone Nano is pleased to have a young and energetic team of researchers based near Penn State University creating and testing new anti-cancer therapies each day."
WPSU CELEBRATES MORE THAN 50 YEARS OF EDUCATION

LOCAL MEDIA PROVIDER CONTINUES TO GROW AND STIMULATE YOUNG MINDS AND COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

Some may not recognize the innovative and creative resource found right within Innovation Park. WPSU Penn State, the local PBS and NPR station, is a gathering of some of the area’s best writers, producers, educators, and entertainers, all bringing a wide array of exciting and informative media content over the airwaves of public radio and television through WPSU-TV, WPSU-FM, the newer WPSU Digital (a made-for-web series), and WPSU Creative Services (which focuses on other media projects and documentaries).

Though WPSU Penn State’s location at Innovation Park is new, the organization itself is hardly. WPSU-TV went on the air for the first time in 1965, the initial broadcast being an introductory Spanish class for elementary-age children. At that time, it was known as WPSX-TV, to be rebranded as WPSU Penn State in 2015. During this first year of operation, the station reached hundreds of thousands of students across the state, broadcasting through the school day, Mondays through Fridays. The station soon began producing its own local shows, including one, “Weather World,” that is still produced by meteorology students in Penn State’s College of Earth and Mineral Sciences today.

Over the years, they expanded to include the various facets of the operation that are seen currently, from documentary productions to on-demand digital platforms.

WPSU moved to Innovation Park in 2005, from the Wagner Building on Penn State’s campus. “The new studios allow the station to respond to current events and produce programming much more quickly,” says Greg Petersen, WPSU’s director of broadcasting. The location is also noted for its greater accessibility to collaboration resources, particularly when partnering for educational purposes.

WPSU started with children’s programming, and the outlet continues to place a large amount of emphasis on children’s education and family-friendly media. While content is made for all demographics, with stories and programs produced that have a largely local aspect, children are still a major component.

WPSU just launched a 24/7 WPSU KIDS channel alongside PBS, premiering January 16. Children can view the station on televisions or stream from digital devices at any time, and the channel is even available through popular media providers such as Amazon Fire, Roku, and Apple TV.

“The new WPSU KIDS programming brings important educational content to children that’s accessible at any time, especially during prime time, and allows families to collaboratively watch and learn together,” says Petersen. “The quality of the programming that kids interact with plays a critical role in their early development, and WPSU Penn State is dedicated to providing the resources necessary to help unlock children’s potential.”

Beyond WPSU’s media outreach, it also hosts a variety of community and family events. One big hit is the Annual Open House. Last year’s theme was Cosmic Carnival. The event took place in October and featured almost two dozen family activities, along with educational opportunities, including science projects and planetarium experiences.

“On a more mature scale, WPSU has hosted political events in the past, including a congressional debate last year, between Rep. Glenn Thompson, Republican incumbent representing Pennsylvania’s fifth congressional district, and Kerith Strano Taylor, the Democratic challenger. The event was free to attend.

Beyond just checking out the media programs and coming to one of the many events, however, WPSU engages the community in another way. They’re always looking for volunteers to work within the main office, or to lead behind-the-scenes station tours for school field trips and scout troops. Volunteering can be a great way to network, gain useful skills, and see a different side of the organization. Additionally, businesses can volunteer as a group and receive on-air recognition. WPSU will be appearing at the Bellefonte Chamber Volunteer Fair March 11, and invite you to visit their booth for more information, or you can fill out a volunteer profile online.

As for the future of WPSU, there are a few exciting changes on the horizon. The WPSU Digital platform is a new initiative, and there’s an overall bigger push on the educational front toward STEM areas. Examples of these STEM projects include SciTech Now and the Women in Science series. The online Women in Science series includes profiles of local women who are successful in STEM fields. So far, five women have been profiled, including a quality manager at Berkey Creamery, a chemist-turned-forensic-scientist, an engineer at a statistical software company, an ecologist and professor of geography, and a professor of architecture with a passion for computational textiles.
When Penn State alum William "Bill" Hallman graduated with his communications degree, he didn't anticipate returning to State College to head up a new and exciting science-based production at WPSU. Starting at WTAJ-TV in Altoona, he worked his way through the news industry with stints in Fort Myers and Miami, before finally being brought on staff at The Weather Channel. "The Weather Channel is really where my TV background and interest in science collided," he says. "I had the privilege of working with some of the world's top meteorologists every day. They loved the weather. Everything about it. I wanted to help translate that behind-the-scenes enthusiasm into entertaining and educational TV moments for our viewers. Doing that every day helped me develop a deeper appreciation for the natural world, the people that research it, and the science that makes it all possible. Basically, it really helps when you work with people who love what they do."

It was this experience with The Weather Channel that led Hallman to WPSU and SciTech Now. The program, part of WPSU's STEM initiative, is led by producers at WNET in New York, who compile science-based segments from other stations around the country, and then distribute those segments as an episode to member stations like WPSU. It's there that Hallman and his team take the media they receive and turn it into a local version of the show. With Hallman at the helm, WPSU produces, writes, and reports one local segment per episode, and also oversees the recording of studio segments with a local host. Each episode is filled with science-based education, presented in an entertaining method.

While juggling the production of such a show and its many moving parts can be stressful, there's no lack of inspiration when it comes to covering these sometimes-complex topics. "Scientists often dedicate their entire lives to a single field of research. That is amazing to me," says Hallman. "Day after day, working to advance their field for the betterment of humankind. I get to meet these people every day. I love hearing their stories and finding out what makes them tick. Yes, the technology they are working on can be amazing, but I find their personal stories just as fascinating."

It's this fascination that is translated to the screen. "I hope that our viewers can watch an episode of SciTech Now and be entertained. I also hope they learn something in the process. We've tried to tackle a lot of complicated science on the show so far, but I think we have been able to showcase it in a way that is relatable to the non-science community."

The segments specifically produced by WPSU are even garnering some attention from producers at WNET, who oversee the show's national distribution. When it comes to this recognition, Hallman credits his WPSU team for a job well done.

"Cutting-edge technology that's making an impact on the world isn't just in Silicon Valley—it's going on right within the community."

Beyond just drawing corporate eyes to WPSU's fantastic work, SciTech Now also exposes viewers to the science that's available right within Central Pennsylvania. Cutting-edge technology that's making an impact on the world isn't just found in Silicon Valley, Hallman presses—it's going on right within the community. Some of that impact is occurring in Innovation Park. "I know that Innovation Park is home to some great scientists working hard on all sorts of great ideas," says Hallman. "I want to hear from you! Send me an email. Who knows? You could be on the next episode of SciTech Now!"

See past episodes of SciTech Now on the WPSU website, at www.wpsu.psu.edu/tv/programs/scitechnow.

WANT TO GET IN TOUCH WITH BILL HALLMAN AND SCITECH NOW?

If your science endeavor would be a perfect fit for a local science segment, reach out at wjh147@psu.edu.
On Tuesday, December 6, the TechCelerator at State College wrapped up its 11th session.

After 10 weeks of classes and one-on-one mentoring sessions, the five start-ups presented their business ideas to a panel of judges and their peers with the hopes of winning $10,000 to further their projects.

The judges included Paul Sciabica, Allan Darr, and Bob Fiori—all local entrepreneurs and investors.

The winner of the evening was Peconic, a team that uses patented genomic technology to better identify and treat cancer. The company was founded by Frank Pugh, Penn State professor of biochemistry and molecular biology, along with William Lai and Nina Farrell, who work in Pugh’s lab.

Peconic is on the forefront of genetic discovery and technology. Made up of a team of scientists, the company is led by Dr. Frank Pugh, a professor of Biochemistry and Molecular Biology at Penn State University, and team members Dr. William Lai and Nina Farrell.

Utilizing ChIP-exo technology developed by Pugh, Peconic maps the precise layout of the epigenome, which is essentially the inner workings of cellular gene control systems. Dedicated to understanding the fundamental principles by which our genes are controlled, Pugh concluded that understanding these processes can yield breakthroughs in medicine. “When the control breaks down, it leads to cancer. By understanding these control processes in detail, it is hoped that we can better diagnose and treat disease,” says Pugh.

Through epigenome profiling, the company can create a tumor profile for each patient. Ultimately, they plan to build a profile database that will track which treatments each unique tumor responds to. Physicians will then be able to use the database to determine most effective treatment plan for each patient.

The Other Teams

Architects Anonymous will provide an app—and ultimately software—that analyzes a variety of factors (including geology, utilities, zoning laws, macro-climate, and micro-climate) to help individuals and professionals build more efficient houses. The app can provide suggestions for materials to use, how to utilize space, and more.

Helios has discovered a potential treatment for late stage cancers. Their novel small molecule inhibitors target the PAD4 enzyme to reduce cancer growth.

Million Concepts is a research and consulting company specializing in data analysis and archiving in astronomy and remote sensing. Over the course of the 10-week program, founder Chase Million discovered that an endoscope designed to prevent wounds would be too expensive and complicated to bring to market. Instead, he presented the valuable lessons he learned through the TechCelerator program. The judges—all seasoned entrepreneurs—assured Million that failure is a normal part of the process and commended him for all his work.

Phospholutions, a Penn State student start-up, has created a buffering agent to reduce water and fertilizer consumption and ultimately pollution. Their product, which also accelerates turf growth, is being targeted towards golf courses.

To learn more about the TechCelerator program, visit www.techceleratorstatecollege.org.

Peconic attributes much of their early success to the TechCelerator program, winning the Fall 2016 session and awarded $10,000. One of the most important things Pugh attained through this program was “learning to balance science and business objectives so that all develop in parallel.” The team also realized that “business objectives that stream out of academia often do not gain traction in the commercial space,” leading the group to explore the market segments more carefully and focus on customer needs when developing their business model.

Their Innovation Park location allows Peconic to partner with Penn State University. A portion of their work involves high capital investment, which is contracted to the university, allowing Peconic to minimize upfront fixed costs. In return, the university is able to recover some of the operating costs associated with the technology, which is used internally for academic purposes. Pugh sees the relationship as a “win-win situation.”

While Peconic remains very much in the incubator state, the plans to move forward continue. “What seems like a great scientific idea needs to be further honed into a marketable product,” states Pugh. “We are on the lookout for talented partners and team members that bring synergism to the business side.”

For more information on Peconic, visit their website at peconicgenomics.com.
Happy Valley LaunchBox held a graduation ceremony for its five Fall 2016 Accelerator Bootcamp teams on December 7. It was the third class of start-up companies to complete the 10-week program since its opening in February.

According to Lee Erickson, Chief Amplifier at LaunchBox, 32 start-up hopefuls applied for the fall program, and only five were accepted.

The five graduating teams were:
- **Musical Minds**—The first ever wellness-based music streaming service that uses brainwave-sensing headphones to recommend songs that help you focus, relax, get motivated, and feel great.
- **Rain Reality**—Creates virtual and holographic learning modules using augmented and virtual realities for universities, museums, and other educational institutions.
- **Stock’d**—A subscription food service that delivers home-cooked meals directly to the doors of college students.
- **Visionese**—A virtual tour company that combines 360-degree panoramic and aerial drone photography to deliver next-generation experiences for remote users.
- **What’s Poppin’**—An online centralized platform that helps students search for and discover unique events around campus.

The teams lived up to their potential of accomplishing amazing things during just 10 weeks. **Musical Minds** just finished prototypes for both its app and TRILLS headphones. **Rain Reality** will soon work with Penn State World Campus to create virtual modules. **Stock’d** founder Ben Sparango says he plans to rent an industrial kitchen in State College, acquire food licensing, and fully launch the business this spring. **What’s Poppin’** has launched a beta website and will soon launch apps for Apple and Android. And **Visionese** founder Tim Ko made a bold announcement that he recently quit his full time job to pursue his start-up.

All five teams are fully committed to continuing the growth of their companies going forward, and perhaps most importantly, are passionate about what they have started.

"I truly believe this will change the world," Ko said of his company’s technology.

Joe Kitonga, founder of **What’s Poppin’**, said that all the hard work is worth it to see his creation making a difference for people.

"The feedback that we got from people validated that we’re doing something people actually care about," he said.

The ceremony consisted of a three-minute “rocket pitch” presentation from each team, followed by a Q&A session. It ended with parting gifts from the LaunchBox staff to the graduates: Mugs and portable phone chargers with each team's logo on them, to “keep them and their phones caffeinated.” The young entrepreneurs can surely use the energy boost as they take the next steps in making their dreams a reality.

The Happy Valley LaunchBox spring session is under way now, and applications for the summer 2017 accelerator program are open until April 9.

Learn more about Happy Valley LaunchBox at www.launchbox.psu.edu.
Innovation Park’s coolBLUE Community is an employee engagement program that aims to provide a dynamic environment and make a positive impact on the quality of work-life for employees in the park. Networking, workshops, field trips, lunch programs, walking and running clubs, and other activities help companies in the park connect with each other, and retain their top talent.

The coolBLUE community also promotes opportunities available to employees, like fitness memberships and restaurant discounts at the Penn Stater.

Events, activities, and other opportunities are promoted through a regular coolBLUE e-newsletter. Are you a park employee who would like to receive our e-newsletter? Contact the coolBLUE Lady, Michelle Cook, at coolbluelady@psu.edu to get on the list, and for more information.

EVENT HIGHLIGHTS

- Tour of the Arboretum at Penn State
- Tour of the Morningstar Solar Home at Penn State
- Musical performances by Sphinx Virtuosi Quartet, Sybarite 5, and Windscape—all brought to us by the Classical Music Program from the Center for Performing Arts
- Salsa classes taught at the Technology Center building
- Yoga in the Park, weekly classes taught by Elizabeth Hay
- Ice Cream social with demonstrations from the 4-H Robotics Club
- Food Drive to benefit the State College Area Food Bank
- Marine Corps Toys for Tots
- Stockings for the Troops
- Park-wide picnic
- Various GreenTeam events

2016 Fall Picnic had over 650 park employees in attendance!

PLANNED EVENTS

- Tour of the Millennium Science Complex
- Tour of Pegula Ice Arena
- Tour of the Stuckeman School of Architecture
- Tour of the CIMP-3D facility
- Walking group for summer/fall
- Park picnic in late summer
- Rita’s Italian Ice summer visits
- And much more!

Tour of the Morningstar Solar Home at Penn State

The 2016 Fall Picnic had over 650 park employees in attendance!

Innovationpark.psu.edu
The Penn State EdTech Network is an organization that is devoted to fostering collaboration among companies, students, faculty, staff, and alumni. Their goal is to transform education through the use of technology and promote Penn State’s World Campus. The EdTech Network is part of President Barron’s $30 million Invent Penn State Initiative. The purpose of this initiative is to create job opportunities, kick start economic growth, and increase student career success by connecting researchers with individuals who can make their findings marketable.

Network Leaders
The EdTech Network executive leaders have a lifetime of experience in higher education and private industry. They are dedicated to online learning, and many have had an affiliation with Penn State since 1998, when World Campus was created.

Network Partners
The EdTech Network partners include individuals and organizations that provide products or services that support World Campus. Each partner is equally dedicated to the use of technology to promote higher education and student growth. Partners are encouraged to co-locate so they can work more closely with the university technology program to establish needs and meet goals. These network partners include: Insidetrack, Dreamit, Campus Management, and tutor.com.

BIG IDEA Contest
The Penn State EdTech Network is always looking for new education technology ideas and initiatives to promote entrepreneurship. One of the ways that they are fostering this creative process is through their BIG IDEA Contest. This contest is powered by Ben Franklin Technology Partners and co-sponsored by the Penn State Small Business Development Center. The purpose of this contest is to use technology to create a new learning environment for students of all ages.

With the contest in full-swing, the finalists are currently in the process of developing their two-page investment summaries. The final judging will take place on March 1. The contest prize packages are as follows: First place: $35,000; Second place: $7,500; and Third place: $2,500. For more details, go to http://edtechnetwork.psu.edu/watson.

Company Involvement
The EdTech Network is always looking for new members to join their organization. Companies that collaborate with the EdTech Network have the opportunity to take part in the technological transformation of education. Companies are given the opportunity to partner with Penn State and have their product or service applied to future research.

Entrepreneur Involvement
The EdTech Network is also looking to partner with entrepreneurs. The Network believes that their knowledge of how to compete and succeed in the business world is an incredibly valuable asset. Even if entrepreneurs are not in the State College area, the EdTech Network is willing to work with them and find ways to localize their ideas.

Student Involvement
The EdTech Network encourages students, as well as faculty and staff, to get involved with their organization. Students and faculty prove to be a useful resource to the Penn State community, and the network is always looking for new ways to improve the technological aspects of the education system. Their ultimate goal is to develop ways to advance the teaching and learning aspects of Penn State’s technology-based education.

The EdTech Network aligns with Innovation Park’s mission, which is to “provide an ecosystem where business, education, and research come together.” Its advocacy of Penn State’s World Campus encourages higher education through the use of technology. This network provides companies, entrepreneurs, and students with an opportunity to grow and transform their ideas into real products and services. The members of the EdTech Network are constantly trying to change and improve Penn State’s technological landscape and create a better learning experience.

To learn more about Penn State EdTech Network, and to read a Q&A with Director Daren Coudriet, go to innovationpark.psu.edu.
On January 17, the Pennsylvania Department of Community and Economic Development (DCED) Secretary Dennis Davin visited the Technology Center Incubator as part of the “Jobs that Pay” Tour. The tour is an effort by state agencies to promote good-paying, family-sustaining jobs and career paths available to job-seekers across the commonwealth, and to listen and learn from employers and employees about workforce development needs.

The tour stop highlights the impact that the Technology Center has on entrepreneurship and innovation in the region. The Technology Center Incubator is a key part of Penn State’s Innovation Park network, offering business support to early-stage entrepreneurs, inventors, and Penn State faculty. It provides 118-acres of office, manufacturing, and research space, and is part of one of the world’s premier research institutions, with access to Penn State’s scientific, engineering, technology, and business resources, as well as the support services.

“Governor Wolf has placed an emphasis on fostering the continued growth and achievement of Pennsylvania’s entrepreneurs,” said Sec. Davin. “Incubators are excellent resources in reaching this goal because they provide an array of business services and support including physical working space, capital, coaching, and networking connections, which can set young entrepreneurial efforts off on a path to success.”

The primary focus of the Department of Community and Economic Development is to foster opportunities for businesses to grow and for communities to succeed and thrive in a global economy. Their mission is to improve the quality of life for Pennsylvania citizens while assuring transparency and accountability in the expenditure of public funds.

The Ben Franklin Technology Partners of Central and Northern PA, the largest early-stage seed investor in the region and an initiative of the DCED funded by the Ben Franklin Technology Development Authority (BFTDA) helps support the efforts of the Technology Center Incubator by providing funding, operational assistance, and business mentoring to the Incubator’s tenants. “Ben Franklin makes investments not only in the new technologies developed by the start-ups and small manufacturers located in our footprint, but also in innovative business support programs, including our Ben Franklin TechCelerator@StateCollege and the Technology Center Incubator,” said Stephen Brawley, president and CEO of the Ben Franklin Technology Partners of Central and Northern PA. “We are pleased that many of our TechCelerator graduates take the next step in moving their business forward by availing themselves of the services and space provided by the Incubator.”

For more information about the “Jobs that Pay” Tour and the DCED, visit dced.pa.gov.

Penn State’s Lion LaunchPad, created in 2009, was designed to promote student entrepreneurship by helping them turn innovative product and service concepts into viable start-up companies. This is achieved through mentorship and by providing workspace, business programs, and grants to student entrepreneurs. Aiming to support students in all majors, Lion LaunchPad develops the entrepreneurial mindset, skills, and desire to seek opportunities for innovation and positive change.

Students participating in the Lion LaunchPad program are supported in their endeavors in various ways. Lion LaunchPad awards grants, averaging between $300 and $500. They also accept applicants into their Business Accelerator Program, which supports about 12 small projects each year, depending on available funding. Through the Business Accelerator Program, students develop their ideas through planning, creating, and receiving feedback. Participation requires students to attend weekly meetings, bi-monthly work sessions and dinners, and to connect with director and faculty advisors. As participants progress through the program, they launch their businesses and continue to grow by preparing for investment, networking, advertising, and finalizing plans.

The heart of the Lion LaunchPad program is mentorship, providing students access to Penn State alumni, faculty, entrepreneurs, intrapreneurs, and experienced business people from all disciplines. The goal is to link the mentors with specific skills, experiences, and interests with students working in that same area.

“The purpose of Lion LaunchPad is to provide an umbrella in which undergraduate students at University Park can have access to non-credit opportunities and support,” states Anne Hoag, Penn State College of Communications and Lion LaunchPad co-director. With the explosion of the local entrepreneurship ecosystem, Lion LaunchPad is taking a second look at their role in supporting student entrepreneurship, shifting away from the traditional accelerator concept. “We will point students to the best resources to help them reach their goals,” explains Hoag. “We have an 18-credit Entrepreneurship minor, but students need mentoring and resources outside of the minor. That’s where Lion LaunchPad comes in.”

Next year, Lion LaunchPad will offer a Special Living Option for up to 20 incoming freshmen in the North Hall. Students will be living and connecting with fellow entrepreneurs, collaborating with others who share the same passion for starting something new. Lion LaunchPad relies on donations to keep the program going. Donors make an impact by funding seed grants, loans, equity investments, access to Lion LaunchPad facility, and plans for the future of the program.

Students and potential donors interested in the Lion LaunchPad program can find more information on their website, lionlaunchpad.psu.edu.
Innovation Park offers a wide range of facilities that benefit many colleges on the Penn State campus, including the College of Communications. Located in the 101 building is the CommMedia newsroom and multimedia production facility. This facility includes cutting-edge, high-definition televisions for news and sports productions. It also encompasses 30 Mac Pro computers that are used for various media production roles, including video editing, video encoding, photo editing, audio recording, and video playback. The Mac Pros are linked to an internal system that allows students to access their work from any computer in the facility.

Penn State Staff Multimedia Specialist Brian Shoensfelt works in the Innovation Park CommMedia labs to support the students who produce Centre County Report and other related endeavors in the College of Communications. The Centre County Report is an award-winning weekly program produced by students in the capstone broadcast journalism class in the College of Communications.

“Students are able to use the newsroom and labs here at Innovation Park to hone their skills as journalists in a very real-world environment, allowing them to experience the challenges facing a working journalist before they get their first job,” says Shoensfelt. He adds, “The newsroom, studios, and lab space here are an essential part of our communications students’ lives. Many of them spend upwards of more than twenty hours per week at our facilities at Innovation Park.”

PSU senior Maddie Brightman is a broadcast journalism and Spanish major. She is the General Manager at CommRadio and an Executive Producer for the Centre County Report. At Innovation Park, Brightman points out that CommMedia majors like herself “have access to industry standard equipment like cameras and sound boards, but also have the opportunity to work in state-of-the-art studios and learn in a hands-on manner that will prepare us for the future.”

While filming, students use high-definition cameras that allow for tapeless workflow. The content that they produce is then broadcast locally and shown through an HD campus channel that can be found on the College of Communications student media website, commmedia.psu.edu.

Brightman continued, “I spend almost all of my time at Innovation Park. For students in the College of Comm, Innovation Park is a home away from home. I often like to think of it as a little getaway from campus and a place you can come both to be productive and have fun. The equipment we have access to and the hands-on opportunities have helped me thrive as a student and learn new things about the industry.”

Also located in the 101 building is an equipment center with audio and video equipment available for student use. There is a film-video shooting space complete with a lighting grid, blackout curtain, and specialized equipment for in the film program. The Finestra Digital Editing Lab provides support for the telecommunications, broadcast journalism, and film-video programs. This lab is generally open 70 hours per week.

The College of Communications also has resources located in the 103 building at Innovation Park. This building contains the Digital Audio Laboratory. The lab has an on-air broadcast studio and 10 digital audio workstations featuring Hindenburg Journalist Pro editing software. These workstations also feature other software including: Audacity, GarageBand, iTunes, QuickTime, and Associated Press wire service. All of the digital audio workstations are linked to a central server that allow students to access their work from any computer within the lab.

The Digital Broadcast News Laboratory is similar to the Digital Audio Laboratory. This lab also features an on-air broadcast studio and 10 digital audio workstations equipped with Hindenburg editing software and Associated Press wire service.

There is also a television studio located in building 103. This studio features the latest HD digital technology in its control room and studio. This studio is available for recording and broadcasting productions by both students and faculty. This space provides students with both on-air and behind-the-scenes experience. This television studio has the capacity to be run as a news station.

When asked what she likes about Innovation Park location best, student Maddie Brightman answered without hesitation: “The people—Innovation Park is its own community. When people ask me where my favorite place on campus is, my go-to answer is IP—even if it doesn’t technically count! Innovation Park is not only a great learning environment, but it is also a place where you can make relationships with your peers and professors. I always find myself out here longer than needed because I’m having fun and am enjoying the people I am working with.”
SBDC Seminars
SBDC courses, seminars, and conferences provide up-to-date, practical information on a wide variety of business topics and are designed to educate entrepreneurs about new and innovative management procedures. The programs teach basic business skills as well as more advanced and specific business management. These low-cost workshops feature experts and leaders from industry, government, higher education, and professional associations.

The First Step of Starting a Business
When: March 7, April 4, and May 7, 9:00 a.m.–12:00 p.m.
Where: State College, PA
Cost: $20.00
Have you always had a dream to start your own business but didn’t know where to start? This workshop will help.

Learn more: sbdc.psu.edu/events

CBICC Events: Strengthen and Grow Your Professional Circle
CBICC Business After Hours are held from 5:30 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. The cost to attend is $5 for members; $20 for nonmembers. All employees of a member business receive the member rate, so be sure to invite your coworkers and team. Business After Hours are a great way to learn more about Centre County’s business community while enhancing your professional network.

CBICC Business After Hours Events
March 2: Jabco Auto Sales & Service
March 16: Saint Joseph’s Catholic Academy
March 30: Above the Valley Special Event Center by Harrison’s
April 27: Home Delivery State College
May 11: Central Pennsylvania Convention and Visitors Bureau
June 8: Hearthside Rehabilitation & Nursing Center

Learn more: cbicc.com

Building Local Business Through Tourism
The Central Pennsylvania Convention & Visitors Bureau (CPCVB) is a nonprofit, membership-based organization that promotes travel-related activities and coordinates visitor services to bring people to Central Pennsylvania and boost economic activity. Membership connects local businesses to a network of business professionals who understand that travel and tourism are vital to the overall wealth and economic strength of the region.

The CPCVB operates the Centre County/Penn State Visitor Center, a state-of-the-art facility serving hundreds of visitors each day. Guests can find out what’s happening in the area and pick up brochures on Central PA Businesses, attractions, and outdoor recreation. The Center is open and staffed seven days a week.

Learn more: visitpennstate.org

PEOPLE OF THE PARK
TONY DE LUCA USES PIE AS A PLATFORM TO FIGHT MULTIPLE SCLEROSIS

Tony De Luca is the senior director at Siemens PLM Software, one of the more recent tenants to join Innovation Park, and already he says that the company is noticing the great difference Innovation Park makes within their work community, by, instead of isolating it, expanding it.

“In our previous office location we were isolated in a single tenant building aside a residential neighborhood,” he says. “It’s great to now be part of a community of professionals where we can interact, whether it be waiting in line at a food truck or looking forward to participating in future park events.”

De Luca and his peers are actually using these newfound connections in an interesting way—to support a worthy cause in a fun (and admittedly tasty) manner.

“Our office is a strong supporter of the National Multiple Sclerosis Society. Our company is also one of the sponsors for the upcoming MS Walk fundraising event that will take place on PSU’s campus April 30,” says De Luca. The Innovation Park location particularly has been affected by the disease, when a friend and co-worker passed away in July 2015. “Associated with this event, we are conducting a fundraiser that we are hoping will interest others here in Innovation Park in supporting this great cause.”

As some may know, March 14 is Pi Day, often celebrated in math classes around the country with a healthy helping of everyone’s other favorite pie, whether it be cherry, apple, or any other variety. On this day, De Luca’s team and The Pie Shoppe of Laughlintown, PA, are pairing up to deliver a fresh pie straight to your Innovation Park office door, with the proceeds going toward the MS Walk fundraiser.

“Each baked good is $10 and will make a great office treat or can be taken home for a delicious family dessert,” says De Luca. “We are hoping for strong support from our new Innovation Park neighbors. It’s opportunities like this that make us so excited to be part of the Innovation Park community.”
#1 Recruiter Ranking
A *Wall Street Journal* survey found that Penn State is #1 among recruiters from leading companies, nonprofits, and government agencies because of its focus on teaching practical skills that give companies the greatest return on their recruiting investment.

Top City for Entrepreneurs
State College was named one of the “15 Best U.S. Cities for Entrepreneurs to Live and Launch” by *Entrepreneur* magazine, citing the town’s “promising unemployment rate and business growth rate” and proximity to Penn State’s University Park campus.

Top Place to Live and Launch
*CNN Money* named Happy Valley one of the top towns for business owners and start-ups because of its mix of business advantages and lifestyle appeal.

NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC: Adventure Town
*National Geographic* named State College one of the country’s top adventure towns—encouraging out-of-towners to spend a long weekend here.

Both Penn State and State College have long been favorites on “best of” lists—and it’s no wonder: somehow we have found the perfect combination of big city fun and small town benefits, with college town energy added in like a shot of adrenaline.

But what makes websites like *The Wall Street Journal*, *Entrepreneur* magazine, *CNN Money*, and *National Geographic* take notice of us? This infographic breaks it down!
Recruit and Retain Top Talent with Innovation Park’s coolBLUE Community

The Innovation Park community offers:
- Resources and a network for start-ups and expanding businesses
- World-class research facilities and meeting spaces
- Access to top talent and cutting-edge technology from Penn State
- Employee perks, including opportunities for fun, fitness, and personal and professional development
- Daycare services right inside the park

If you’re interested in learning more about space in the park, contact Dan Leri at 814-865-5925.