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GOVERNOR HASLAM, COMMISSIONER HAGERTY ANNOUNCE STATEWIDE REGIONAL ENTREPRENEURIAL ACCELERATORS

Nine Accelerators Will Provide Tennessee Entrepreneurs with Mentoring and Support

NASHVILLE, Tenn. – Tennessee Gov. Bill Haslam and Economic and Community Development Commissioner Bill Hagerty announced today nine Regional Entrepreneurial Accelerators will be established throughout the state to assist Tennessee entrepreneurs. The accelerators will provide mentoring, education and training, strategic and technical support, and assistance identifying sources of capital.

“The Regional Entrepreneurial Accelerators will be an incredible asset throughout Tennessee to help aspiring entrepreneurs launch and grow their businesses with expert mentoring and support,” Haslam said. “Startup companies have the potential to be a significant source of job creation, and we want to give local entrepreneurs their best chances for success as we work to make Tennessee the No. 1 location in the Southeast for high quality jobs.”

“Despite the economic challenges our state and country continue to face, the entrepreneurial spirit is alive and well in Tennessee,” Hagerty said. “The Regional Entrepreneurial Accelerators will help promising entrepreneurs with the resources necessary to propel their companies along the spectrum of business growth and job creation.”

Accelerators will be located in each of the nine Jobs4TN Jobs Base Camp regions to assist area entrepreneurs as they develop business plans and launch companies that have the potential to create new jobs. Each accelerator will become a foundational component of the region’s economic development strategy while creating a network of partnerships and mentors within the local business community, the statewide investor base, higher education, non-profits and government.

A \$250,000 grant will be awarded to each of the nine Regional Entrepreneurial Accelerators as a result of a competitive grant application process. Each application was judged by multiple reviewers and assigned a composite score based on how effectively it responded to the program criteria. The grant funding is a combination of state and federal dollars and contingent upon each accelerator providing at minimum an additional \$250,000 in local matching support.

The Regional Entrepreneurial Accelerators and partnering organizations include:

- ***Northeast Region: East Tennessee State University, Bureau of Business and Economic Research, Johnson City***

Partners: First Tennessee Development District, Eastman Credit Union, Mountain States Health Alliance, the Johnson City Power Board, Bristol Tennessee Essential Services, community leaders Scott Niswonger and Pal Barger, Milligan College, Tusculum College, Northeast State Technical Community College, the Tennessee Small Business Development Center and the economic development agencies in each of the eight counties which make up the Northeast Tennessee region.

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- **East Region: University of Tennessee, Anderson Center for Entrepreneurship and Innovation, Knoxville**
Partners: Oak Ridge National Laboratory, Knoxville-Oak Ridge Innovation Valley, Tech 20/20, UT Research Foundation, Knoxville Chamber of Commerce, Oak Ridge Economic Partnership, 3 Degrees LLC, Pellissippi State Community College, Roane State Community College, UT Extension, UT Center for Industrial Services, Claris Networks, Development Corporation of Knox County, Entrepreneurs' Organization - East Tennessee Chapter, Entrepreneurs of Knoxville, Tennessee Veterans Business Association, Entrepreneurial Transitions, Sensible HR Solutions, SociallyU, Tennessee Small Business Development Centers and multiple private capital firms.
- **Southeast Region: The Company Lab, Chattanooga**
Partners: The Enterprise Center, Chattanooga Area Chamber of Commerce, Lyndhurst Foundation, CreateHere, EPB, Chattanooga Neighborhood Enterprise, Chattanooga Technology Council, Chattanooga Regional Manufacturers Association, Launch, Bethlehem Center, Urban League of Greater Chattanooga, Lamp Post Group, Chattanooga Renaissance Fund, Blank Slate Ventures, University of Tennessee Chattanooga, UTC SIM Center Enterprises and Covenant College.
- **Upper Cumberland Region: Roane State Community College, Crossville**
Partners: Tennessee Technological University, Upper Cumberland Development District, Tennessee Small Business Development Centers, Motlow State Community College, Nashville State Community College, Fentress County Chamber of Commerce, Byrdstown-Picket County Chamber of Commerce, Crossville-Cumberland County Chamber, University of Tennessee Center for Industrial Services, First National Bank of Tennessee, East Tennessee Human Resource Agency/Local Workforce Investment Area 4, Tennessee Career Center Local Workforce Investment Board Area 7 and the Cumberland Business Incubator.
- **Northern Middle Region: Nashville Entrepreneur Center, Nashville**
Partners: Avenue Bank; Baker Donelson; Bass, Berry & Sims; Belmont University; Bone McAllester Norton; Bradley Arant Boult Cummings; C3 Consulting; Clayton Associates; Cole Designs; Complete Holdings Group; Council Capital; Denovo Concepts; EMMA, Inc; Interior Design Services; Lattimore Black Morgan & Cain; Lipscomb University; Michael Shmerling Partners, GP; Flo Thinkery; Nashville Area Chamber of Commerce; Nashville Capital Network; Nashville Healthcare Council; Nashville Technology Council; Orchard Advisors; Pinnacle Financial Partners; Qualifacts; Solidus Company; Stringfellow Technology Group; Vanderbilt University; Waddey & Patterson; Waller Landsten Dortch & Davis; Williamson County Economic Development; TSBDC; Middle Tennessee Industrial Development Association; City of Kingston Springs; City of Ashland City; Cheatham County Chamber of Commerce; Cheatham Connect, ECD; Nashville Area Hispanic Chamber of Commerce; Dickson County Chamber of Commerce; Houston County; Humphreys County Chamber of Commerce; Night Stalker Association; Clarksville-Montgomery County Economic Development Council; Robertson County Chamber of Commerce; Rutherford County Chamber of Commerce; Middle Tennessee State University College of Business; Mind2Marketplace; Stewart County Chamber of Commerce; Hendersonville Area Chamber of Commerce; Vol State Community College; Gallatin EDA; Four Lake Regional Industrial Development Authority; City of Fairview; Cool Springs Chamber of Commerce; Wilson County; and Cumberland University Labry School of Business & Technology.
- **Southern Middle Region: Southern Middle Tennessee Entrepreneur Centers, Inc./South Central Tennessee Workforce Alliance, multiple locations including Spring Hill, Clifton, Tullahoma and Fayetteville**
Partners: Columbia State Community College, Martin Methodist, Maury County Alliance, Motlow State Community College, University of Tennessee Research Foundation, Fayetteville-Lincoln County IDB, Pulaski-Giles County EDC, University of Tennessee Space Institute, Wayne County ECD, NEST-TN, LLC, Nashville Entrepreneur Center, Solidus Company, Tullahoma Business Incubator, Workforce Solutions and South Central Tennessee Development District.

- **Southwest Region: Jackson State Community College, Jackson**
Partners: Southwest Tennessee Development District, Small Business Development Center, West Tennessee Industrial Association, Union University, Jackson Downtown Develop Corporation, TLM Associates Inc Architects & Engineers, The University of Memphis Lambuth Campus, Jackson Area Chamber of Commerce, University of Tennessee Center for Industrial Services and local chambers of commerce and county governments.
- **Northwest Region: Northwest Tennessee Development District, Martin**
Partners: University of Tennessee at Martin; Dyersburg State Community College; Dyersburg Dyer County Chamber of Commerce; Greater Humboldt Chamber of Commerce; Paris-Henry County Chamber of Commerce; Obion County Joint Economic Development Council; Weakley County Chamber of Commerce; Weakley County Economic Development Board; Alt. Consulting; First State Bank; REED Center (Regional Entrepreneurship & Economic Development); Alexander, Thompson, Arnold Accounting; and Small Business Development Centers of Martin and Dyersburg, Benton, Crockett, and Gibson Counties.
- **Greater Memphis Region: Memphis Bioworks, Memphis**
Partners: Bartlett Area Chamber of Commerce, City of Covington, City of Memphis, City of Ripley, Covington/Tipton Chamber of Commerce, Dyersburg State Community College/Jimmy Naifeh Center, EmergeMemphis, Fayette County Government, Greater Memphis Chamber of Commerce, The Growth Coach, HTL Advantage, Innova Memphis, Lauderdale County Government, Launch Memphis, Memphis Area Association of Governments, Memphis ED, Memphis Research Consortium, The MMBC Continuum, Seed Hatchery, Shelby County Government, Shelby County Chambers of Commerce Alliance, Solidus, Tipton County Government, The University of Memphis FedEx Institute of Technology and The University of Tennessee Research Foundation.

The Regional Entrepreneurial Accelerator Program is part of the INCITE initiative Gov. Haslam announced in May that is designed to support innovation across the state and drive growth in the creation of knowledge-based jobs. INCITE is named for its focus on innovation, commercialization, investment, technology and entrepreneurship.

The INCITE initiative includes two distinct entrepreneurial components: the regional accelerators and the previously announced Startup Tennessee. The Startup Tennessee program is a statewide public-private partnership that will connect and provide consulting support to the accelerators, while leveraging best practices and the national network of the Startup America Partnership. For more information on Startup Tennessee, please visit <http://tennessee.startupamericapartnership.org/>.

ECD will be working closely with each Regional Entrepreneurial Accelerator over the coming weeks to launch their program activities locally. Entrepreneurs or startup businesses seeking additional information about the Regional Accelerator Program or Startup Tennessee can contact the department directly at ecd.innovation@tn.gov or visit <http://www.tn.gov/ecd/Innovation.html>.

About the Tennessee Department of Economic and Community Development

The Tennessee Department of Economic and Community Development's mission is to develop strategies which help make Tennessee the No. 1 location in the Southeast for high quality jobs. The department seeks to attract new corporate investment in Tennessee and works with Tennessee companies to facilitate expansion and economic growth. To find out more, go to www.tn.gov/ecd.