



## Updates from the Office of Economic Development

### Inaugural NextGen Skilled Trades Day a Success!

More than 300 attendees participated in the first-ever NextGen Skilled Trades Day, celebrating hands-on learning and the many rewarding career opportunities in the trades at Piedmont Virginia Community College on Saturday, October 4th.

Over 30 exhibitor stations came together to showcase in-demand professions—from construction and automotive to renewable energy and welding. Students, parents, and career seekers engaged in live demonstrations, tried out tools of the trade, and connected directly with employers, educators, and training providers.

One parent shared, *"Thank you for doing this! It was really great to be able to speak with people and get a feel for the different trades. Anne from Alloy impressed me because she found a way to connect with my son who doesn't necessarily fit the tradesman stereotype. She immediately zeroed in on his strengths!"*

A local career counselor added, *"Students and parents need to be educated about alternative paths to college. I appreciate you highlighting this awesome career path."*

The enthusiasm extended to schools and employers alike. PVCC's Skilled Trades Program Manager Scott Ishler noted, *"We were busy the whole time and that means a lot of people know about our programs that didn't before."* Exhibitor Beth Lucchesi from Carter Myers Automotive shared, *"What a great event! I participate in so many events during the school year, but this was exceptionally well done! We are already looking forward to next year!"*

DJ Double U kept the energy high with upbeat music, announcements and shoutouts to the many sponsors and partners who made the day possible.

OED would like to thank all of our exhibitors for sharing your talent and knowledge with the next generation and all of our sponsors for investing in the future of our region's workforce.

A special thank you to our generous partners: Piedmont Virginia Community College, Martin Horn, Charlottesville Regional Chamber of Commerce, Blue Ridge Home Builders Association, Dominion Custom Homes, Charlottesville Remodeling Company, Arrowhead Excavating, and Charlottesville Area Technical Education Center – thank you for your vision and collaboration bringing this event to life. Until next year!





## Mall Ambassador Services Coming Soon

The City's Office of Economic Development and Parks and Recreation Department have jointly entered into a contract with Block by Block to provide Ambassador services on the Downtown Mall. This Mall Ambassador team will serve as friendly guides, caretakers, and problem-solvers to make our downtown area safer, cleaner, and more welcoming. The ambassadors will complement the core cleaning work done by Parks staff and add over 200 hours per week of additional presence and support to the downtown area. Block by Block has 30 years of experience providing ambassador services in over 190 business districts and downtowns across the country. While the ambassadors will be engaging and friendly to all, the city is separately developing a team of homeless outreach coordinators to handle engagement and service provision for the unhoused. You can expect to see Ambassador services on the Downtown Mall in early 2026.

## Join Us for Coffee & Conversations - A Workforce Mingle

Friday Oct. 17th | 9:30-10:30AM

Charlottesville  
OFFICE OF  
ECONOMIC  
DEVELOPMENT

# Coffee & Conversations

**Workforce Mingle**

A casual gathering of local jobseekers and employers to share and explore opportunities, skills and networking - all over coffee.

Charlottesville  
ALBEMARLE COUNTY, VIRGINIA

\*RSVP: [bichej@charlottesville.gov](mailto:bichej@charlottesville.gov)

Start your morning with a cup of coffee and a great conversation! The City of Charlottesville's Office of Economic Development invites local jobseekers, employers, and workforce partners to join us for Coffee & Conversations — a relaxed and engaging networking event designed to spark meaningful connections and explore local career opportunities. It's our version of a relaxed mini job fair!

Whether you're looking to hire, job hunt, or simply learn about the latest workforce initiatives in our community, this informal "workforce mingle" offers the perfect opportunity to share ideas, exchange insights, and build relationships — all over coffee.

The event is free and open to all, but we ask that you **RSVP to [bichej@charlottesville.gov](mailto:bichej@charlottesville.gov)** by Wednesday, October 15. Jobseekers, bring copies of your resume. Employers and Workforce partners, bring your business cards. Come ready to chat, connect, and collaborate toward a stronger local workforce.

## Data Centric Summit 2025: Unlocking the Future of Data

The Data Centric Summit 2025 (DCS25) is coming to Charlottesville, Virginia this fall! Data professionals, technologists, researchers, and government stakeholders will be meeting at the CODE Building, on the Downtown Mall, Thursday, November 6, 2025, to explore the evolving data landscape, spotlight innovation, and build community across sectors.



Data is no longer a back-office utility — it's central to strategic decision making, policy, security, and innovation. At DCS25, you'll gain strategic insights from expert keynote speakers and panelists across data governance, data security, AI/ML, infrastructure, and emerging technologies; participate in hands-on workshops and technical deep dives to help translate strategy into action; and gain exposure to next-gen tools & solutions via exhibitors and demos, helping you stay ahead of innovation curves. A career fair component — new for 2025 — will connect professionals, job seekers, and employers in data, AI, cybersecurity, and related fields.

Hosted by the AFCEA Central Virginia chapter, DCS25 will include a variety of keynote addresses, panel discussions, and breakout sessions designed to appeal to a broad cross-section of experienced professionals and those who are new to the field. Opportunities to network with individuals from government, industry, academia, and local tech ecosystems will only serve to grow each attendee's network.

Whether you're a data engineer, analyst, architect, CIO, researcher, or policymaker, or if you are simply intrigued by the power of data, this summit is for you! Visit the official event website: **DCS25 – Data Centric Summit 2025** for more information.

## City and County to Hold Joint EDA Board Meeting

The Economic Development Authority (EDA) Boards for the City of Charlottesville and Albemarle County will hold a joint meeting next week. Following on the success of last year's historic joint meeting, this year's gathering will allow the board members to receive an update from the Central Virginia Partnership for Economic Development on regional efforts to establish an Innovation Corridor. Staff from both localities will also share updates on their respective economic development strategic plans. A time of discussion will follow with a focus on opportunities for continued collaboration between the two localities as we work to enhance and diversify the area's business community.

The meeting is open to the public and will be held Tuesday, October 14th, at 4:00 pm in the Albemarle County Office Building (401 McIntire Road, Room 241, Charlottesville VA 22902).

## Charlottesville Business Resource Fair

Join **Community Investment Collaborative** at their Charlottesville Resource Fair on **Wednesday, November 12, 2025**, from **12:00 PM to 4:00 PM** at the **Hillsdale Conference Center, 550 Hillsdale Drive, Charlottesville, VA 22901**.

This is your chance to connect with a wide range of business professionals all in one room. Whether you need help with accounting, marketing, human resources, or social media, this event offers free, one-on-one consultations to help you strengthen and grow your business. You can even meet with attorneys, financial planners, and branding experts ready to share practical guidance tailored to your needs.

Spots fill quickly, so don't wait, **register** today before sessions are booked. Take advantage of this incredible opportunity to access expert advice and valuable resources designed to support your entrepreneurial journey.

## Business Spotlight

Rami Daniel is the owner and operator of **Thyme & Co.**, a restaurant specializing in **authentic Lebanese cuisine** made fresh daily. Rami opened the business in 2019, after relocating to Charlottesville when his wife accepted a position at UVA.

Thyme & Co. is best known for its **freshly made flatbread**, prepared right in front of customers, and for using **imported ingredients from Lebanon**, such as olive oil and grains, to maintain authentic flavor. Rami chose a location at The Corner for its steady foot traffic, though he admits it comes with challenges. "The slow seasons are tough," he shared. "When students are away, locals don't often visit The Corner."

Inspired by his love of cooking and a desire to share Lebanese culture through food, Rami has built a loyal following of **UVA students and staff**. As a business owner focused on the local community, he gives back by fundraising and collaborating with the **Cystic Fibrosis Foundation, along with other local organizations**. He will be serving at this year's **Charlottesville Brewers Ball**, allowing guests to sample his food while supporting a meaningful cause.

Rami says what keeps him motivated is the continued support of his customers and his passion for bringing people together through food. His advice for aspiring entrepreneurs: *"Don't start a restaurant, it's a real labor of love."* One of his proudest milestones was **surviving the pandemic**. He ran the entire restaurant alone to stay afloat, a true testament to his determination and resilience.

Rami invites the Charlottesville community to **visit Thyme & Co. on The Corner** (104 14th St NW) so everyone can experience his great dishes firsthand. He also offers **catering for all occasions**, from small gatherings to large corporations and weddings.

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## OED Fun Fact

October in Charlottesville marks the return of the Virginia Film Festival, now celebrating its 38th year. This five-day event draws approximately 21,000 attendees to the area, with about 26% of

last year's audience traveling over 50 miles to participate. With a rich line-up of films and special guests, this year's Virginia Film Festival promises to be an unforgettable experience for film lovers and the Charlottesville community alike.

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## Free Business Resources



The Central Virginia Small Business Development Center is a team of business and technical experts available to advise and assist entrepreneurs, confidentially and free of charge. They offer 1:1 assistance, curated research, access to technical experts and professionals, and timely events/training. To see upcoming SBDC events, click [here!](#)

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