



Updates from the Office of Economic Development

GO Cook Graduates Cohort 14



The 14th graduating class of the GO Cook program celebrated their graduation ceremony on February 23, 2023 at The Center at Belvedere in Charlottesville. Six students, four of whom were city residents, completed the culinary school program, earning their ServeSafe and Certified Cook certificates. Family, friends, and community partners were in attendance to honor the new graduates. Two of the new grads, Stacy Rush and Heathra King, both city residents, were offered and accepted positions as Alumni Instructors with Culinary Concepts AB, Inc. As Junior Instructors, they will have the chance to work alongside the

lead instructors to gain hands-on experience while reinforcing soft and hard skills learned from the GO Cook program. Fellow graduate Skylar Stoddart, also a city resident, had been working full-time at Organic Kush as Lead prep cook and expeditor. Upon completion of the GO Cook program, he received a raise increase of \$2 per hour and secured a part-time position as Grill/Sauté cook at Mochiko Chicken. We congratulate all of the new grads on their accomplishments and wish them the best of luck in their new culinary careers!

Enrollment for the next GO Cook training course is open now. [Click here](#) to learn more or to enroll. Scholarships available for qualified students.

Photo credit: Kori Price

OED Welcomes New Parking Manager

The Office Economic Development recently recognized the retirement of Rick Siebert who had filled the position of Parking Manager for the past 6 years. The position is responsible for managing the City's public parking program and specifically the City's off-street parking assets.

Kristie Kraisen-Thomas has been hired to fill the position and began work this month. Kristie has a bachelor's degree in Business Administration from Davenport University and a master's degree in Public Administration from Grand Valley State University. She has 5 years of experience working in the parking industry from different positions she held in Michigan, Florida, and Virginia. She has implemented parking policies and procedures throughout her different roles that have remained successful in the operations of several parking lots, ramps, and metered parking areas.

Kristie is passionate about building positive working relationships with everyone she encounters and strives to maintain a welcoming environment where people feel empowered, encouraged, important, and respected. Welcome Kristie!

New Accelerator Loan Offered by Community Investment Collaborative

The Community Investment Collaborative just announced it will be launching the Accelerator Loan Program. The Accelerator Loan is designed to help local businesses get the financing they

need to accelerate growth. This fund will allow the ability to purchase equipment to optimize operations, purchase inventory, improve building conditions or support short-term working capital. The maximum loan amount is \$10,000 or 2.5 months' worth of current revenues, whichever comes first. To apply or learn more click [here](#).

Charlottesville City Market is Open for the Season!

The Charlottesville City Market opened their season on Saturday, April 1st and is the oldest open-air market offering a little bit of everything. The Market is located at 100 Water Street and is open every Saturday from 9am to 1pm now through November. Stop by and pick up some fresh produce, baked goods, flowers, crafts and more! Shop local and support our neighborhood vendors!



GO Virginia Regional 9 Council Seeking Business Leader Nominations

The GO Virginia Region 9 Council Nominating Committee is soliciting nominations of private sector business leaders to serve on the Region 9 Council. The Council is responsible for overseeing the development and implementation of the GO Virginia program in Region 9, which includes the City of Charlottesville and the Counties of Albemarle, Culpeper, Fauquier, Fluvanna, Greene, Louisa, Madison, Nelson, Orange and Rappahannock. Nominations are due by **May 10, 2023**. The GO Virginia Region 9 Council is comprised of 23 members, of which a majority are private sector leaders. The Council is charged with advancing opportunities identify in the Region 9's latest Growth & Diversification Plan by validating business demand and assessing funding proposals. Nominations of private sector leaders are being accepted for two at-large and two seats nominated by a local chamber of commerce. Download nomination forms [here](#).

Downtown Spring Stroll is Coming

From May 1st – 31st the Charlottesville Downtown Mall will be buzzing with activity. The Spring Stroll will feature cocktails, mocktails, and specialty drinks at bars, restaurants and coffee shops in the downtown district. You can pick up your interactive Spring Stroll passport at participating locations, Charlottesville Insider or the CACVB mobile vans.

If you try at least half of the drinks featured, identify the secret "code" and turn your passport back into Charlottesville Insider before the end of the month you will be invited to a special summer celebration on the Common House rooftop. For more information click [here](#)

CODE Building Awarded LEED Platinum Certification

Congratulations goes out to The Center Of Developing Entrepreneurs (CODE) Building, located on the Downtown Mall for achieving the LEED platinum certification. It is the highest green building certification possible, according to LEED's website. The platinum certification was awarded to The CODE Building for its sustainability features that allows it to harvest rainwater and provide irrigation to green roof spaces.

Volunteers Needed For Friends Of C'ville May Events

Downtown is blooming this Spring and Friends of C'ville need volunteers to help make it a success! Volunteers are needed for the Flower Market at Ting Pavillion on May 4th and for the first annual Chalk Fest on May 20th. The Downtown Flower and Plant Market will be held from 2pm – 7pm and will feature over 10 plant and flower vendors and will provide everything you need to beautify your spaces this Spring. Chalk Fest will be held from 10am – 5pm and will feature 13 local artists creating 10x10 chalk murals in the Downtown in Bloom theme. If you are able to donate a few hours of your time to either or both of these amazing events, please sign-up ASAP at Flower Market and Chalk Festival.

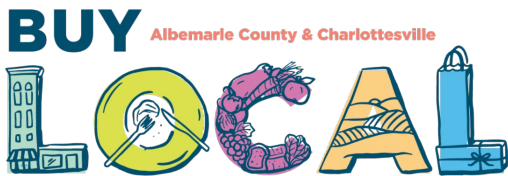
Upcoming Events



City and County to Host Business Pitch Competition

The City of Charlottesville Office of Economic Development and Albemarle County Economic Development have joined forces to offer educational programming leading to a pitch competition for local small businesses. Entrepreneurs and small business owners in Charlottesville and Albemarle can apply to participate in the 10-week program including 8 training programs (Business Essentials Training) offered by Central Virginia SBDC and work with a business advisor to hone their pitch and develop a solid business plan. To learn more about the program or to sign up, please visit the Piedmont Pitch [website](#).

Free Business Resources



The Albemarle County & City of Charlottesville Buy Local campaign highlights small businesses within the Charlottesville-Albemarle area through a multi-channel, multimedia promotional and educational campaign. To learn more about the campaign, click [here](#)!



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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