

Delta Regional Authority launches Delta Challenge to identify and strengthen entrepreneurs in Delta

The Delta Regional Authority has launched The Delta Challenge—a series of entrepreneurship pitch competitions—as part of a newly established program called the DRA Entrepreneurship Network to boost entrepreneurial success in the Delta region and Alabama Black Belt—DRA Federal Co-Chairman Chris Masingill announced today.

The Network builds on a key partnership with The Idea Village to identify, connect, nurture and grow entrepreneurs from across the Delta region and Alabama Black Belt by addressing regional deficiencies in capital, training, and best practices through a connected infrastructure of support organizations, investors, and educators.

“The DRA’s Entrepreneurship Network will provide regional entrepreneurs and support organizations with the additional connections, access, and tools they need to achieve entrepreneurial success and support their local communities,” **DRA Federal Co-Chairman Chris Masingill said.** “Our region’s entrepreneurs have the innovation and creativity to develop highly successful and scalable products and ideas to grow our regional economy as well as identify solutions to our region’s greatest challenges.”

The new program seeks to strengthen the entrepreneurial ecosystem of the Delta region and broaden the region’s cultural understanding of entrepreneurship. The Delta Challenge pitch competitions will help regional leadership to identify up to 16 Entrepreneurship Network fellows and will take place in five communities across the region:

- Cape Girardeau, Missouri – February 24, 2015
- Ruston, Louisiana – February 26, 2015
- Jackson, Mississippi – February 27, 2015
- Jonesboro, Arkansas – February 28, 2015
- Linden, Alabama – March 2, 2015

As a part of the Network’s development, DRA is also accepting applications from individuals and non-profit organizations that provide direct entrepreneurship support or educational services. Representatives from up to 16 support organizations will be identified to join the Network. Application guidelines and instructions for interested entrepreneurs and support organizations can be found at dra.gov/entrepreneur.

About the Delta Regional Authority

The Delta Regional Authority is a federal-state partnership created by Congress in 2000 to help create jobs, build communities, and improve lives through strategic investments in economic development in 252 counties and parishes across eight states. Through the past twelve project cycles, the DRA is helping to create and retain 41,000 jobs. These investments have leveraged 2.7 billion in other public and private investment with DRA projects that are helping to train 26,000 for a 21st century workforce and provide more than 61,000 families access to clean water and sewer services. Through its Small Business and Entrepreneurship Initiative, the DRA has invested 8.7 million in small businesses and entrepreneurship in the Delta, creating and retaining more than 1,250 jobs, training more than 1,400 entrepreneurs, and leveraging 16 million in other public and private investment. www.dra.gov