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Virginia Beach Economic Development selected next two winners for the Entrepreneur-in-Residence (EIR) Program

VIRGINIA BEACH, VA (April 15, 2019) — Virginia Beach Economic Development, in collaboration with 1701 Coworking, has selected the next two participants for the EIR program: Jimmy and Mary's Authentic Body Care and Vigilant.

Jimmy and Mary's Authentic Body Care is a small Virginia Beach business specializing in creating authentic and cost-effective body care products for men and women. The company is currently offering its handcrafted products at four Wholefoods markets in Virginia and looking toward broadening its reach nationally.

"We're looking to develop as much as we can as business owners while benefiting our community, so this is an ideal opportunity," said Jimmy and Mary's Authentic Body Care co-founder, Mary Benson.

Vigilant is a branding and design studio which started its business by acquiring a contract with the City of Virginia Beach. Since then, the company has accumulated a few other accounts while simultaneously learning how to run a business. Vigilant strives to create powerful visual story-telling that helps bring brands to life and connect them with their audience. Through this mentorship the company hopes to find strategy guidance on how to expand its business.

"The opportunity for us to be a part of 1701 will open that door and allow us to create good designs for good people," said owner Todd Aftel.

The three-month long program offers a unique way for entrepreneurs to learn and grow. "This program focuses on mentoring and educational assistance and provides networking opportunities with fellow members that is difficult for people to cultivate on their own," said Ray White, Virginia Beach Economic Development.

"Feedback from the first cohort of the EIR program was positive. The participants felt particularly appreciative of the assistance they received related to technology, hiring, and strategic planning," Lisa DeNoia, 1701 co-founder, explained. "We're very excited to kick off the next quarter with our new entrepreneurs in residence and look forward to helping them grow their businesses in Virginia Beach."

The Department of Economic Development and 1701 Coworking will also reach out to the startups not selected for the program to connect them with community resources. 1701 Coworking will offer a free week of residence as well.

A total of eight participants will be selected throughout 2019 to participate in the program. Selectees will be chosen every three months. The next session starts this summer, and the deadline to apply to be considered is June 6, 2019. For additional information, visit 1701VB.com/eir.

The mission of the Virginia Beach Department of Economic Development is to attract and retain national and international businesses to stimulate capital investment and create jobs. The Department of Economic Development received re-accreditation through the International Economic Development Council in 2016 and is one of only 50 economic development organizations in the world to have this recognition. Virginia Beach was named America's #1 best big city to live in by wallethub.com. For more information, visit www.yesvirginiabeach.com

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