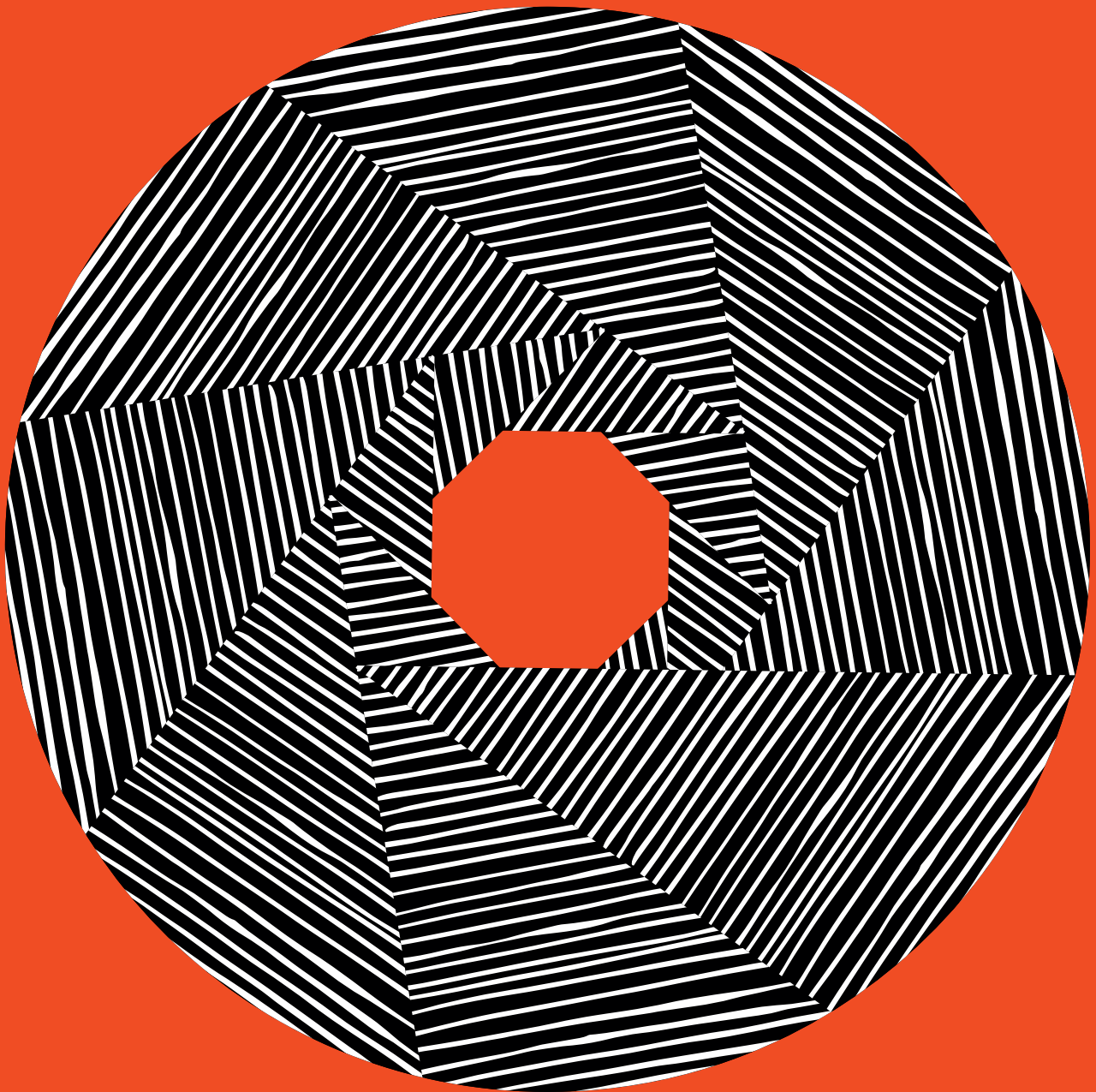


fOCUS

GREATER PALM SPRINGS

JULY
2018



focus

WELCOME TO FOCUS

Rapidly changing times — simultaneously exciting and challenging — stir imaginations. Imaginations, in turn, stir evolution in culture and commerce. Particularly as advances in technology accelerate, astonished minds ponder, “Who would have ever thought ...?” The answer: innovators. They’re the ones with a focus that turns possibilities into realities.

This publication, produced by the Coachella Valley Economic Partnership (CVEP) in conjunction with *Palm Springs Life*, intends to focus on the strengths of our local communities to achieve a sustainable future and the importance of actively fostering successes in reaching that goal. The name *Focus* further relates to its launch pad: the annual publication known as *Vision*, which is incorporated into the October issue of *Palm Springs Life* and printed in standalone versions.

In 1994, a group of local leaders formed CVEP as a 501(c)(3) nonprofit charged with improving the economy of the region. Today, CVEP has more than 40 members on its board of directors. Local governments, healthcare providers, professional-service organizations, banks, franchises, media, utilities, telecommunications companies, and retail establishments have signed on as supporters.

CVEP’s mission is to diversify the Coachella Valley business base of traditionally cyclical industries attuned to the region’s beauty and tranquility. Tourism remains a vital element in this environment, but it should not bear the burden of being the sole driver of any economy. CVEP addresses this challenge through the development tasks of business attraction, retention, and expansion.

CVEP is poised to lead the Coachella Valley into the future. Collectively, its six staff members hold 13 academic degrees that include business, finance, accounting, education, forestry, and engineering; five business advisory accreditations; and 132 years of direct experience in the business world that includes piloting 12 startups.

The Coachella Valley has a bright future if the right decisions and actions are taken now with respect to critical infrastructure to support technology-based businesses. The beauty and affordable lifestyle of our communities position us to inspire and attract exemplary employers.

Through *Focus*, we welcome you to become informed of our efforts, the opportunities available to participate in shaping the future, and the achievements of innovators that deserve to be celebrated. With this premiere issue, we invite you to learn more about CVEP itself.

—Joe Wallace, CEO of CVEP

focus

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5 Information GIS reveals insights to help businesses reach and understand their customers.

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GETTING INVOLVED

A COMMUNITY THAT SUPPORTS INDIVIDUALS' EFFORTS HELPS DREAMS TAKE FLIGHT.

WORDS BY
Lesla Bodnar,
chief of staff

Thanks to an actively engaged populace, philanthropic residents, and supportive governmental and business entities, many 501(c)(3) organizations call the Coachella Valley home. What is not widely known is that Coachella Valley Economic Partnership, too, is a nonprofit supported by investors.

We purposefully call them “investors,” not “donors,” because these supporters play active roles in CVEP’s mission. They are making an investment in the economic vitality of the region. This requires vision and an understanding that economic growth can be fostered and encouraged by making sound investments at the business level. They also are strategically positioning their brands among the region’s top business and community leaders.

Our investors come from a cross-section of industries that represent the local community: professional-service providers such as lawyers, accountants, and business development and management services; education; energy; financial and capital services; local municipalities and tribal government; health services; marketing, advertising, design, and public relations firms; media; real estate development; retail; tourism; technology and communications; and

THE 411 ON INVESTING IN CVEP

The staff, board of directors, and investors in CVEP pride themselves in being doers — not just “doing” meetings. When you invest in CVEP, you join a team whose corporate culture dictates that we take action — not just notes. Here are answers to some FAQs.

HOW ARE INVESTMENTS IN CVEP USED?

Investments come from both public and private sources and are expended to further our mission of uplifting and diversifying the Coachella Valley economy. The only exceptions to this are when investors specify direct support of individual programs.

CAN I HELP FUND A PARTICULAR IHUB OR ACCELERATOR CAMPUS BUSINESS?

CVEP does not secure or make recommendations with respect to private investment decisions. Any equity investments and the terms associated with them are done directly with the business owner(s).

HOW MUCH TIME WOULD I NEED TO SET ASIDE TO SIT ON THE BOARD OR A TASK FORCE?

The CVEP board meets for one hour each month. Task forces determine their meeting frequency and length. In both cases, demands on time are not considered prohibitive, even for busy people — and those who do participate say they find it time well spent.

To learn more about becoming an investor or to request a speaker from CVEP, contact Lesa Bodnar at lesa@cvep.com or 760-340-1575, ext. 107.



utilities. The breadth of knowledge and resources covered creates a dynamic team of engaged leaders with a collective purpose: growing and diversifying the region’s economic base.

Investors can choose their levels of commitment in CVEP, both monetarily and in terms of time. Most businesses choose a minimum of a board-level commitment, as it pairs them with like-minded leaders able to effect change.

One of the advantages we have as a region is our ability to drive consequential initiatives via easy access to elected officials who can support and champion them through local, county, and state channels.

Participation in CVEP can take many forms, such as attending our small-business forums and workshops; sitting on a committee or task force that is complementary to one’s business or personal goals; attending and/or sponsoring our annual Greater Palm Springs Economic Summit, which reveals the economic forecast and showcases business-attraction strategies and goals; or inviting one of our staff members to an event to speak on economic and business-development topics.

Our investors understand that a purposeful and effective vision requires stalwart commitment and short- and long-term goals. By their very nature, entrepreneurial ventures require a leap of faith. However, as LinkedIn co-founder Reid Hoffman has noted, “An entrepreneur is someone who will jump off a cliff and assemble an airplane on the way down.” Entrepreneurial backers like CVEP and its investors can serve as the wind beneath their wings. ■

MAKING NUMBERS TALK

GIS REVEALS INSIGHTS TO HELP BUSINESSES REACH AND UNDERSTAND THEIR CUSTOMERS.

WORDS BY
David Robinson,
GIS coordinator

Whenever you search the internet, you see algorithms at work. You don’t *literally* see them, because they work behind the scenes. But you recognize their presence from the results they yield, and you benefit from their ability to aggregate vast amounts of information and extract what is most relevant to you.

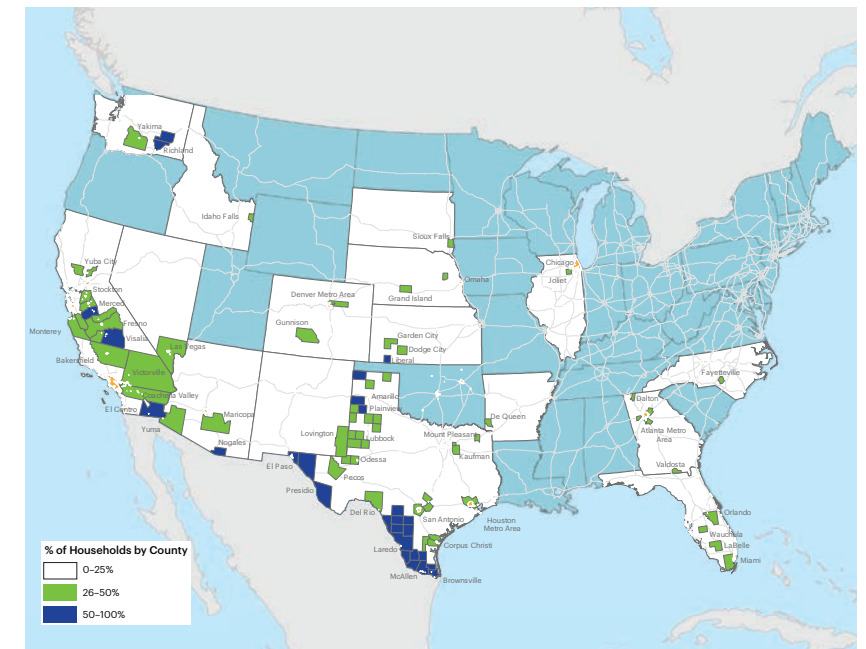
Geographic Information Systems (GIS), a service offered by the Coachella Valley Economic Partnership, fine-tunes the algorithmic process by localizing data to help businesses make informed decisions.

GIS is a valuable tool for organizing, understanding, and communicating facts about our world. It integrates many types of data and organizes it using maps to reveal insights, patterns, and relationships. By knowing the location of a business and its current or desired customers, CVEP can access thousands of related data sets, such as household income and spending patterns, and their associated attributes. By mapping these, we can look for strategic concentrations or correlations.

CVEP provides businesses with detailed socioeconomic and demographic data.

We know the region’s opportunities and challenges, its unique and diverse residents, its proximity to Southern California’s population of 25 million potential customers, and access to rail and auto corridors and a world-class port. Our GIS services can help business owners understand how their markets work within this context and the opportunities that wisdom affords.

People with similar demographic and lifestyle characteristics, as well as spending preferences, tend to cluster in similar ZIP codes or neighborhoods. Thus, we are able to provide comprehensive profiles of consumers to help businesses better understand their current customers and attract and target new markets.



Using GIS, CVEP analyzed a local Native American tribe’s database of loyal hotel and casino customer addresses in 67 socioeconomic categories. This map shows locations across the country with densities of people sharing one of the highest-matching categories. Armed with a greater understanding of who their customers are, the tribe is able to target its marketing efforts.

Access to raw data lacks value unless the information is converted into qualitative, meaningful knowledge. GIS organizes data in layers that can be superimposed and combined to interpret otherwise static characteristics. For example, where might one find a concentration of individuals who own their homes, travel extensively, and consistently visit art galleries? GIS can easily locate such a customer demographic. Furthermore, it can analyze trends and growth patterns, find averages or typical situations, compare and identify similarities or differences, and monitor changes over time. It can even determine the significance of analysis results.

CVEP is a catalyst for growing and diversifying the Coachella Valley economy. Changing the economy requires knowing where we are now and where we want to go. A thorough understanding of current and projected information is essential. Custom maps, graphs, and reports bolster our ability to improve the power and effectiveness of existing and future businesses in the Coachella Valley. ■

A HOME FOR INNOVATION ENTREPRENEURS FIND ADVICE AND COLLABOR- ATION AT THE PALM SPRINGS IHUB AND ACCELERATOR CAMPUS.

Michael McNeely
conducts research and
development in the clean
room of his company,
GattaCo, which is focused
on efficiently extracting
plasma from whole blood.

WORDS BY
Joe Wallace,
CEO

T

ake the image of an inventor tinkering in the garage or a visionary tapping on a laptop in the library. Now throw that image out the window.

Sure, some billionaires got their start in such a solitary fashion. But think of the potential lost due to a lack of resources.

There's a better model than "go it alone." That's why the California Governor's Office of Business and Economic Development created the Innovation Hub.

The City of Palm Springs asked the Coachella Valley Economic Partnership to manage its participation in the program, which leverages assets and stimulates partnerships. Cathedral City and Desert Hot Springs joined in the founding of the Palm Springs iHub, one of six charter innovation centers in a statewide network that has grown to 16 since its launch in 2012. More than 62 companies have been selected to join the program.

The iHub has drawn significant investment from the Desert Healthcare District and Wells Fargo Bank to focus incubation efforts on healthcare and renewable-energy technology,

**PALM SPRINGS
IHUB
COMPANIES
HAVE
ATTRACTED
\$23 MILLION
IN EQUITY
INVESTMENTS
AND BEEN
GRANTED
22 PATENTS.**

respectively. Other industries represented by iHub companies include water-management technology, electronics, software, and wearables.

In 2013, the City of Palm Springs and Desert Healthcare District partnered to fund the refurbishment of a 43,000-square-foot complex of buildings for a complementary Accelerator Campus to encourage companies with proven concepts and markets to establish their supply chains and manufacturing operations here, thus reducing the risk they will turn to places like Silicon Valley, where the pool of venture capital entices startups. In fact, entrepreneurs from California and Arizona, as well as China and Canada, have pulled up stakes and moved their businesses to the Palm Springs Accelerator Campus to start their manufacturing operations.

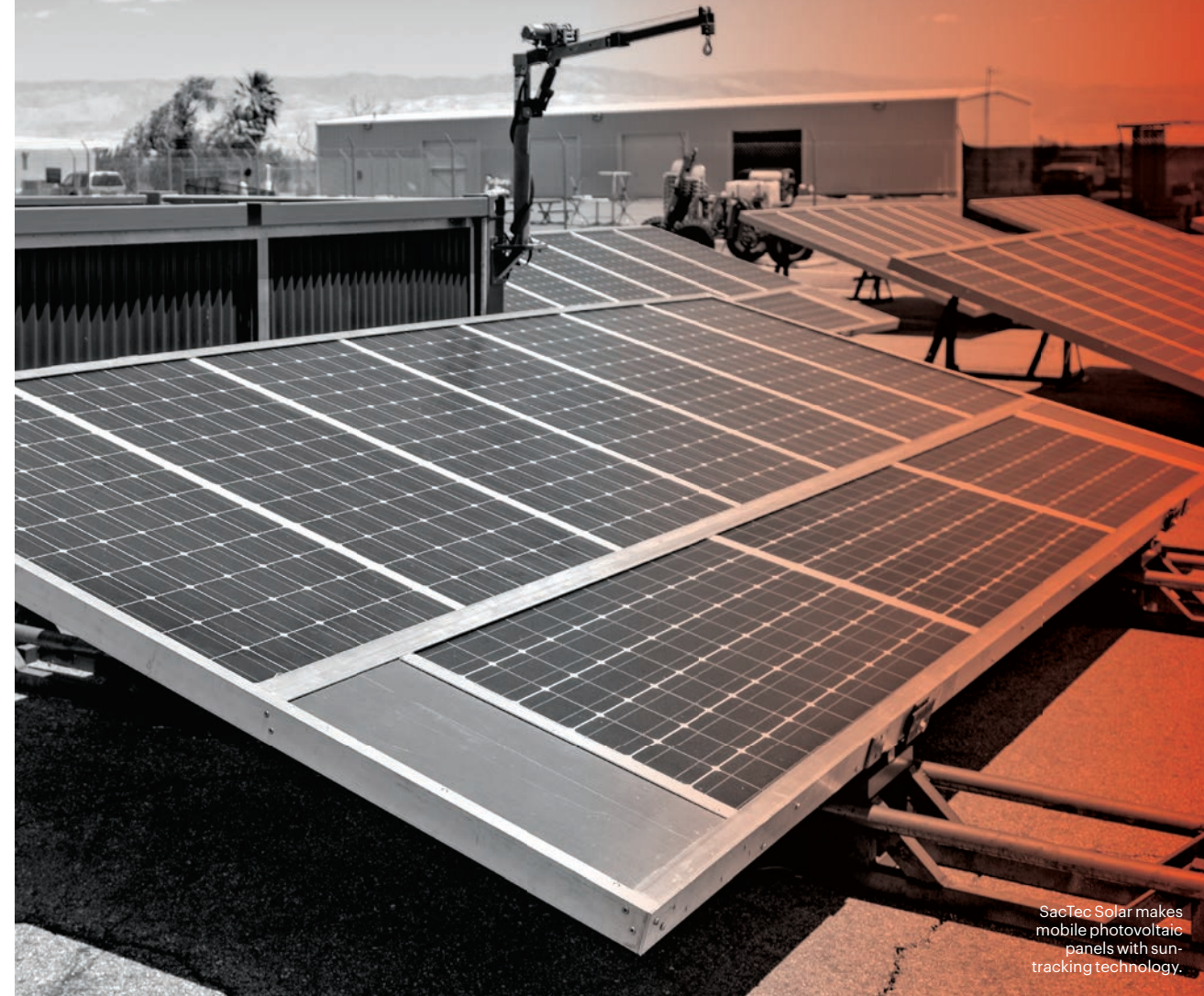
The Palm Springs iHub is one of two California iHubs to create an Accelerator Campus (the other is Los Angeles Cleantech Incubator). Just a mile from the iHub on Tahquitz Canyon Way (immediately west of Palm Springs International Airport), the Palm Springs Accelerator Campus off Alejo Road holds the distinction of being within a Foreign Trade Zone, where goods are not subject to import duties.

CVEPeschews canned advisory routines, instead choosing to treat each iHub business and its management as individuals. We take pride in offering practical, experience-based advice tailored to each operation. ■



Jesse Foster works
on the manufacture
of circuit boards at
EV Enterprises.

IN GOOD COMPANY THE COACHELLA VALLEY'S CENTER FOR INNOVATION DEVELOPS AND ADAPTS TO A RANGE OF BUSINESSES.



SacTec Solar makes mobile photovoltaic panels with sun-tracking technology.

WORDS BY
Laura James,
economic
development
director

CURRENT INTELLIGENCE

iHub and Accelerator
Campus companies.

- AA Supply: advanced materials to manufacture and export gear for military applications
- Butterfli Technologies: on-demand, nonemergency transportation for those who need additional assistance, wheelchair access, or specialized vehicles
- CAIA: online patient portal connecting all aspects of healthcare management and delivery
- Double Lock Healthcare Systems: patented medical device designed to reduce healthcare-associated infections
- Eco Culture Manufacturing: textiles using recyclable materials and integrating sensor technologies for smart devices
- Eco Green Supply: environmentally responsible, nontoxic, commercial laundry soap and cleaning products
- EV Enterprises: lithium-ion battery components, microelectronics, and related products
- GattaCo: technology to replace centrifuges and allow extraction of plasma from whole blood in half the time
- Heppolt Wind Energy: wind turbines that allow installation and maintenance at ground level
- hipS-sister: wearable bands that shield the electromagnetic field caused by cell phones
- Indy Power Systems: technology for consumers to store energy during periods of low demand for use during peak demand
- InstApp Deals: mobile application to connect businesses with new customers via existing customers
- Lux Bodega: online rental and subscription service for luxury footwear
- Pet Projx LLC: hand sanitizer with an innovative delivery system and formulation
- Pocial: connecting individuals through a combination of polling and social media to foster debate, create a collective voice, and quantify opinions
- Post Modern: integrated hardware and software to bring social-media marketing to retail outlets and events
- PSTalent: Sony PlayStation entertainment platforms
- PureOzone 360: an ozone-based disinfectant
- SacTec Solar: mobile solar energy systems with sun-tracking technology
- SecoSys: smart water meters for management, conservation, and leak detection
- Solaris Power Cells: capacitor cells to store renewable energy at rapid charging rates
- SolAqua: solar hot-water collectors
- Stellar Networks: multiplatform creative services company and producer of iHub Radio
- Wise Education: online language training geared toward Chinese speakers

W

ith ample access to sun, wind, and geothermal energy, the Coachella Valley offers an ideal setting for energy innovation.

At Palm Springs iHub, an incubator offering programs, services, and incentives to startups focused on clean and renewable energy, six companies are reimagining the tools, methods, and processes behind one of the 21st century's most critical issues: the sustainability of our planet's resources.

Similarly, healthcare — already one of the region's largest industries — calls for fresh ideas to curb escalating costs and complexities. Three current and six iHub "graduate" companies concentrate on improving human welfare.

While the Coachella Valley Economic Partnership has identified clean energy and healthcare as core industries for its iHub and Accelerator Campus, we recognize the value of attracting and nurturing innovation in myriad disciplines. Other iHub companies are developing and manufacturing consumer and commercial products that solve a range of needs.

Because the needs of these industries vary, the physical spaces in which they operate are highly customizable. The iHub Accelerator Campus includes a paint shop and a winch. For prototype manufacturing, one medical device company needed a clean room, which we installed in a repurposed building. Another company occupies a space plumbed for compressed air, with an exhaust system for sawdust and 440-volt capacity.

Half the businesses selected for the iHub sprang from the imaginations of Coachella Valley entrepreneurs. The others fall into two categories: businesses that have relocated here and businesses that receive long-distance/virtual assistance based upon the promise of locating here once they are ready to open a physical facility. The iHub and Accelerator Campus currently have 24 participating companies, of which 19 are resident.

Greater Palm Springs has long been a lure for vacationers and, therefore, saturated with low-paying, seasonal jobs in hospitality and retail. Developing a foundation for careers in the fields of science, technology, engineering, and mathematics would greatly benefit the local economy — and prove to the rest of the world that you don't have to be a high-profile center of commerce to generate and support groundbreaking ideas. ■



Freddy Olgalby
fabricates mobile
solar panels at
SacTec Solar.

THE PATH TO PROGRESS GETTING STARTED WITH IHUB.

WORDS BY
Laura James,
economic
development
director

G

reater Palm Springs brings to mind sunshine, shopping, lush golf courses, music festivals, and fine dining. The area is renowned for luxury and resort living.

For years known primarily as a resort and retirement community, the region is becoming more popular as a lifestyle destination for millennials and Gen Xers. But behind the scenes of the Coachella Valley's newfound hipness lies a burgeoning innovation ecosystem driven not by stereotypical young techies but by experienced workers who have found better ways to do things.

These are the innovators of methods, devices, and applications that have a high likelihood of commercial success. These are the innovators who are solving problems, streamlining processes, preventing waste and loss, improving patient outcomes, and enhancing engagement between businesses and consumers.

The innovators of Greater Palm Springs are hard to profile. They are men and women, from all races and ethnicities. They have varied socioeconomic

WHAT DO I GET?

Beyond mentoring, coaching, access to capital, and the credibility of a statewide innovation network, membership in the Palm Springs iHub provides practical benefits such as these:

- Complimentary high-speed internet and Wi-Fi access
- Use of a conference room and meeting space
- Private offices with no long-term lease
- Shared reception and mail services
- Copy, fax, and scan services (copies are billed monthly at approximately half of retail rates)
- A dedicated landline phone number

HOW DO I GET IN?

Admission to the Palm Springs iHub is based on an application and interview. The application includes basic information such as:

- What type of business is it?
- Do you have any intellectual property?
- What investments have been made in the business, and from where did the funds come?
- Who will buy what you're selling, and how do you know it?
- Who are your competitors?

Because some entrepreneurs come to the iHub with little more than an idea, the information on their application may be sparse, and that's OK. The important thing is that the idea is viable and there is a market for it.

Qualified applicants may go through two rounds of interviews. Once the interview process is complete, CVEP typically notifies the applicant of their standing within a week.

For applications and information, visit cvep.com or email info@cvep.com.

backgrounds and family situations. They are of all ages, but many are over 50 — far enough along in their careers to have noticed the things around them that beg to be improved.

The characteristic they share is a desire to create something bigger than themselves. These are not people who merely look to turn a hobby into a job; they are the dreamers and big-picture thinkers who can envision building something that outgrows and even outlives them.

How do these innovators find their way to the Palm Springs iHub, managed by the Coachella Valley Economic Partnership? Most often, it's through a referral from a chamber of commerce or the economic development department of one of the Coachella Valley's nine cities. Occasionally, someone will forward one of CVEP's Facebook posts or e-newsletters to an entrepreneurial friend. A number of entrepreneurs have found us by searching the internet for small-business resources in the Coachella Valley. Whatever their path to us, most of our innovators report that once they discovered the Palm Springs iHub, they knew they'd found home.

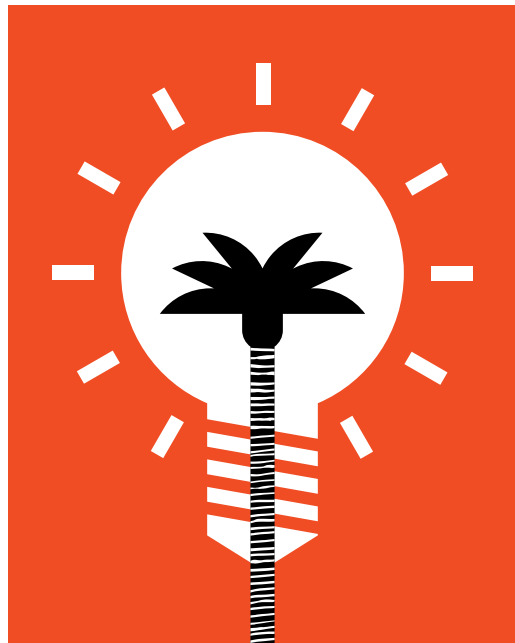
Many business incubators approach their operations formulaically: with rigid timetables, metrics, and milestones to meet. The Palm Springs iHub innovators possess a variety of strengths and weaknesses, operate in a diverse set of industries, and will pursue various paths toward commercialization. Thus, there is not one set of metrics or one type of assistance that will work for all.

We may serve one company best by making the right introductions. Another might value our office and conference room spaces to escape the kitchen table, coffee shop, or garage, so often the lonely headquarters of startup companies. Yet another entrepreneur might seek help with financial projections, a marketing plan, or public speaking. By recognizing what each entrepreneur does well, we also can recognize the areas in which we can best utilize our expertise to fill in the gaps.

In entrepreneurship, there is no perfect path. Even those who have worked for many years or who have been through business school can find themselves ill prepared for the stresses of building a company. Despite a solid understanding of the business or product side of their startups, most people need a sounding board as they navigate the emotional roller coaster of establishing an enterprise.

As part of an entrepreneurial community like the one at the Palm Springs iHub, innovators share ideas and swap stories about their struggles and challenges, relating to one another in a way that can be done only with others who are going through the same or a similar process.

These connections — and the people who make them — constitute the foundation of the Greater Palm Springs innovation ecosystem. ■



ON THE AGENDA

CVEP HAS A PACKED ANNUAL CALENDAR OF WORKSHOPS, PRESENTATIONS, AND COMPETITIONS.

WORDS BY
Agustin Aragon,
economic development
associate

Shark Tank fans have watched entrepreneurs tout reusable tape, a re-engineered bathrobe, and a wine-like drink for cats and dogs. In April, the Coachella Valley's Elizabeth Wong angled for a more serious product — her patented double-lock, sterile-entry, intravenous port and syringe system — at the **Coachella Valley Fast-Pitch Competition**. Hosted by the Coachella Valley Economic Partnership (CVEP) in conjunction with Riverside County's Innovation Month, the event put

The 14th annual Greater Palm Springs Economic Summit, set for Nov. 8 at the Palm Springs Convention Center, will showcase business-attraction strategies and goals to “focus on creating a prosperous future” in the Coachella Valley. Manfred W. Keil, associate professor and former chairman of the faculty at the Robert Day School of Economics and Finance at Claremont McKenna College, will present CVEP's annual economic report and forecast.

For more information on CVEP events, visit cvep.com (and subscribe to the e-newsletter), the CVEP Facebook page, or the websites of participating cities (Cathedral City, Coachella, Desert Hot Springs, Indian Wells, Indio, La Quinta, Palm Desert, Palm Springs, and Rancho Mirage).

Wong and Shawn Isaac (creator of a system allowing Uber and Lyft drivers to share ads with their passengers on a seat-back tablet computer) in contention for the county's fast-pitch finale and a chance to win up to \$5,000 of seed capital. (Wong came in third, taking a cash prize of \$1,500.)

Through its outreach efforts, CVEP opens doors for individuals in all stages of a business — whether they simply have the inklings of ideas with potential or have established a going concern that can benefit from the advice of and contact with experienced professionals.

In addition to the Fast-Pitch Competition, CVEP presents workshops and forums throughout the year that are open to the public free of charge (registration is encouraged but not necessary). These events cover a range of subjects and are tailored to trends that can have an economic impact in the Coachella Valley. Topics covered include startup basics, access to capital, social media, and marketing.

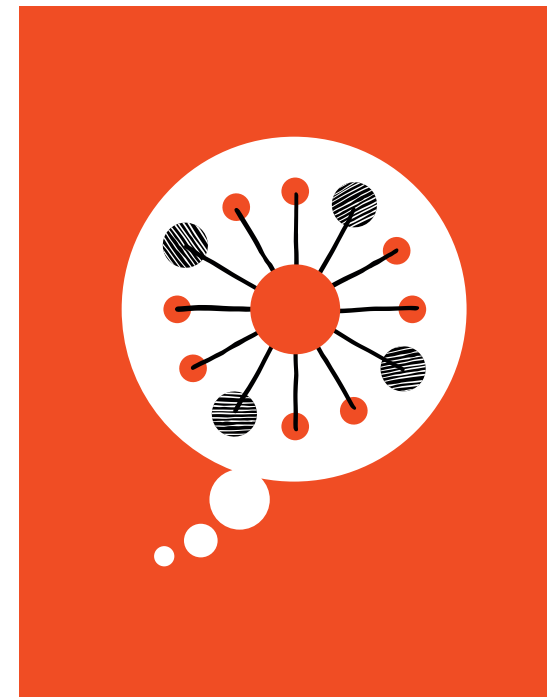
Among CVEP's schedule of events is the **Small Business Forum**, held the second Wednesday of every month at the UCR Palm Desert Campus. Entrepreneurs and industry experts gather to discuss topics relevant to owning and operating a business in the Coachella Valley. The forum offers an excellent opportunity for local business owners and aspiring entrepreneurs to network and establish new contacts. Thanks to sponsorship from Southern California Gas Company, CVEP scheduled six sustainability forums related to energy, the environment, business, and lifestyle. The series, which concludes in October, introduces attendees to educational material, new technologies, and sustainable practices.

In collaboration with the Small Business Administration and the City of Cathedral City, CVEP offers a **Small Business Success Series** at Palm Springs Motors in Cathedral City. These monthly workshops are held February through November, covering topics that include how to start a business, understanding credit, and how to finance your business.

Through the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Rural Business Development Grant Program, CVEP conducts **Small Business 101** workshops in outlying areas of the Coachella Valley and in the High Desert. These workshops present information on how to start a business, how to grow/enhance an existing business, and how small business owners and entrepreneurs can use geographic information system (GIS) technology to make data-driven decisions. They further provide an introduction to small-business resources and access to CVEP's GIS coordinator, giving small businesses data-driven strategies once afforded only by Fortune 500 companies.

CVEP backs up these workshops through one-on-one counseling with CVEP's economic development staff and its GIS service to develop a specialized business growth plan (for more information on GIS, see page 5).

In an effort to benefit a wide audience, the Small Business Success Series and Small Business 101 workshops are presented in English and Spanish. ■



HONORS AND ACCOLADES

ORGANIZATIONS AND GOVERNMENT BODIES ARE TAKING NOTE OF CVEP-RELATED VICTORIES.

General Awards

- Humanitarian of the Year Award to CVEP, with special acknowledgement to City of Indio Councilmember Elaine Holmes, City of La Quinta Mayor Linda Evans, and City of Palm Desert Councilmember Jan Harnik, presented by LifeStream (2018)
- Coachella Valley Workplace Wellness Award, presented by Health Assessment and Research for Communities (HARC) (2017)
- Business Innovation Award to the Palm Springs iHub, presented by Palm Springs Chamber of Commerce (2016)
- Martin Luther King Legacy of Service Award to CVEP/Joe Wallace, Managing Director Palm Springs Chapter, presented by the Southern California Black Chamber of Commerce (2015)
- Spirit of the Entrepreneur Award to Joe Wallace, presented by The Inland Empire Center for Entrepreneurship (IECE) at California State University San Bernardino (2014)
- International Economic Development Council Human Capital Bronze Award to CVEP in recognition of the Coachella Valley Workforce/Jobs Model, presented by the International Economic Development Council (2014)
- 26th Annual Clean Air Award to the Palm Springs iHub for Model Community Achievement, presented by the South Coast Air Quality Management District (2014)
- World's Best Technology Innovation Marketplace Silver Award to the Palm Springs iHub (2013)
- International Economic Development Council's Silver Award to CVEP in recognition of its Summit Special Event (2011)

American Advertising Federation (Desert AdFed) Awards

Presented to Kiner Communications and Hunter/Johnsen for their work with the Coachella Valley Economic Partnership

Gold Addy Awards: CVEP Summit Annual Report (2010); CVEP Pathways to Success website (2010)

Silver Addy Awards: CVEP Summit Multimedia Campaign (2008); CVEP Summit Annual Report (2018 and 2014)

Bronze Addy Awards: CVEP Summit Annual Report (2013); CVEP Interactive Screen Saver (2012)

Certificates of Recognition

- California State Assembly to the Palm Springs iHub in honor of its grand-opening celebration (2011)
- California State Assembly to CVEP in honor of the Coachella Valley Lanzatech Latino Business Workshop Series (2012)
- California State Assembly to CVEP's Accelerator Campus (2013)
- California State Senate to CVEP's Accelerator Campus (2013)
- County of Riverside to CVEP's Accelerator Campus (2013)



ACTION-ORIENTED

GET TO KNOW CVEP'S LEADER.

Joe Wallace, CEO of Coachella Valley Economic Partnership, started small: His first job was at Jimmy's Drive-In in his hometown of Sturgis, Kentucky, earning 75 cents an hour. But that didn't stop him from thinking big.

You come from a small town, population 1,800, and attended community college. You went on to generate impressive credentials at various institutions. Walk us through your progression. I earned an associate of forestry degree from Hazard Community College in Hazard, Kentucky. I then earned a bachelor's degree in mechanical engineering from Indiana's University of Evansville, where I built a small photovoltaic generator for my senior project. I got my master's in mechanical engineering at Stanford University in Palo Alto. My thesis was on a 3.5-inch, erasable magneto-optical disk drive, which later became the CD-ROM burner. I achieved candidacy for a doctorate in engineering at the University of California, Santa Barbara, but I left school to start Pallace Technologies, which replaced white-light interferometry with laser-based interferometry in disk-drive recording head manufacturing.

"THINKING
OUTSIDE THE
BOX IS USELESS
UNLESS YOU
HAVE THE
COURAGE TO
LIVE OUTSIDE
THE BOX."

When did you move to the Coachella Valley?

I moved here in January 2012 after being recruited to be the Palm Springs iHub's founding managing director.

What is the highlight of your pre-CVEP career?

I started a business in my home that was eventually listed in the NASDAQ stock exchange. Our product, the Pegasus Flying Height Tester, won an R&D 100 Award and a Conference on Lasers and Electro-Optics Award for innovation.

What were you doing right before you joined CVEP?

I was the founder and CEO of Innovation Pointe, a high-tech business incubator in Evansville. I also consulted with technology-based businesses and wrote a daily column for called "Evansville's True Watchdog" for the *City-County Observer*.

What qualities do you possess that aid you in your role as CVEP's CEO?

My engineering background has been invaluable in performing mathematical analyses that help our client companies make good business decisions. I have been a founder or participant in 11 startups, from handyman services to cutting-edge technology. I strike a balance between optimism and practicality.

What talents do you possess that are unrelated to your career?

Playing guitar, architectural design, and home improvements.

Do you collect anything?

Wine and guitars. My best guitars are a 1978 Gibson Les Paul Artisan, a 1952 Gibson Southern Jumbo, and a Fender Stratocaster, the instruments played by, respectively, Peter Frampton, Sheryl Crow, and Eric Clapton.

What do you do to stay healthy?

I run/walk 25 miles a week, work out with light weights, and stay positive about the future, no matter what comes along.

What is your favorite time of day?

From 5 to 6:30 a.m., when I can plan the day for a positive outcome.

Fill in the blank: _____ is the speed bump on the road of life.

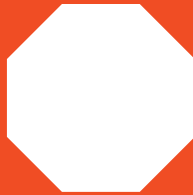
Reality.

What advice do you offer others, for business and for life?

One: Moderation is the key to mediocrity. Two: Be an action-oriented person, and learn how to do things that work. Three: Thinking outside the box is useless unless you have the courage to live outside the box. ■



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