

Coachella Valley



Brandon Marley checks out the installations at the newly inaugurated business iHub at the Chamber of Commerce of Indio Thursday. OMAR ORNELAS/THE DESERT SUN

iHub business incubator opens in Indio to spur entrepreneurship

Melissa Daniels
Palm Springs Desert Sun
USA TODAY NETWORK

A Coachella Valley business incubation program has opened its second outpost in Indio with the aim of spurring entrepreneurship and job creation in the eastern reaches of the valley.

The Innovation Hub, or “iHub,” has opened its doors at the Greater Coachella Valley Chamber of Commerce at 82921 Indio Blvd. The goal of the pilot

program is to help support local entrepreneurs who are creating start-ups. Organizers hope to lure six to 12 businesses to the Indio shared workspace, where they can work on their operation free of charge.

Businesses in the space can use the Wi-Fi and conference room, plus mailing service and front desk support. The Coachella Valley Economic Partnership (CVEP) provides business guidance and support for the entrepreneurs, including seminars and workshops.

The first iHub was founded in Palm Springs in 2011 and another one in Palm Desert is slated to open this spring. They’re a collaboration between the Greater Coachella Valley Chamber of Commerce and CVEP.

Joe Wallace joined CVEP about eight years with the specific charge to launch the iHubs, and later became the organization’s CEO. He said that giving business owners tools to help start their

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Agua Caliente chairman says Trump has lack of respect

Colin Atagi
Palm Springs Desert Sun
USA TODAY NETWORK

Agua Caliente Band of Cahuilla Indians Chairman Jeff Grubbe took to his personal Instagram account to express his displeasure with President Donald Trump for failing to acknowledge the tribe during Trump’s Wednesday visit to the Coachella Valley.

Grubbe says in his Wednesday post that while he’s reticent to “get political” on social media, he believes, “I wouldn’t be much of a Tribal Leader if I didn’t express my disappointment about the lack of Respect President Trump has shown my Tribe.”

Trump flew into Palm Springs International Airport shortly after 10:30 a.m. Wednesday to attend a re-election campaign fundraiser hosted by Oracle Chairman Larry Ellison at his Porcupine Creek estate in Rancho Mirage. Trump departed at about 1 p.m.

The airport sits on the Agua Caliente Indian Reservation.

During every one of former President Barack Obama’s presidential visits to the valley, he was greeted by a contingent of local dignitaries and elected leaders, including a tribal representative, when he stepped off Air Force One, a tribe spokeswoman confirmed.

This was not the case with Trump. When he stepped onto the tarmac at the Palm Springs airport on Wednesday



Grubbe

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 1.00CT ROUND G VS2 RETAIL \$9,999 SALE \$6,499	 1.58CT EMERALD CUT D SI1 RETAIL \$15,999 SALE \$12,999	 2.01CT CUSHION F SI1 RETAIL \$27,999 SALE \$18,999	 2.01CT PRINCESS G VS2 RETAIL \$24,999 SALE \$19,999	 2.01CT RADIANT H SI1 RETAIL \$21,999 SALE \$14,999
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 2.35CT ROUND H SI1 RETAIL \$32,999 SALE \$22,999	 2.45CT HEART H VS1 RETAIL \$32,999 SALE \$22,999	 2.51CT RADIANT J VS2 RETAIL \$21,999 SALE \$14,999	 2.52CT ROUND K VS2 RETAIL \$27,999 SALE \$19,999	 2.75CT OVAL I SI1 RETAIL \$22,999 SALE \$17,999
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 3.20CT PEAR F VS2 RETAIL \$79,999 SALE \$54,999	 4.00CT OVAL I SI1 RETAIL \$64,999 SALE \$49,999	 4.00CT PEAR F VS2 RETAIL \$79,999 SALE \$54,999	 4.02CT ROUND L SI1 RETAIL \$48,999 SALE \$34,999	 4.02CT EMERALD CUT I VS2 RETAIL \$79,999 SALE \$55,999
 4.23CT ROUND J VS2 RETAIL \$79,999 SALE \$59,999	 4.66CT ROUND E SI1 RETAIL \$169,999 SALE \$139,999	 4.75CT ROUND G SI2 RETAIL \$129,999 SALE \$99,999	 5.00CT RADIANT I VS1 RETAIL \$109,999 SALE \$84,999	 5.01CT ROUND F VS2 RETAIL \$349,999 SALE \$189,999
 5.03CT MARQUISE G SI2 RETAIL \$84,999 SALE \$64,999	 5.03CT PRINCESS J SI2 RETAIL \$89,999 SALE \$69,999	 5.05CT PEAR F VS2 RETAIL \$249,999 SALE \$199,999	 5.07CT ROUND J VS2 RETAIL \$134,999 SALE \$94,999	 5.15CT PRINCESS G SI2 RETAIL \$99,999 SALE \$79,999
 5.37CT PEAR D VS2 RETAIL \$299,999 SALE \$249,999	 6.00CT ROUND J SI1 RETAIL \$329,999 SALE \$229,999	 7.00CT PEAR I VS2 RETAIL \$329,999 SALE \$229,999	 8.05CT RADIANT H VS2 RETAIL \$349,999 SALE \$229,999	 8.08CT RADIANT J SI2 RETAIL \$149,999 SALE \$99,999
 8.90CT ROUND FANCY YELLOW VS2 RETAIL \$329,999 SALE \$229,999	 9.00CT RADIANT J SI1 RETAIL \$249,999 SALE \$189,999	 10.04CT RADIANT FANCY YELLOW VS2 RETAIL \$259,999 SALE \$199,999	 10.14CT ROUND J SI1 RETAIL \$129,999 SALE \$99,999	 12.04CT CUSHION K SI1 RETAIL \$349,999 SALE \$249,999

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Incubator

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businesses gives them a better chance of growing jobs locally.

“Homegrown entrepreneurs, if they have their fundamental needs, won’t leave town,” he said.

About 85 companies have come through the Palm Springs iHub, and while some failed to launch or have since shuttered, an estimated \$33 million has been invested in companies affiliated with the iHub overall, according to CVEP.

Companies that have joined the iHub span a range of industries. While it initially focused on supporting renewable energy companies, it’s expanded to incorporate ideas involving health and medicine, app technology, manufacturing and consumer products.

At the iHub, Palm Springs resident Bill Schlanger is building a lithium-ion battery manufacturer called EV Enterprises, drawing on his past experience working in the energy industry.

“There’s a great deal of support and coaching that we get from the iHub,” he said. “A lot of people come to see it, and we get to meet them and it’s a great source of contacts.”

Indio Mayor Glenn Miller said the new iHub was “a long time coming,” as plans for a business incubator have been discussed for years.

“The most the east valley rises up, the more the rest of our community rises up,” he said.

The Indio City Council approved the pilot business incubator in November. The city increased its annual contribution to CVEP from \$25,000 to \$50,000 to support the pilot through 2021.

Councilmember Waymond Ferman said that Indio — which is the most populous valley city with about 90,000 residents and is also the fastest-growing — is in the middle of a business growth spurt.

Gesturing around the downtown area where the city is coming up with a new specific plan, Ferman said younger generations who are making their home in Indio want to be able to start their own businesses there.

“There are going to be many opportunities for entrepreneurs,” he said.

As the program gets established, CVEP and the city will look into getting additional funding opportunities and a permanent site, per a memo of understanding on the project.



Community members celebrate at the newly inaugurated iHub business incubator at the Indio Chamber of Commerce on Thursday. OMAR ORNELAS/THE DESERT SUN



In this file photo, Temo Nuñez, right, works in a manufacturing facility at the Coachella Valley iHub Accelerator Campus. JAY CALDERON/THE DESERT

CVEP and Indio are also planning to work with College of the Desert to connect the iHub to the CENIC, which operates a powerful, high-bandwidth computer network with more than 8,000 miles of optical fiber.

Applications for the Indio iHub can be found and submitted at

www.cvep.com.

The Palm Springs iHub is funded by the city and Wells Fargo. Various programs exist to help companies at different stages of development. Currently, there are 36 companies affiliated with the Palm Springs iHub:

■ Seven resident companies are

working out of the iHub headquarters near the Palm Springs International Airport and are in the very beginning stages with a proof of concept.

■ 11 companies are working in the iHub accelerator campus program; these businesses might be farther along and becoming profit-driven

■ Another 18 “virtual” companies who may be based anywhere but could have a physical presence in the valley at some point, and participate in iHub coaching virtually.

Some companies that have gone through the iHub include Indie Power Systems, which designs and manufactures energy equipment and used their systems to energize an off-grid electrical supply center in Buffalo, Wyoming. Hepplot Wind Energy, a wind turbine company founded by Palm Springs resident Johann Steinlechner, secured two phases of financing for a grid-scale prototype of its patented Vertical Axis Windmill from Los Alamos National Laboratory.

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