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Bethesda leads in incubating Green Businesses

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Published on: Thursday, February 10, 2011

By Nick Coletta

The Bethesda Green business incubator is now able to develop more partnerships with entrepreneurial companies after a recent donation of office space from Capital One Bank that has allowed the organization to expand its downtown Bethesda location.

“By working together and leveraging our collective resources, we continue to drive innovation and progress toward our goal of making Bethesda a better, healthier place to live, work and do business,” said David Dineen, Montgomery County Market president for Capital One Bank.

The donated space adds 1,000 square feet to the incubator’s existing 3,000-square-foot facility, located on the second floor of the Capital One branch on Cordell Avenue in Bethesda, according to Bethesda Green spokesman Dave Heffernan. He said the additional room allows for two or three more full-time occupants.

Bethesda Green provides its services to 11 various companies and nonprofits, said Heffernan. According to a press release published Monday, its services include providing affordable office space, shared resources, available networking opportunities, access to business services from outside experts and affiliation with business innovation group across the county.

Bethesda Green held an open house Tuesday to showcase its new addition and meet with start-up and early stage companies that wish to join its business incubator.

Formed in 2008 by Seth Goldman, president of Bethesda beverage company Honest Tea, and County Councilman George L. Leventhal (D-At large), Bethesda Green seeks to promote the successful start-ups of companies that focus on “green” business practices, such as renewable energy, energy efficiency, pollution reduction, recycling and reuse, natural resources conservation and education, training and public awareness services, according to Bethesda Green’s Executive Director Dave Feldman.

“In short, we help create ‘green jobs,’” Feldman said.

The incubator’s website states that in addition to the recently acquired space, a new partnership with the University of Maryland has been added to the list of provided resources to support the growth and success of our companies.

However, due to limited space - even with the new donation from Capital One Bank - Bethesda Green only accepts occupants whose companies meets certain criteria, including: a well-developed and feasible business idea, a mission aligned with Bethesda Green and the potential to have the greatest impact on the community and contribute to creating a vibrant “green” sustainable business cluster, according to the organization’s website.

Additionally, only a few of the companies have full-time offices at the facility, and the majority of occupants send executives to meet with the incubator once or twice a week.

Among the full-time occupants of the incubator is Savenia Labs, a Bethesda-based enviro-science company that uses a proprietary method to measure the environmental impact or “greenness” of popular consumer products, according to Bethesda Green’s website, which notes that the company joined in 2009 as one of the first occupants.

Other occupants, who are part-time, include: a rain barrel manufacturer called Aquabarrel LLC, a green business marketing firm called 4GreenPs/OrganicMania.com, a historic conservation nonprofit called The Menare Foundation Inc., an electric-car charging-station maker called E-Car Solutions Inc., and a green transit software developer called Movement Gti, according to the incubator’s website.



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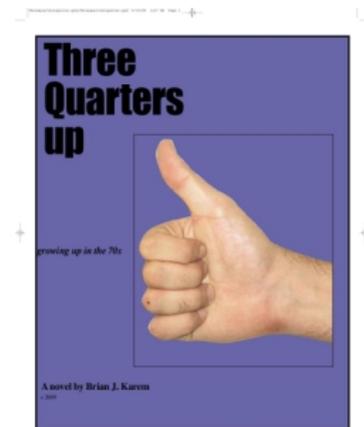
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