

Driving the community

\$100,000 endowment created for local business accelerator

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A \$50,000 pledge along with a matching donation have been made for an area business accelerator to further help budding entrepreneurs.

Penn State Fayette, The Eberly Campus recently announced that the Fayette LaunchBox program has received a pledge of \$50,000 from the Garlow Family.

Established in 2018, Fayette LaunchBox is a no-cost business accelerator designed to help regional entrepreneurs and university affiliates develop ideas into commercially viable products and services.

Penn State will make a matching contribution to the donation to create a new endowment valued at \$100,000 to support the business-accelerator programming in perpetuity.

“It is such an honor to be able to support local entrepreneurs at the beginning of their endeavor,” said Jonathan Garlow, the president and CEO of Ford Business Machines in Connellsville. “Programs such as this are what will drive our community and provide career opportunities for years to come.”

The facility, located at the Fay-Penn Economic Development headquarters, provides 6,000 square feet of state-of-the-science flex space, including 3-D printing and light manufacturing labs, as well as a 1,500-square-foot event center that can accommodate up to 70 people for meetings, workshops, training, seminars and conferences.

“This generous endowment will be used to empower local innovators, identify promising products and services, catalyze business ideas and promote growth and scale,”

said Lori Omatick, director of development at Penn State Fayette. “This gift will encourage entrepreneurship and create real, hands-on experiences that educate and equip local leaders, enhance economic potential, and scale business growth in our region and beyond.”

Fayette LaunchBox is a joint venture between Penn State and the Fay-Penn Economic Development Council, under Invent Penn State, a commonwealth-wide initiative to spur economic development, job creation and student career success.

Fayette LaunchBox is a signature program of the Invent Penn State initiative, and one of 21 innovation hubs located in Penn State campus communities across Pennsylvania.

“It has always been my ambition to build up Fayette County and bring it back stronger than ever,” Garlow said. “This endowment is designed to do just that. It will also serve as a lasting legacy to the entrepreneurial spirit of the generations that came before me.”

Currently, donors who pledge endowments of \$25,000 or more will be matched one to one by Penn State.

To contribute a gift to the Fayette LaunchBox, contact Lori Omatick, director of development, at 724-430-4190, or lao11@psu.edu.

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