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## **Norfolk Launches a Cyber-Focused Regional Business Accelerators Project with HRIC.**

Norfolk, VA – An innovative business accelerators project is being launched by the City of Norfolk to speed entrepreneurship and job growth by harnessing regional assets. Accelerators in cyber security, data science, bioscience and sea-rise mitigation are expected to provide solutions to Hampton Roads’ pillar industries, branding the region as a Mid-Atlantic technology hub founded on collaborative advantage.

Chuck Rigney the City’s Director of Development, said: “Norfolk is at the heart of a mid-Atlantic bulwark of defense, industry and academic leadership. Our cities, our businesses, our healthcare systems, our education systems, our neighborhoods face many resilience challenges. Our business acceleration strategy in niche areas such as cyber security, bioscience, sea-rise mitigation and other areas is designed to mobilize and concentrate resources that the region has already developed. Our strategy focuses on supporting entrepreneurship and innovation to address these challenges.”

Working with Norfolk to deploy this program – which will commence with a cyber security accelerator -- is the Hampton Roads Innovation Collaborative (HRIC).

Dan Bell, president of HRIC commented: “Norfolk’s plan is a very sound way of actually implementing a strategy. Their multi-point approach touches on the key elements and may be used as a model for other cities around the region and in fact, other clusters of interest.”

Bell continued: “Their idea of a collaborative approach, working with other entities and cities is exactly the approach that we need. Any city that wants to participate has the chance to benefit and if many benefit, the region benefits. Our first supporting step will be to dedicate an HRIC website page ([www.hrinnovationcollaborative.com](http://www.hrinnovationcollaborative.com)) as a bulletin board for cyber community members to market their skills, products, curricular resources and events – and, finally, recognize the community’s depth and breadth.”

HRIC and Norfolk will share the Program Management Office responsibilities of facilitation and coordination of the program. Point person for Norfolk’s Dept. of Development for the business accelerators project is Allen Baker, a veteran of advanced technology cluster development, and Dept. of Defense promotion of innovative technologies developed by small business.

The program is expected to launch in September and run for several months if not on-going based on the dynamic nature of cyber-security threats.