



NC STATE UNIVERSITY  
Institute for  
Emerging Issues

**InnovateNC**  
A Cross-City Learning Collaborative

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

## **ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVE HIGHLIGHTS WILMINGTON/CAROLINA COAST INNOVATION**

WILMINGTON, NC, April 11, 2016— Wilmington, NC, one of five “**InnovateNC**” cities across North Carolina, today kicked-off a two-day cross-city learning collaborative convening to showcase its local network of innovation. Hosting representatives from the Wilmington and Carolina Coast Innovation Council, the event features area site tours, presentations, Q & As, and panel discussions focused on the development of an entrepreneurial ecosystem able to support the community’s innovative marine biotechnology and life sciences initiatives.

Featured locations for [the April 11-12 convening](#) include MARBIONC, TekMountain, Ironclad Brewery, and Cape Fear and Brunswick Community Colleges. Local government officials are scheduled to join leaders from colleges and founders of private enterprises to speak at each of the venues.

“We’re so excited to host the **InnovateNC** members and partners here in Wilmington and the surrounding Carolina coast,” said Bill Saffo, Mayor of Wilmington. “This is a great opportunity to showcase the region’s growing entrepreneurial ecosystem and highlight the variety of assets in place to develop a hub of innovation in marine biotechnology and life science that includes a diverse set of tech startups and makers.”

**InnovateNC** is the first public-private innovation initiative of its kind in the nation. Evolving from the 2015 Emerging Issues Forum hosted by the Institute for Emerging Issues (IEI) at NC State University, “Innovation Reconstructed,” **InnovateNC** is an intensive two-year “cross-city learning collaborative” supporting five North Carolina communities—Asheville, Greensboro, Pembroke, Wilson, and Wilmington/Carolina Coast—as they expand their local innovation economies.

Earlier this year, IEI and its partner organizations launched **InnovateNC.org**, the online engagement platform for **InnovateNC**.

“The online platform is especially exciting to me because it provides a space for the five communities to network, problem solve, share resources, connect to the partners, and

celebrate their success,” said Sarah Langer Hall, IEI Health Policy Manager. “More importantly, it allows us to share what we are learning about building regional innovation centers with other communities across the state seeking to build and grow their own innovation ecosystems.”

**InnovateNC.org** will publicly chronicle the journey of five communities across the state, seeking to become regional innovation centers, while also privately serving as a collaborative resource for **InnovateNC** participants.

**InnovateNC** partners include NC State University’s Institute for Emerging Issues; NC State University College of Design; NC State Industry Expansion Solutions; Forward Impact; the Research Triangle Foundation; the UNC System; Duke University’s Sanford School of Public Policy; UNC Chapel Hill’s Department of Public Policy; UNC Chapel Hill’s Kenan Institute for Private Enterprise; RTI International; UNC-TV; the Council for Entrepreneurial Development; and the NC Board of Science, Technology & Innovation.

To learn more about **InnovateNC**, please visit [innovatenc.org](http://innovatenc.org), and follow [@InnovateNC](https://twitter.com/InnovateNC) on Twitter.

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### **About Wilmington & the Carolina Coast Innovation Council:**

The City of Wilmington and the Carolina Coast is one of five NC communities selected to participate in the State’s **InnovateNC** economic development initiative. The Wilmington and Carolina Coast Innovation Council is a collaboration between the City of Wilmington, New Hanover County, University of North Carolina at Wilmington, Marine Bio-Technologies Center of Innovation, Town of Leland, Brunswick County, NC Biotech Center SE Office, and Cape Fear and Brunswick Community Colleges. Through **InnovateNC**, the Council will strengthen the region’s emerging entrepreneurial ecosystem and innovation in the marine and life sciences.

Follow the **Wilmington & the Carolina Coast Innovation Council** on Twitter at [@InnovateNC SE](https://twitter.com/InnovateNC_SE)

**About Institute for Emerging Issues:** The Institute for Emerging Issues (IEI) connects people and resources from all sectors and regions of North Carolina in an effort to ensure our state’s future economic competitiveness. For more information on IEI’s work, visit [emergingissues.org](http://emergingissues.org).

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