
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**City of Bethlehem Receives Excellence in Economic Development Gold Award from
the International Economic Development Council**

Bethlehem, PA – The Bethlehem Economic Development Corporation and the City of Bethlehem received a Gold Excellence in Economic Development Award for *Southside Bethlehem Keystone Innovation Zone (KIZ)*, a project in the category of Partnership with Educational Institutions of the International Economic Development Council (IEDC). Lehigh University and Northampton Community College (NCC) were the key educational institutions that served as co-applicants. This is the second time the KIZ has received this award, with the first coming exactly a decade ago. The continued partnership and interaction with Lehigh and NCC have continued to evolve and strengthen.

The honor was presented at an awards ceremony on Tuesday, October 2, during the IEDC Annual Conference, which was held September 29 – October 3, in Atlanta, Georgia, United States.

“This award from the IEDC validates our efforts to strengthen bonds with Lehigh and Northampton Community College on the Southside” said Bethlehem Mayor Bob Donchez. “We have seen and will continue to see job creators and innovators graduating from these institutions and we want to make sure that Bethlehem continues to be an attractive place to launch and grow. I want to thank the IEDC for selecting Bethlehem and the Southside Bethlehem KIZ program.”

BEDCO and the City of Bethlehem administer the Southside Bethlehem Keystone Innovation Zone (KIZ). The KIZ provides an incentive and resources for students and entrepreneurs to launch and grow their company in Bethlehem. Lehigh University and Northampton Community College are preparing these students with skills and knowledge for the real world with an overarching focus on entrepreneurship and innovation. The Southside Bethlehem Keystone Innovation Zone was established in 2004 and is now in its 14th year of operation. The KIZ has had a profound impact on innovation and entrepreneurship in Bethlehem by offering critical financial resources and assistance to early-stage startup companies. To date, the KIZ has invested over \$8 million dollars in 100 companies since the program’s inception. The result of this program has been a closer bond between these partners and capitalizing on retaining our homegrown talent being fostered here in Bethlehem.

“This year our judges reviewed some extraordinary projects that advanced both communities and businesses. We congratulate all the award winners, and thank everyone who nominated their projects for sharing their success with fellow IEDC members. What we learn from each other helps us to grow and advance as a profession. We look forward to even greater participation from economic developers across the globe in the 2019 awards program.” -Craig Richard, CEcD, FM, President and CEO, Tampa Hillsborough Economic Development Corporation located in Tampa, Florida, and 2018 IEDC Board Chair.

BEDCO

The Bethlehem Economic Development Corporation (BEDCO) was established in 1982 for the purpose of facilitating economic development in the City of Bethlehem. BEDCO works closely with

the City of Bethlehem's Department of Community & Economic Development to ensure a unified economic development strategy.

Southside Bethlehem KIZ

The mission of the Southside Bethlehem KIZ is to foster innovation and create entrepreneurial opportunities by aligning the combined resources of educational institutions, the public sector, and the private sector. The Southside Bethlehem KIZ was established in 2004 and is now in its 14th year of operation. The KIZ has had a profound impact on innovation and entrepreneurship in Bethlehem by offering critical financial resources and assistance to early-stage startup companies. To date, the KIZ has invested over \$7 million dollars in 90 companies since the program's inception.

International Economic Development Council (IEDC)

The International Economic Development Council (IEDC) is the world's largest membership organization for economic development professionals. Economic developers promote economic well-being and quality of life in their communities by creating, retaining, and expanding jobs that facilitate growth and provide a stable tax base. From public to private, rural to urban, and local to international, our members represent the entire range of economic development. Learn more at iedconline.org.

Contact:

Asher Schiavone
Economic Development Coordinator
City of Bethlehem
Dept. of Community & Economic Development
10 East Church St.
Bethlehem, PA 18018
(610) 865-4347
ASchiavone@bethlehem-pa.gov