



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

September 5, 2017

## **Roanoke-Blacksburg Regional Acceleration and Mentoring Program Demo Day**

**ROANOKE, Va.** – A first-of-its kind Demo Day and reception is being hosted by the Roanoke-Blacksburg, Regional Acceleration and Mentoring Program (RAMP) on September 11. This event is designed to showcase the inaugural RAMP program cohort companies.

**Jonathan Briganti**, President of cohort company DESA states, “As Demo Day approaches, we feel the excitement. September 11th is an opportunity for DESA to share with the larger community our plans to build a company that uses big data analytics to improve patient care. Our time at RAMP has been exactly the acceleration we needed; the timing was perfect. We feel we have a strong foundation and we are looking forward to working within this region to take the next steps.”.

### **The inaugural cohort is comprised of the following:**

- **Acomhal Research Inc.**, a biotech spinout from the Virginia Tech Carilion Research Institute (VTCRI), working on an innovative therapeutic drug to target chemoresistant cancer cells and prevent tumor recurrence in glioblastoma. Acomhal Research Inc. is led by Dr. Samy Lamouille and Dr. Robert Gourdie,

- **Altede**, developing easy and affordable tests for gluten and other allergens in food. Altede is led by Ed Champion, Dr. Anna Champion, and Briana Petruzzi.
- **Autonomous Flight Technologies, Inc. (AFT)**, licensed and credentialed to use drones for business developing new ways to replace older, slower, and costlier methods. AFT is led by Josh May.
- **DESA**, developing screening assessments to more effectively support the diagnosis and monitoring of health issues such as dementia, depression, concussion, PTSD, anxiety, pre- and post-surgery instructions, among others. DESA is led by Jonathan Briganti, Brian Elliot, and Dr. Anne Brown.
- **Flex Metrics by SoftSolutions**, providing real-time production visibility technology for print, packaging, and manufacturing industries for almost 20 years. Flex Metrics is led by Jay Foster.
- **Volatia**, a full-service language service company, providing on-site, over the telephone, and remote video interpretation and translation services in more than 280 languages. Volatia is led by Baraka Kosongo, recently recognized with the Regional Entrepreneur award at RBTC's TechNite.

“RAMP opened its doors on June 1<sup>st</sup> and invited six companies from across the region to join us on a journey that we knew would be fast paced and challenging.”, says Mary Miller, Director of RAMP. She also adds that, “Our first cohort has now turned their attention to Demo Day, September 11, where they

will share their story with the greater community. We are about to celebrate our first cohort and this important regional step forward”.

## **RAMP Demo Day**

**When:** Monday, September 11, 2017 | 2:30p – 7:00p

**Where:** Virginia Western Community College - Whitman Theater | 3095 Colonial Ave SW, Roanoke, VA 24015

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### **ABOUT THE REGIONAL ACCELERATION AND MENTORING PROGRAM (RAMP)**

RAMP’s mission is to propel high-potential startups to expand and create jobs in the STEM-H (Science, Technology, Engineering, Mathematics and Health) fields.

Founding partners in the initiative include the City of Roanoke, the Roanoke-Blacksburg Technology Council, and Virginia Western Community College. The program is housed in the recently renovated Gill Memorial Building, 709 S.

Jefferson St., along the downtown Roanoke Innovation Corridor. Learn more at [www.ramprb.tech](http://www.ramprb.tech).

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