

For Immediate Release

RAMP welcomes diverse mix of startups to 3rd cohort

Public reception planned June 4 at Gill Memorial

Roanoke, VA — Four high-growth companies have been selected to join the RAMP business accelerator's latest cohort, which begins classes June 3.

The Regional Acceleration and Mentoring Program helps science, technology, engineering, math and health (STEM-H) companies test the viability and marketability of their products before entering the wider market. Now in its third year, the program aims not just to support individual companies, but to create a robust entrepreneurial community in Southwest Virginia.

Kevin Bloomfield, who helped select the 2019 cohort, serves as the board chair for one of RAMP's founding partners, the Roanoke-Blacksburg Technology Council. He said the companies chosen for this year's program are diverse not only in the industries they serve, but also in the growth stages they have reached so far.

"We have really early stage but really high-potential companies, and we have post-revenue companies that are ready to be accelerated and take the next big leap," Bloomfield said. "It's a really good mix."

By accepting companies at different maturity stages, RAMP has provided another venue through which budding entrepreneurs can connect with those who may have more business experience. More developed companies can also learn from early-stage participants, who may be able to provide a creative solution to a larger company's problem. Learning from fellow participants, Bloomfield said, has been a crucial component for success for members of RAMP's previous cohorts.

"It's not just about their own learning and their own experience, but the shared learning that happens between companies," he said. "I think that they'll feed off each other in different ways."

RAMP Director Mary Miller agreed, adding that she looks forward to seeing how collaboration between the selected companies will contribute to their future growth.

"These companies represent a wide range of technical solutions, but I feel confident they will find a great deal of common ground as we work together, which is why the cohort experience is so important," she said.

The incoming cohort will include the following companies:

- **Point 93** — Point 93 is a startup that uses blockchain technology and artificial intelligence to provide consumers and retailers with better information about what

customers want. By answering a few simple questions, customers can provide retailers with information about what level of data they are willing to share, and what kinds of prices they are willing to spend for the goods they want. That information can then be used to set prices that save consumers money and widen retailers' profit margins. Laura Godfrey, co-founder of Point 93, said that she's excited to learn from the regional and national experts the program hosts, as well as her fellow cohort members.

- **FAVE** — FAVE provides consultation, training and accessible technology to organizations in hopes of improving inclusivity for people with communicative or cognitive disabilities, like autism and Alzheimer's. FAVE works with parents and experts alike to develop solutions that government agencies, businesses and nonprofits can use to help families and individuals with disabilities. Lauren Askew, FAVE's founder, said that she's hoping to connect with technology experts through RAMP who may be able to help the company develop tech-based solutions for its customers' problems.
- **Ticket Spicket** — Ticket Spicket helps event organizers make the most out of their programs by providing tools that increase ticket sales, enhance audience engagement and create opportunities for additional revenue. Under the leadership of its CEO, Russell Hertzberg, the company aims to provide the most intelligent, streamlined ticketing platform on the market. Presently, Ticket Spicket works primarily with high schools, delivering ticket services to school districts and associations in 36 states. Participating in RAMP will help the company increase in scale, identify new markets and achieve significant revenue growth, Hertzberg said.
- **Micro Harmonics Corporation** — Micro Harmonics Corp. (MHC) produces millimeter-wave components that can be utilized by commercial companies and government agencies alike. MHC's products have a vast number of applications; they've been used by NASA to observe atmospheric conditions on Earth and on other planets, and have also been used in radio astronomy, biomaterial analysis and chemical spectroscopy. By participating in RAMP, MHC will learn how to accelerate growth, engage in strategic planning and create targeted marketing strategies, Chief Operating Officer Diane Kees said.

RAMP cohort member will each receive up to \$20,000 in seed capital and three months of entrepreneurship training from Virginia Western Community College adjunct instructors Mike Abbott and Lisa Garcia. Participants will operate their companies out of the Gill Memorial Building on South Jefferson Street in downtown Roanoke, where they will be given office space as well as free Wi-Fi until May 2020.

Two additional companies will participate as corporate-sponsored members of the cohort:

Adapify Inc. — Adapify Inc. creates custom Android, iOS and web-based applications for youth sporting organizations. Their apps help teams manage various needs like scheduling, payments and registration, and facilitate communication between parents, players and coaches. Adapify's

founder and CEO, Philip Tompkins, said the company hopes to develop its advertising and marketing while participating in the RAMP cohort.

Prescription Soil & Plant Nutrient Management — Prescription Soil & Plant Nutrient Management (PS&PNM) provides homeowners with a simple, four-season plan for creating a healthier lawn, garden or landscape. Customers can order the company's ThinkSOIL test, send a sample off to a lab, and receive results within three to seven days. The results include recommendations for what products the customer should buy and when those products should be used. Through RAMP, PS&PNM hopes to grow by developing a business-to-business model.

The public is invited to meet all six RAMP-in-Residence cohort companies during a welcome reception at Gill Memorial on June 4, from 5:30 to 7:30 p.m. To RSVP for this event, go to <https://ramprb.tech/2019/05/meet-the-2019-cohort-june-4/>.

"We are excited to welcome our 2019 startups to RAMP and are eager to see their growth in the months and years ahead," Miller said. "It is going to be a fun and exciting 12 weeks."

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ABOUT RAMP

Founded in 2017, RAMP is a public/private business accelerator serving high-growth startups in the STEM-H fields. It operates from the historic Gill Memorial Hospital building at 709 S. Jefferson St., along downtown Roanoke's Innovation Corridor. RAMP's founding partners include the City of Roanoke, Virginia Western Community College and the Roanoke-Blacksburg Technology Council. To learn more, visit www.ramprb.tech.

ABOUT THE ROANOKE-BLACKSBURG TECHNOLOGY COUNCIL

The Roanoke--Blacksburg Technology Council is a nonprofit, member--driven association of businesses and organizations in the greater Roanoke--Blacksburg region, working together to promote the growth and success of the region's technology sector. Its membership includes more than 250 organizations. The RBTC is the leading resource for the region's growth and success. It exists to connect and unite the region's technology community, develop and educate thought--leaders, mentors and the technology workforce, and improve access to talent. To learn more, please visit www.rbtc.tech.