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For Immediate Release:

## **BERKSHIRE INNOVATION CENTER ANNOUNCES \$40,000 GOLD LEVEL SPONSORSHIP BY BERKSHIRE BANK**



*Mayor Daniel Bianchi, Lori Gazzillo (Berkshire Bank Foundation), Stephen Boyd (BIC Chairman), and Rod Jané (BIC Project Director)*

The Berkshire Innovation Center (BIC) announced today that Berkshire Bank will be a Gold Level Sponsor of the Berkshire Innovation Center (“BIC”) and that Berkshire Bank Foundation has provided a \$40,000 grant to support two important BIC initiatives – a BIC internship program and the design and development of the BIC interactive web site, which will include a Learning/Expertise Interactive Portal for BIC member companies. “On behalf of the BIC and its member companies and partners, we are delighted that Berkshire Bank is joining the Berkshire Innovation Center family in such a meaningful and significant way,” stated Stephen Boyd, President of the Berkshire Innovation Center. “The employees of Berkshire Bank and the residents of Berkshire County can be proud of the community leadership being clearly demonstrated by Berkshire Bank.”

Through the BIC Internship Program, funds from Berkshire Bank Foundation will contribute up to \$750 to the BIC for each paid intern hired by BIC member companies that is either a resident or student in the Berkshires and surrounding region. The program is designed to encourage companies to provide meaningful internships in STEM areas of interest to local students with the goal of demonstrating the opportunities available in the Berkshire County area and ultimately retaining the students after graduation. “We are so pleased to support this program, which will help local students realize the myriad of career tracts available in advanced manufacturing and technology fields right here in the Berkshires” said Sean Gray, Berkshire Bank’s executive vice president of retail banking and a Berkshire Bank Foundation Director. “The Program will also provide financial assistance to companies that could benefit from a student who they can train and ultimately prepare for permanent employment upon graduation. It’s a win-win,” said Gray.

Berkshire Bank’s grant will also help fund the design, development, and administration of the BIC web site including the Learning/Expertise Interactive Portal for BIC member companies, education-research partners, and students. Berkshire Bank will provide the Financial Expertise for Business content on the site and serve as a financial resource for BIC member companies and others.

Berkshire Bank joins General Dynamics – Mission Systems as the second major Berkshire-based private sector company to announce a high-level sponsorship of the Berkshire Innovation Center. “Berkshire Bank and General Dynamics have truly stepped up big time to show leadership support of the BIC. The BIC needs and greatly appreciates this support. We hope that other companies and institutions in the region will join them in financially supporting this critical economic development initiative, which serves as a catalyst to spur innovation, investment, and job growth in the Berkshires region,” stated Rod Jané, Project Director for the BIC.

#### **About Berkshire Innovation Center**

Berkshire Innovation Center, Inc. (“BIC”) was established in August, 2014 and is a 501c3 non-profit corporation based in Pittsfield, Massachusetts. The BIC was formed at the initiative of the City of Pittsfield as a result of a \$9.7 million grant from the Massachusetts Life Sciences Center for the design, construction, and equipping of the 20,000 sq. ft. innovation center to be constructed at William Stanley Business Park. The BIC’s mission is to provide advanced capabilities (technology, equipment, training, facilities, and expertise) to small and medium sized manufacturers in the Berkshires region in order to spur innovation, investment, and job growth. Construction of the BIC facility by the City of Pittsfield is expected to begin 4<sup>th</sup> quarter of 2015 and to be completed by 4<sup>th</sup> quarter 2016. The BIC Board of Directors includes leaders from 10 private sector manufacturing companies and notable education-research partners including Berkshire Community College, MCLA, RPI, UMass-Amherst, UMass-Lowell, SUNY College of Nanoscale Science & Technology, Williams College, and McCann Technical School.

#### **About Berkshire Bank Foundation**

Through foundation grants to nonprofits, scholarships to students, and employee volunteerism, Berkshire Bank is making a difference. Each year the Foundation donates nearly \$1.6 million to non-profits in the

bank's footprint and employees provide over 40,000 hours of service. In 2014, Berkshire Bank was named one of Massachusetts' Most Charitable Companies by the Boston Business Journal. This year, Berkshire Bank and NESN are teaming up to raise \$50,000 for Habitat for Humanity by donating funds to the [Hockey 4 Housing](#) campaign each time the Boston Bruins achieved a penalty kill. To learn more about Berkshire Bank Foundation, visit [www.berkshirebank.com/community](http://www.berkshirebank.com/community) .

### **About Berkshire Bank**

Berkshire Hills Bancorp (NYSE: BHLB) is the parent of Berkshire Bank, [America's Most Exciting Bank](#)<sup>®</sup>. The Company, recognized for its entrepreneurial approach and distinctive culture, has \$7.5 billion in assets and 93 full service branch offices in Massachusetts, New York, Connecticut, and Vermont providing personal and business banking, insurance, and wealth management services. In 2014, Berkshire Bank was named one of Massachusetts' Most Charitable Companies by the Boston Business Journal. To learn more, visit [www.berkshirebank.com](http://www.berkshirebank.com) or call 800-773-5601. Berkshire Bank is the official bank of the Boston Bruins coverage on NESN.

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