

March 12, 2015

## **GENERAL DYNAMICS PLATINUM SPONSORSHIP OF BERKSHIRE INNOVATION CENTER CLIMAXES A HUGE BERKSHIRE CHAMBER GOOD NEWS BREAKFAST EVENT**



*Team from General Dynamics Mission Systems presents \$50,000 check to Rod Jané, BIC Project Director, after the announcement at the Chamber Breakfast at Pittsfield Country Club*

On Wednesday, March 11<sup>th</sup> the Berkshire Chamber of Commerce welcomed 250 members of the business community to the Country Club of Pittsfield for its first Good News Business Salute of 2015, which was sponsored by TD Bank. The Chamber celebrated the accomplishments of the American Red Cross, Berkshire County Arc, Inc., and Kimball Farms Retirement Community, and helped the Center for EcoTechnology present the Alan Silverstein & Laura Dubester Award for Environmental Community Leadership to Juliette Haas.

After giving kudos to the salutees, emcee Jason "Jake" McCandless, Superintendent of Pittsfield Public Schools, discussed the importance of investing in education and went into detail about the Taconic High School project currently underway, emphasizing the economic benefits of and critical need for quality vocational programs that help shape high school ages kids into experienced, work-ready adults upon graduation.

Adding to the energy of an already exciting event, Keynote speaker Rod Jané, Project Director for the Berkshire Innovation Center (BIC), gave the audience an overview of the Berkshire Innovation Center project and the considerable progress it has made to date. He provided the background of how the original capital grant of \$6.5 million to the City of Pittsfield was increased to \$9.7 million by the Massachusetts Life Sciences Center, after a thorough feasibility study by New England Expansion Strategies was conducted. The study transformed the original concept of a life sciences incubator into

an innovation center that is focused, instead, on assisting existing companies in the Berkshires region including not only life sciences companies, but also their potential suppliers including plastics and materials companies, advanced manufacturing companies, and technology companies.

The BIC will bring advanced capabilities to its member companies including shared access to cutting edge R&D equipment, customized training programs, student internship programs, and collaborative research opportunities with the BIC's research partners including UMass-Amherst, RPI, SUNY College of Nanoscale Science & Engineering, and UMass-Lowell. The innovation center will be housed in a new approximately 24,000 sq. ft. building to be constructed at William Stanley Business Park. The facility will include clean rooms, wet lab space, and state-of-the-art training classrooms including videoconferencing equipment. In essence, BIC will become the R & D and Training facility for many small and medium sized manufacturers in the Berkshires, addressing a critical need that will spur economic growth, jobs creation, and further investment in the region.

Jané stated that 11 companies had already signed up to become members of the BIC, and given that the facility will not open for another 16 months, that is well ahead of schedule. After taking the chamber audience through the BIC's business model and impressive list of education and research partners, Jané gave attendees a special sneak peek at the architectural renderings of the building, scheduled for groundbreaking in the third quarter of 2015. If all goes as planned, the ribbon cutting and grand opening of the Berkshire Innovation Center will happen in the third quarter of 2016.

The highlight of the event took place when Brenda Burdick announced that General Dynamics Mission Systems is stepping up to become the first Platinum Sponsor of the Berkshire Innovation Center and presented a \$50,000 check to Jané. "General Dynamics Mission Systems supports the Berkshire Innovation Center and has been involved in the Center since its inception. Investing in the Berkshire Innovation Center is an investment in future jobs, job training as well as engineering and manufacturing excellence," stated Brenda Burdick, Senior Manager of Marketing and Public Relations at General Dynamics Mission Systems and Advisory Board Member of the Berkshire Innovation Center. "General Dynamics Mission Systems has once again displayed its leadership in the Berkshire Region by stepping to the forefront in a very big way to support one of the most important economic projects to happen in the Berkshires during this generation. We are extremely appreciative of their generous contribution and support," stated Stephen Boyd, Chairman of the Berkshire Innovation Center and CEO of Boyd Technologies (Lee, MA).

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

The Berkshire Innovation Center is an independent non-profit 501c3 corporation established in August, 2014 as a result of a \$9.7 million capital grant awarded to the City of Pittsfield by the Massachusetts Life Sciences Center for the design, construction and equipping of a 20,000 plus sq. ft. innovation center facility at William Stanley Business Park in Pittsfield, MA. The Berkshire Innovation Center's mission is to provide a catalyst to enable and accelerate innovation and the growth of existing companies in the Berkshire Region – primarily small to medium sized manufacturing companies in life sciences, the life sciences supply chain, advanced manufacturing and technology with the ultimate objective of spurring economic growth, jobs, and investment in the region.