

PRESS RELEASE

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Commerce awards \$2.4 million in innovation grants

SCCMS to receive support toward efforts fostering high-tech and entrepreneurial endeavors

COLUMBIA, S.C. - In its inaugural round of innovation-related grants, the South Carolina Department of Commerce is awarding \$2.4 million in grant funds to 14 organizations across the state, including SCCMS, to further high-tech and entrepreneurial economic development.

Our project, STEMLinx, is South Carolinas's one-stop discovery site for STEM education resources. As a digital marketplace of visual and textual information STEMLinx identifies a broad range of STEM education programs located in South Carolina and makes them accessible to STEM constituencies including educators, parents, students, scientists, engineers, professional organizations, economic development entities and government agencies. STEMLinx will be South Carolina's One Stop Discovery site for STEM education. SCCMS will receive \$25,000 for further STEMLinx development and marketing efforts.

As part of its efforts to support and grow an innovative, technology-based and entrepreneurial business environment, the Department of Commerce launched the state's first Office of Innovation in the fall of 2013. In January, the Department of Commerce issued a notice of funding opportunity, dubbed the South Carolina Innovation Challenge, soliciting proposals for projects that focus on fostering technology-based economic development, entrepreneurship and innovation in South Carolina communities through university collaboration, local government participation or public-private partnerships. Projects were required to address one or more goals of the South Carolina Innovation Plan.

"I'm excited to see the energy and impact that South Carolina's startup community has created, and we hope to help continue that momentum through this new program," said Secretary of Commerce Bobby Hitt. "The knowledge economy represents a vital part of South Carolina's present and future. Through the Office of Innovation, we want to create a business environment in South Carolina that is ideal to start and build a high-growth company."

About S.C. Department of Commerce

As South Carolina's leading economic development agency, the Department of Commerce works to recruit new businesses and help existing businesses grow. Commerce has recruited world-class companies to South Carolina such as Boeing, Bridgestone, Continental, Monster.com, ZF Group, BMW and Google Inc. and also supports small and existing business, rural development initiatives and community development. Commerce partners with the S.C. Technical College System via readySC to support workforce training and recruiting, and with the S.C. Department of Employment and Workforce, which provides worker training and employment opportunities within the state. South Carolina ranked

first in the national for attracting jobs through foreign investment, according to IBM-Plant Location International reports in both 2012 and 2013. The state won the Gold Shovel Award and the Project of Year Award from Area Development magazine in 2012. For more information, visit www.SCommerce.com.