



Weekly News Round-up

IN THIS ISSUE: DRA launches The Entrepreneurship Network, Delta Challenge pitch competitions
SBA announces 2015 Emerging Leaders Initiative in four Delta cities



DRA launches The Entrepreneurship Network to identify, strengthen entrepreneurs in the Delta

The DRA announced this week the dates for The Delta Challenge—a series of entrepreneurship pitch competitions—as part of a newly established program called the [DRA Entrepreneurship Network](#) to boost entrepreneurial success in the Mississippi River Delta region and Alabama Black Belt—DRA Federal Co-Chairman Chris Masingill announced today.

The Network builds on a key partnership with The Idea Village to identify, connect, nurture and grow entrepreneurs from across the Delta region and Alabama Black Belt by addressing regional needs in capital, training, and best practices through a connected infrastructure of support organizations, investors, and educators.

Entrepreneurs and non-profit organizations that provide services to their local entrepreneurial

Upcoming Events:

Register or Apply Today

January 19

Join us for Delta Leadership Institute's MLK Day of Service
Wheatley Community School | New Orleans, LA

January 20-22

DLI Executive Academy Small Business Development & Entrepreneurship
New Orleans, LA

February 15

Application Deadline for Entrepreneurship Support Organizations
Send completed applications to deltachallenge@dra.gov by Midnight.

February 20-21

DRA Governors Quorum Meeting and Board Meeting
Washington, DC | JW Marriott

February 24

Delta Challenge pitch competition
Cape Girardeau, Missouri |
Submit business summary online |
Time and location TBD

February 26

Delta Challenge pitch

community should consider applying for the Network's fellowships at dra.gov/entrepreneur.

[Read More >](#)



Emerging Leaders Initiative provides small business owners training, opportunity to grow

The U.S. Small Business Administration has launched its 2015 Emerging Leaders executive-level training series in 48 cities and communities across the country.

The initiative has trained more than 2,400 promising small business owners in underserved communities, and its impact continues to expand in helping small businesses to grow and create jobs throughout the country. There are four cities within the Delta region that will be hosting the initiative this year--Jackson, MS and Little Rock, AR (both of which are new to the initiative); Memphis, TN; and New Orleans, LA. Additional trainings will be held in cities close to Delta businesses in Alabama, Kentucky, and Missouri.

[Learn More About the Initiative >](#)

competition

Ruston, Louisiana
Submit business summary online |
Time and location TBD

February 27 Delta Challenge pitch competition

Jackson, Mississippi
Submit business summary online |
Time and location TBD

February 28 Delta Challenge pitch competition

Jonesboro, Arkansas
Submit business summary online |
Time and location TBD

March 2 Delta Challenge pitch competition

Linden, Alabama |
Submit business summary online |
Time and location TBD

**If you have an event that you would like featured in our Upcoming Events section, send event information to news@dra.gov*

Announcements From Our Partners:

**New Orleans named #1 Food City
in America**

**Applications open for Social
Entrepreneurship Boot Camp in
Arkansas | Deadline to apply
January 31, 2015**

**USDA Rural Utilities Services
opens applications for
Community Connect Grant
Program | Deadline February 17,
2015**

**OECD Report "Skills Beyond
School" Identifies Good Practices
in Addressing Growing Skills Gap**



Delta Regional Authority

236 Sharkey Avenue - Suite 400
Clarksdale, MS 38614
(662) 624-8600 | DRA.GOV



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