

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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RAMP business accelerator launches crowdfunding drive to support region's startups

Goal is to raise \$25,000 to furnish team rooms in renovated Gill Memorial Building

ROANOKE -- The RAMP business accelerator has launched a crowdfunding drive to support its goal of growing high-potential startups in the Roanoke-Blacksburg region. The campaign, launched Oct. 28 through the Tilt platform, aims to raise \$25,000 to help outfit team rooms occupied by the startups accepted in the RAMP program.

This is the first fundraising drive by RAMP, which will be located in the renovated Gill Memorial Building at 709 S. Jefferson St. in downtown Roanoke. Renovations are currently under way, with the building expected to open in early 2017. The first class of RAMP startup companies is expected to start in mid-2017.

RAMP, which stands for Regional Acceleration and Mentoring Program, is led by a volunteer advisory board whose members are drawn from the founding partners:

- + the City of Roanoke, which won a \$600,000 state grant approved by Gov. Terry McAuliffe to renovate the Gill building as an accelerator;
- + Virginia Western Community College, which will provide business education classes and faculty support;
- + the Roanoke-Blacksburg Technology Council, which will hire RAMP's executive director and develop the accelerator's mentorship and networking initiatives.

RAMP's programming will be based on best practices garnered from existing successful business accelerators. It will initially focus on accelerating three to five technology- or life science-focused companies in the fields of science, technology, engineering, math and healthcare each per year.

Entrepreneurs accepted into RAMP will work closely with multiple mentors during an intensive three- to four-month "boot camp for founders" designed to focus on building, testing, improving, validating product-market fit, and launching their product for the market.

>>> To donate to the RAMP Tilt campaign, go to RAMPTilt.com

>>> To learn more about RAMP, go to RAMPrb.tech

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