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RBTC Emerging Tech Conference Returns to Roanoke with Powerhouse Lineup

ROANOKE, Va. (Oct. 13, 2026)—RBTC's [Emerging Technology Conference](#) (ETC) returns to Roanoke to share insights and resources on emerging technologies in AI, healthcare, energy, advanced manufacturing, agriculture, venture, capital, and infrastructure. The third annual ETC, presented by Carilion Clinic, will be held November 19–20 at Hotel Roanoke.

The ETC has fast become the region's premier stage for advancements happening at the leading edge of innovation. In 2025, it convened more than 500 innovators, founders, and tech leaders from more than 250 companies and organizations from Roanoke, Blacksburg, and beyond.

Thought Leadership Across Sectors

Keynote Speakers

-  [Ken Gall](#), Chief Commercial Officer at [restor3d](#): Ken Gall is a tenured professor of Mechanical Engineering and Materials Science and Orthopaedic Surgery at Duke University and a serial entrepreneur in the medical device space. He has co-founded 10 companies, and his startups have been acquired in five transactions by companies including NuVasive, Conmed and W. L. Gore.
- [Nigel Thurlow](#), CEO of The Flow Consortium: Nigel Thurlow spent 20 years at Toyota, where he became the first-ever Chief of Agile at a global Toyota company. He co-created The Flow System®, a framework for how organizations make decisions, reduce complexity and sustain innovation at scale, and has trained more than 11,000 people worldwide.

Featured Speakers

- [Nicole Hall](#), Senior Associate Vice President of Student Affairs at [University of Virginia](#): A higher education strategist and national voice on college recruiting, Nicole Hall is known for her executive capacity and strategic approach. Her session: "College to Career: National Trends + Insights."



- [Gary Mays](#), Chief Operating Officer of [Axle](#): Gary Mays boasts a career that spans public health, defense, energy, and telecommunications, including stewardship of a \$1.7 billion FDA center. His session: “Building a Translational Research Network: Virginia’s Opportunity in Human-Centric Biomedical Innovation.”
- [Mark Otter](#), Founder and Managing Partner of Community Works Collective: Mark Otter designs communities that support learning, collaboration and real-world recognition at scale. Mark previously served as CEO of Participate. His session: “Small Proofs, Big Signals: Rethinking Credentials for Today’s Workforce.”

More speakers and program details will be announced in the coming weeks. View the full confirmed lineup at emergingtechconf26.sched.com.

Focused Tracks for Maximum Impact

ETC’s program is anchored by six focused tracks, so participants can choose those most relevant to their work.

- **AI & Data Systems:** topics include artificial intelligence, analytics, autonomy, and applied digital systems.
- **Industry 4.0 (AM2):** topics include additive manufacturing, advanced materials, automation, robotics, smart factories and industrial transformation.
- **Health and Bio Innovation:** explore topics in biotechnology, medtech, healthcare systems, diagnostics, and life sciences innovation.
- **Energy, Agriculture, and Infrastructure:** topics include energy systems, utilities, agtech, logistics, and climate resilience.
- **Venture and Ecosystem:** topics include entrepreneurship, venture capital, commercialization, policy, economic development, and innovation ecosystems.
- **Career and Education Pathways:** the skills, leadership, workforce strategies, and career development shaping the future of technology and innovation.

Programmatic Partnership

This year’s conference is being developed in collaboration with presenting partner Carilion Clinic and organizations across the region. Academic partners include Virginia Tech, the Fralin Biomedical Research Institute at VTC, Radford University, and Virginia Western Community College. Local and regional partners include the City of Roanoke, the Roanoke Regional Partnership, Onward NRV, Visit Virginia’s Blue Ridge, and additional community partners.

RBTC is proud to return to The Hotel Roanoke and Conference Center for ETC 2026. A discounted ETC room block is available for attendees traveling from outside the region; book through the ETC conference page.



ROANOKE BLACKSBURG
TECHNOLOGY COUNCIL

EMERGING TECH
CONFERENCE

Details for RBTC Emerging Technology Conference 2026

- Date: November 19–20, 2026
- Location: [The Hotel Roanoke & Conference Center](#), Roanoke, VA
- Tickets: \$275 RBTC members / \$325 non-members
- Registration: [Online via RBTC website](#)

Register for RBTC's Emerging Technology Conference

ETC explores the innovation, ideas, and collaboration transforming our region and beyond. Join the conversation driving what comes next. [Get your tickets](#) today.

About the Roanoke Blacksburg Technology Council

Established in 1998, the Roanoke Blacksburg Technology Council (RBTC) is a member-driven association working to promote the growth of the region's technology and innovation community. Its more than 200 member companies, which together employ more than 15,000 people, range from emerging technology firms to the largest technology employers in the region, and its programming connects entrepreneurs, mentors, investors and tech leaders. RBTC is an affiliate of the Roanoke Blacksburg Innovation Alliance (RBIA), a collaborative strategic alliance established to grow the region's innovation economy, technology and life sciences sectors. Learn more at rbtc.tech.

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Media Kit: Speaker headshots, bios and logos available at rbtc.tech/events/emerging-technology-conference/etc-2026-media-kit

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