



## NEWS RELEASE

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**For Immediate Release**

### CHAMBER ANNOUNCES TOM TOM CITIES RISING NEXTGEN COHORT

Danville, Va. (September 28, 2020) – In partnership with the Weldon Cooper Center for Public Service at the University of Virginia and the Tom Tom Foundation, the Danville Pittsylvania County Chamber of Commerce announced a new leadership development experience, NextGen: Southern Virginia, a virtual learning and networking opportunity for emerging leaders from the Dan River Region.

The NextGen experience will take place through the Tom Tom Foundation's Fall 2020 Cities Rising Virtual Summit. This seven-week national event (September 15 - October 30) brings together leaders from hundreds of cities to explore the impact of COVID-19 and the 2020 movement for racial justice in their hometowns. The NextGen cohort was specifically designed to engage those leaders in the context of COVID-19, and allow them to explore the region's challenges, assets and opportunities to move our region through and beyond the pandemic. More information can be found here: <https://www.tomtomfoundation.org/southside-cohort>

"The NextGen: Southern Virginia experience is an incredible opportunity for participants to engage with peers from across the country in an environment focused on real-time, positive impact in our communities," said Alexis Ehrhardt, President & CEO of the Danville Pittsylvania County Chamber of Commerce. "One of the Chamber's three focus areas is talent development, and we are proud to partner with Tom Tom and the Weldon Cooper Center to provide such a unique experience for this incredible group of leaders."

The following 13 cohort members make up NextGen: Southern Virginia:

Liz Cervantes	Averett University
Rachel Covington	Danville Pittsylvania County Chamber of Commerce
Ronella Daniel	VIPKid

Danielle DuCré	Chatham Hall
Shani Gaylord	Piedmont Access to Health Services
Phillip Hayes	Noblis
Drew Herring	West Main Baptist Church
Tracy Mallard	Halifax County IDA
Lauren Mathena	Mid-Atlantic Broadband Corporation
Ryan Millner	Caswell Family Medical Center
Danielle Montague	City of Danville
Steven Osborne	Adams and Fisk, PLC
Maggie Richardson	The Health Collaborative

"We are thrilled to host this phenomenal cohort of leaders at the Cities Rising Summit. It is our goal that they will leave this convening with new insights and relationships to help the region emerge from the pandemic stronger and more resilient than ever before," said Paul Beyer, executive director of the Tom Tom Foundation.

Throughout this experience, cohort members will learn and share best practices around COVID-19 economic recovery and resilience; engage with fellow cohort members to strategize effective solutions for the region's challenges; and inspire and drive new impacts from facilitated cohort conversation.

Larry Terry, executive director of the Weldon Cooper Center, said, "Leadership development and collaboration are cornerstones to the Weldon Cooper Center's approach to serving the Commonwealth, so working in partnership with Tom Tom and the Danville Pittsylvania Chamber of Commerce to provide an innovative experience for this Southern Virginia cohort fits our mission perfectly. These leaders are driven by the belief that anyone can contribute to the public's well-being. We are hopeful that this experience not only exposes them to new ideas from across the country, but also allows them to chart a path for the region's future where they can use their voice and expertise to bring about the innovation-driven change they feel is needed during these challenging times."

The Tom Tom Cities Rising Summit NextGen: Southern Virginia cohort is made possible in part with support from our sponsors, the Tobacco Region Revitalization Commission and the Alexander Berkeley Carrington, Jr. and Ruth Simpson Carrington Charitable Trust.

Registration for the Cities Rising Summit is open now, and thanks to the support of sponsors, available at no charge. Learn more at <https://www.tomtomfoundation.org/cities-rising-summit>

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#### The Danville Pittsylvania County Chamber of Commerce

The Danville Pittsylvania County Chamber of Commerce accelerates business growth by connecting its members to dynamic resources and networks. Its 600 members understand that a strong Chamber is a critical component of an innovative, profitable business community. The Chamber's number one goal is to help area businesses of all sizes to grow and prosper.

#### The Tom Tom Foundation

The Tom Tom Foundation champions innovation, creativity, and entrepreneurship in America's hometowns. Tom Tom's flagship Summit convenes cross-sector leaders from hundreds of cities to share big ideas and tactical solutions in Charlottesville, Virginia. The concurrent festival celebrates Charlottesville with music, art and community programs. Our year-round initiatives expand connections among city and nonprofit leaders, support thriving entrepreneurial and creative ecosystems, and prioritize opportunity and access for all. Learn more about the Foundation and its mission at [www.tomtombfoundation.org](http://www.tomtombfoundation.org).

#### The Weldon Cooper Center for Public Service

The Cooper Center serves leaders across the Commonwealth and beyond by combining decades of knowledge about government, communities, and the people of Virginia with contemporary and advanced research, analytical expertise, and focused training for high performance.