



## NEWS RELEASE

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### **V-TOP AND EmPOWER WEBINAR COMING TO DAN RIVER REGION**

*Webinar Presents Resources to Recruit Talent and Strengthen Talent Pipeline*

[Danville, VA] – The Danville Pittsylvania County Chamber of Commerce, the Martinsville Henry County Chamber of Commerce, and the Institute for Advanced Learning and Research (IALR) are partnering to provide Chamber members an opportunity to learn about the Virginia Talent + Opportunity Partnership (V-TOP) and EmPOWER work-based learning framework. Both initiatives are designed to assist employers in recruiting talent and strengthening regional talent pipelines.

V-TOP is funded through the Commonwealth Innovative Internship Fund and Program. The purpose of the program is to expand paid and credit-bearing student internships and other work-based learning opportunities in collaboration with Virginia employers and facilitate the readiness of students, employers, and institutions of higher education to participate in internship and work-based learning. “This webinar is a direct result from requests of Chamber members in our annual membership survey,” said Anne Moore-Sparks, president and CEO of the Danville Pittsylvania County Chamber of Commerce. “Listening to the needs of business and responding with high quality, in-demand programming is a top priority. We are excited to partner with the Martinsville Henry County Chamber of Commerce and are fortunate to have IALR as a partner because of their experience and reputation in facilitating work-based learning opportunities.”

There are several resources available through V-TOP to support businesses’ internship and work-based learning efforts, including modules to assist employers with developing an internship program, free mentor training, staffing agency services and internship stipend

matching funds (for employers of certain sizes). “Many of our chamber members are looking for ways to bring awareness to the talent pipeline. Our members are willing to utilize work-based learning opportunities as a valuable tool for introducing the workforce to their organizations,” said Brenell Thomas, president of the Martinsville Henry County Chamber of Commerce. “Partnering on this event made sense because it provides an efficient and convenient way for the members of both chambers to gain insight about the valuable resources available through V-TOP.”

The Institute for Advanced Learning and Research is the regional V-TOP facilitator for the Danville Pittsylvania County (and greater [GO Virginia Region 3](#)) region. EmPOWER is IALR’s employer-driven system to empower and connect students to careers and provides employers with a variety of opportunities and formats to connect with their future talent. “Work-based learning is an amazing way to connect with young talent and develop employees with the skills employers need. Work-based learning is incredibly diverse — it’s not just internships. IALR’s EmPOWER team is passionate about connecting employers to programs and resources that work for their organization,” Jessie Vernon, Program Manager for the Institute for Advanced Learning and Research.

The one-hour webinar will be facilitated by both Jessie Vernon, Advanced Learning Program Manager, and Kiana Dillard, Work-Based Learning Coordinator, at the Institute for Advanced Learning and Research. While this webinar is designed for Chamber members only, non-Chamber businesses who are interested in additional information should contact Jessie Vernon at [Jessie.Vernon@ialr.org](mailto:Jessie.Vernon@ialr.org) or 434.766.6722.

There is no cost to attend but registration is required at [https://bit.ly/V\\_TOPWebinar](https://bit.ly/V_TOPWebinar).

*The Danville Pittsylvania County Chamber of Commerce accelerates business growth by connecting its 560+ member organizations and 22,000 employee members to dynamic resources and networks. The Chamber’s number one goal is to help area businesses of all sizes to grow and prosper.*

*The Martinsville Henry County Chamber of Commerce is a membership organization comprised of businesses serving our community. With over 600 members, the Chamber acts as a voice for businesses in the region while also providing opportunities for networking, collaboration, and increased community exposure.*

*The Institute for Advanced Learning and Research serves Virginia as a regional catalyst for economic transformation through applied research, advanced learning, manufacturing advancement, conference center services and economic development efforts. IALR’s major footprint focuses within Southern Virginia, including the counties of Patrick, Henry, Franklin, Pittsylvania, Halifax, and Mecklenburg along with the cities of Danville and Martinsville. For more information, visit [www.ialr.org](http://www.ialr.org).*

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