

Launch Week Encourages Innovation and Entrepreneurship

What's Happening Thumbnail:



A week of events relating to innovation and entrepreneurship will take place in Sioux City and surrounding communities as part of the 6th annual Launch Week, November 7th - 15th. With workshops, startup presentations and plenty of networking, Launch Week aims to inspire, motivate, and promote collaboration among students, business owners and professionals throughout northwest Iowa.

The week of creativity begins with a **Business Blender** on Wednesday, November 7th at The Stirring at 403 in Correctionville. This gathering will provide an opportunity for small business owners and entrepreneurs in rural northwest Iowa to network. The event will begin with refreshments at 8:30 a.m. followed by a guided discussion at 9:00 a.m. All existing and future businesses in Correctionville and the surrounding areas are invited to attend and share ideas, knowledge, experiences, and resources.

On Thursday, November 8th the northwest Iowa **STEM Festival** will be held at MakerSpace Sioux City from 3:00-7:00 p.m. The festival will feature over 20 exhibitors with hand-on STEM activities for children of all ages. This family-friendly event is free and open to the public. The first 300 guests will also receive a free dinner from local food trucks.

The creativity will continue on Friday, November 9th with **Launch It College Games**. This weekend long event brings college students together on Friday night to pitch their business idea and form teams around the top ideas. On Saturday, teams research and discover information that pertains to their business, conduct customer discovery, and refine their ideas to create a minimal viable product. On Sunday, teams tailor their final pitches, present to a panel of judges, and have a chance to win prize money. Local business owners and community members will act as mentors and coaches for the weekend. Students will learn problem solving skills, have an opportunity to network with community members, and will begin to think like an entrepreneur. The event will be held at MakerSpace Sioux City and registration and meals during the event are free for college students thanks to the event sponsor, Iowa's West Coast Initiative. Students can register up by visiting <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/launch-it-college-games-tickets-51551610254>.

On Monday, November 12th the Small Business Development Center will host a **Veteran's Business Roundtable** from 11:30 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. in the Rocklin Conference Center on Western Iowa Tech Community College's main campus in Sioux City. This event is geared toward Veteran business owners and will provide an opportunity to discuss challenges they may be facing and learn about resources that are available to them. The luncheon is free and will be limited to the first 100 people. For more information and to RSVP, contact SBDC Regional Director Todd Rausch at 712-274-6454 or todd.rausch@witcc.edu.

On Tuesday, November 13th, **Navigating the Digital World as a Small Business** will be held at 11:30 a.m. in the Onawa Public Library. This workshop will show small businesses how to embrace the internet and social media in order to reach new customers and clients. The event is free and lunch will be provided. Attendees are asked to register by visiting <http://discovermononacounty.org/events/golive1/>.

Local entrepreneurs, small business owners and business professionals will gather on Wednesday, November 14th

from 4:30-7:00 p.m. at Buffalo Alice for **Biz Brew**. Biz Brew brings people together who are interested in fostering a startup community and creating a positive environment for businesses to grow. Everyone is welcome to stop by after work and enjoy beverage specials, free pizza and great conversations.

To conclude the week, the economic development organizations in northwest Iowa will host the regional **Dream Big Grow Here** pitch competition on Thursday, November 15th in Sheldon, Iowa. In September, entrepreneurs in northwest Iowa submitted their dreams to start or expand a business, and from the entries, five finalists have been selected to present their idea to an audience and judges in a pitch-off event for a chance to win thousands in cash prizes. The first-place winner will receive \$4,000, second place will receive \$2,000 and third place will receive \$1,000.

A special thank you to our featured sponsor, Iowa's West Coast Initiative, for underwriting the cost of many of these events. To view additional details for each event, visit www.iawestcoast.com/event-calendar.