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Flint mayor and community leaders welcome Urban Entrepreneurship Symposium 2016 to Flint

Third annual event will bring business innovators, academics and community change agents together Oct. 19 to 21 to consider how business innovation can revitalize urban communities

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Detroit –Aug. 24, 2016 –The Honorable Karen Weaver, Mayor of Flint, and other community leaders welcomed news that The Urban Entrepreneurship Initiative will hold its third annual Urban Entrepreneurship Symposium Oct. 19 to 21 in Flint. The 2016 Symposium (#UES2016) follows sold-out events in Detroit in 2015 and Ann Arbor in 2014. The Urban Entrepreneurship Symposium convenes entrepreneurs and thought leaders in business, academia, community organizations and government to facilitate business solutions that bring economic opportunity and quality of life improvements to urban communities.

“The City of Flint is in action mode now, aggressively seeking positive change to advance the city’s revitalization efforts,” said Mayor Weaver. “In the spirit of collaboration, the Urban Entrepreneurship Symposium will bring to Flint experience-based knowledge and know-how on using for-profit business approaches to tackle difficult issues such as job creation and infrastructure rebuilding.”

Weighing in with additional business and community support are the Flint and Genesee Chamber of Commerce, the University of Michigan-Flint, Mott Community College, the Charles Stewart Mott Foundation, and SkyPoint Ventures, owned by Phil Hagerman, co-founder and CEO of Diplomat, and his wife Jocelyn Hagerman.

“We are looking forward to the Urban Entrepreneurship Symposium coming to Flint,” Phil Hagerman said. “It’s another great example of the momentum building in the region and we welcome the opportunity for new conversations with innovators and entrepreneurs from across the country. Conversations are the catalyst to progress and we expect the symposium to be another opportunity to move Flint forward.”

W. David Tarver, founder and president of the Urban Entrepreneurship Initiative and the chief event organizer, is a Flint native who holds undergraduate and graduate degrees in electrical engineering from the University of Michigan and also lectures in U-M’s Center for Entrepreneurship. In 1983, at age 30, he launched Telecom Analysis Systems, Inc., a telecommunications instrumentation business, and sold it in 1995 for \$30 million. Working as group president for the company’s buyer, Tarver then spearheaded development of a telecommunications group with a market value of more than \$2 billion. He left that business in 1999 to devote more time to family and community service, ultimately returning to Southeast Michigan in 2007 and starting the Urban Entrepreneurship Initiative in 2014.

“Flint’s twentieth-century prosperity was born of entrepreneurial innovation, and such innovation will be the key to the city’s revitalization,” Tarver said. “The water crisis is a clarion call for the Flint community to work together to rewrite its story from one of crisis and despair to rebirth and opportunity.”

The mission of #UES2016 is to:

- Focus the entrepreneur community on solving urban problems via for-profit businesses.
- Forge productive connections between entrepreneurs, investors, students, faculty and urban communities.
- Identify important urban problems that can benefit from for-profit business innovation.
- Identify new business models that can result in repeatable, scalable businesses that address key urban problems.
- Identify and recognize existing businesses that are applying innovative business models to solve important urban problems.
- Share best practices in community engagement, problem identification, human-centered design, business model creation and validation, finance and support systems and other key areas.

New to this year’s symposium are two business challenge competitions offering monetary awards and professional guidance to the winning teams: The Urban Infrastructure Challenge and the Urban Jobs Challenge. Details to apply for the business challenge competitions will be released shortly via the [UEI website](#).

Details on Urban Entrepreneurship Symposium 2016

- **When:** #UES2016 kicks off Wednesday Oct. 19 with an evening program, and runs through Friday, Oct. 21, 2016; the Thursday session will begin at 8:00 a.m. and end (following a business networking reception) at 7:30 p.m. Friday’s session will commence at 8:00 a.m. and end mid-afternoon.
- **Where:** work sessions, receptions and seminars will take place at several Flint venues. Details will be provided on the UEI website.
- **Cost:** The Wednesday night community reception is free (pre-registration required). Registration cost for the full Thursday work sessions is \$25.00. Registration for the Friday sessions (including access to all seminars) is \$25.00.
- **Registration:** advance registration is required; purchase tickets online at www.urbanei.org.
- **Sponsors:** For sponsorship information, please call Urban Entrepreneurship Initiative at (313) 457-2050 or email info@urbanei.org.
- **Event questions:** for general questions about the event, please email info@urbanei.org.

About the Urban Entrepreneurship Initiative

The Urban Entrepreneurship Initiative, founded by W. David Tarver, a technology entrepreneur, Michigan native and author of “Proving Ground: A Memoir,” is a 501(c)(3) non-profit corporation offering programming and resources that encourage, facilitate and enable the development of for-profit businesses that explicitly and intentionally address the needs of urban communities. Learn more [here](#).

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