

THE WORLD DEMANDS MORE OF US.

VANTAGE

VENTURES

2022 IMPACT REPORT



LETTER FROM OUR EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Our friend and partner, Victor Hwang, wrote in his recent book, “We are all starters. We are all askers of the question, ‘Dare I ding the universe?’ We are all born with the fundamental right to start our own ideas and make them real, create our value in the world and determine our economic destinies.”

Our world — global and local communities — will be successful when systematic efforts to support “starters” are established, knowledge is shared and funding networks are established in a sustainable and inclusive manner. Environmental, social and governance efforts are intertwined in this work. We know we cannot fix one at the expense of another. Only then will prosperity be broadly realized.

In our 2022 Impact Report, we share our work with entrepreneurs leveraging Vantage Ventures resources to make a positive impact and provide an update on our efforts from the past year. I’m proud of the collective work of our mission-driven Founders and how they are leveraging technology to deliver solutions to social and environmental challenges we have in West Virginia, regionally, and across the country. They are the disruptors, the trailblazers and freethinkers who lead by example. They each play a key role in fulfilling the vision of a better West Virginia by being examples of what an entrepreneurship mindset can mean for our overall economy.

There has been no better home for these efforts than the John Chambers College of Business and Economics at West Virginia University. We continue to engage the University community and brilliant students as well as utilize our access to a national business network of West Virginians (and others), experiences, strategic partnerships, and our collaborative community for inspiration and education. Together, we are creating a future and opening opportunities to strengthen West Virginia and the world.

Thank you for your tremendous support. We look forward to an impactful 2023!



SARAH BILLER
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
OF VANTAGE VENTURES

ABOUT VANTAGE VENTURES

Partnering with relentless problem solvers. Building in unexpected places. Amplifying world-changing ideas. Our mission at Vantage Ventures is to build an inclusive, supportive community partnership that retains, attracts, and supports entrepreneurs building scalable, investable companies in West Virginia.

Strategically poised on West Virginia University's campus, this initiative born out of the John Chambers College of Business and Economics, offers a home to a fearless new generation of entrepreneurs. We operate with the mission given by John Chambers to make West Virginia a #StartupState – a thriving innovation center that attracts and retains talented Founders, industry innovators, and professionals building impactful companies.

With Vantage Ventures and other regional entrepreneurship efforts that exist throughout West Virginia, Founders who want to be part of the innovation economy now have the opportunity to do so within their own community, not just in traditional centers like Silicon Valley, New York, and Boston. Our location is strategically located to build bridges between campuses and the vibrant local and global entrepreneurial communities connected by supportive West Virginians. When combined with increasing remote-work opportunities and the Ascend WV program, the talent pool for West Virginia start-ups increasingly draws from the entire United States, allowing us and our Founders to work with the best talent for the jobs, regardless of location.

Our passionate Founders are entrepreneurial leaders committed to scaling their companies and products within the Mountain State. Our community of fearless CEOs, experts, business mentors, and venture investors want to drive impact, fund innovation, and move the needle on social enterprises. Our community roots support Founders from all walks of life. We work collaboratively, accelerate innovation, and ensure that we align opportunities that build a thriving West Virginia entrepreneurial ecosystem.



MEET THE TEAM



Sarah Biller
Executive Director



Quintina Mengyan
Director of Operations



Tanya Smigocki
Head of Community & Partnerships



Bob Waggoner
Executive in Residence



Nicole Andino
Program Manager



Jonathan Serushago
Community Intern



Jack McLaughlin
Operations Intern



Trevor Swiger
Social Media Intern



Robert Warner
Business Development Intern



Ryan Loughry
Accounting & Finance Intern

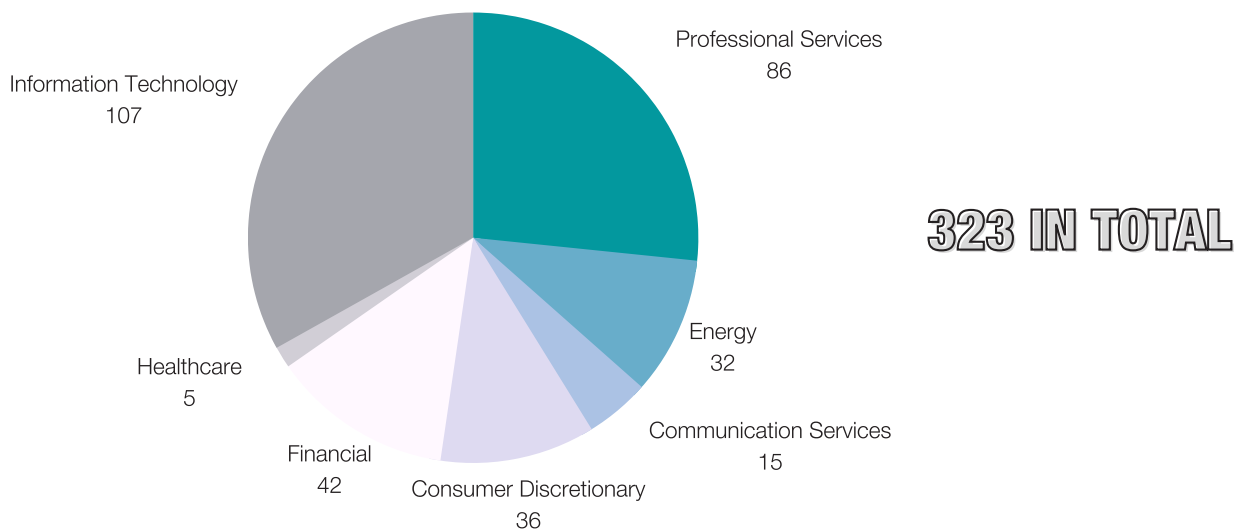


MEASURING OUR PROGRESS

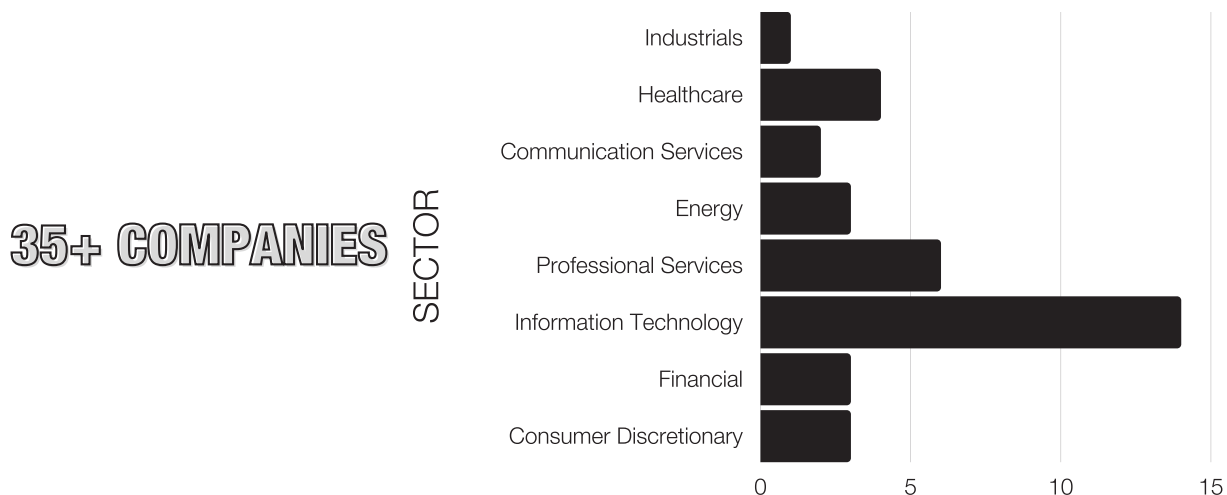
Every connection makes an impact. Since opening our doors in October of 2019, Vantage Ventures remains committed to our mission of empowering the next generation of talented, motivated entrepreneurs to build impactful, technology businesses tackling complex challenges and creating more inclusive opportunities for people to thrive.

We assist our diverse entrepreneurs with the tools to strengthen and scale their businesses and contribute to the prosperity of society by equipping them with mentoring, resources, and access to capital.

JOBS CREATED BY VANTAGE VENTURES



VANTAGE VENTURES COMPANIES BY SECTOR



AMPLIFYING IMPACT

While West Virginia's natural beauty, unique location, and low cost of living all make it an excellent choice for workforce development, our greatest asset by far is our people. Home to a dynamic community of thinkers, doers, dreamers, problem-solvers, go-getters, and risk-takers, the Mountain State is a place for people with a purpose. We are in constant search of innovative solutions, ready to roll up our sleeves, and willing to risk and fail and risk again to turn high-impact ideas into reality.

Vantage Ventures supports and connects teams of radical thinkers, problem-solvers, and go-getters to customers and capital — leveraging the untapped talent and resources that already exist in West Virginia. We seek to support our Founders in their efforts to form companies, source talent, close customers, secure capital, partner with industry, and scale to success.

Several extraordinary Founders and organizations in our space are taking unique approaches to the shared goal of revolutionizing the technology industry by creating more opportunity, diversity, and inclusion for the benefit of all. We are proud to honor and showcase our Founders – the risk-takers, dreamers, and innovators who are fundamental to our state's economy.



FOUNDERS DRIVING IMPACT WITH UNIQUE ENVIRONMENTAL AND CLIMATE TECH SOLUTIONS

Climate change poses significant risks to people, communities, ecosystems, and businesses. Here we highlight our Founders who are innovating responsibly and helping enable the transition to a low-carbon future.



SHAWN HUTCHINSON
FOUNDER AND CEO



Imagine supporting a sustainable future by managing your own energy usage. Similar to a Fitbit for your home, Curby's unique platform provides mutual benefits for employers and employees. Its platform guides employees on very practical ways to reduce emissions, lifestyle, and equipment upgrades; leverages employer investments, Federal rebates, and rewards to subsidize equipment upgrades; and supplies carbon reduction credits to employers to cut greenhouse gas emissions and reach carbon net-zero goals.

90% of net-zero goals are achieved with renewable energy and energy efficiency. Curby® makes it easier for users to do their part in reducing their carbon emissions while saving on monthly bills.

WHAT'S YOUR PERSONAL MISSION STATEMENT - AS A FOUNDER?

"I believe that technology should be a force for good in the world, that scalable business can be shaped to achieve vital sustainable development goals, and by doing so it makes for better value creation for customers and shareholders."

WHAT'S YOUR HIGHLIGHT OF THE YEAR?

"Receiving affirmation from Dr. Chris Greig, co-lead of Princeton University's Net-Zero America report, that our core-tech can make a major inflection point possible with a historic macroeconomic shift to reach carbon net-zero goals. He is now an advisor on the Curby team."

WHAT'S THE FOUNDING VISION OF THE COMPANY?

"With Curby, we want to propel businesses and consumers to carbon net-zero."

RECOGNITION OF CURBY'S WORK IN SUSTAINABILITY AND IMPACT

Accepted into the 2023 Department of Energy's IMPEL tech-to-market program focusing on building technologies, renewables, and efficiency.

This highly prestigious program is funded by the Building Technologies Office and implemented by the Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory.



FOUNDERS DRIVING IMPACT WITH UNIQUE ENVIRONMENTAL AND CLIMATE TECH SOLUTIONS



KYLE GILLIS AND JAMES CARNES
CO-FOUNDERS



Iconic Air pioneered a new way of monitoring emissions and data reporting for the oil and gas industry. Their software platform finds pollution leaks and offers automatic sustainability reporting to its clients in the energy, defense, and other industries through a digital hub.

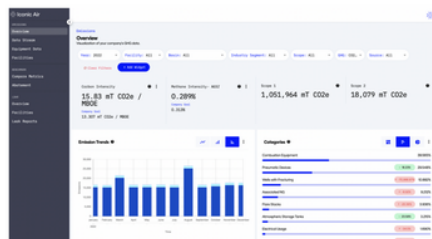
With best-in-class software tools, Iconic Air is devoted to reducing operational emissions, as well as funding high-quality projects that benefit our planet. Their data analytics platform integrates with methane and environmental monitoring sensors, helping to reduce organizations' emissions to net-zero. Iconic Air believes in a transparent, continuous, and automated process to ensure a frictionless transition as the world moves toward higher standards of climate change and ESG reporting metrics.

In 2022, Iconic Air secured \$5 million in seed funding. Their round was led by XYZ Venture Capital, with participation from Garuda Ventures, the GTM fund, and investors from Country Roads Angel Network. [See press release.](#)

"Kyle and James, and their vision for Iconic Air, embody characteristics we look for in founders that we partner with as early-stage investors. Intelligence. Humility. A desire to continuously grow and improve. A customer-first mindset. And a mission-driven approach to company building. Greenhouse gas emissions are becoming a mission-critical metric for businesses to track. Iconic Air's ability to help energy-intensive industries automate, benchmark, and manage the cost of carbon and their carbon footprint is only going to become more essential. We are thrilled to have the opportunity to join them on this journey." Rishi Taparia, Co-founder and Managing Partner, Garuda Ventures

RECOGNITION OF ICONIC AIR'S WORK IN SUSTAINABILITY AND IMPACT

In 2022, Iconic Air launched its Emissions Intelligence™ platform. This platform offers a suite of tools for managing carbon, similar to financial performance, saving organizations significant time and money.



Chosen by Diversified Energy Company as a partner in its emissions reduction journey.



FOUNDERS DRIVING IMPACT WITH UNIQUE ENVIRONMENTAL AND CLIMATE TECH SOLUTIONS

Newpoint Gas, LLC
Innovative Oil & Gas Solutions

WILEY RHODES
CEO



Newpoint Gas, LLC's zero-emission technologies convert retired coal-fired power plants (CFPP) to use blue/green hydrogen as fuel with three precedent-setting results. In upcycling the retired generation station, Newpoint Gas, LLC achieves:

- Net-zero emissions dispatchable power,
- Provides employment opportunities in cutting-edge hydrogen energy technology
- Includes the ability to supply commercial-scale clean-fresh water, which is produced from the combustion of hydrogen.

RECOGNITION OF NEWPOINT GAS WORK IN SUSTAINABILITY AND IMPACT

Newpoint Gas, LLC Founder Wiley Rhodes grew the partner base to include Babcock & Wilcox. The Newpoint Gas team seeks to provide advanced hydrogen generation, decarbonization, and combustion technologies for the redevelopment of the former U.S. Department of Energy Portsmouth Gaseous Diffusion Plant site near Piketon, OH.



See press release [here](#).

FOUNDERS DRIVING IMPACT WITH UNIQUE ENVIRONMENTAL AND CLIMATE TECH SOLUTIONS



AUGGIE CHICO
FOUNDER



Parthian Battery Solutions' exclusive contract with a major car OEM enables them to source retired electric-vehicle batteries that otherwise would go to landfills. Many of these batteries still have capacity enabling the Parthian team to repackage them for applications less demanding than powering a car, such as linking up with solar panels to provide electricity to homes and offices. Bridging the gap to affordable sustainability, Parthian Battery Solutions provides an economically and environmentally viable method for automakers to retire their electric vehicle batteries, by repurposing them into stationary energy storage systems. Its inventive hardware utilizes repurposed electric vehicle batteries, offering consumers the ability to obtain lithium-ion technology at affordable prices and keeping discarded vehicle batteries out of our landfill.

In September 2022, the Country Road Angel Network (CRAN) alongside Wing to Wing's venture arm and high net-worth West Virginians announced their investment in Parthian Battery Solutions, bringing its investment in Parthian Battery Solutions, bringing its fundraising, including grants, to +\$800,000. [Read more here.](#)

WHAT'S YOUR PERSONAL MISSION STATEMENT - AS A FOUNDER?

"As an Appalachian founder, it's my mission to build something that gives back and provides the most positive impact possible to my community and the state of West Virginia."

WHAT'S YOUR HIGHLIGHT OF THE YEAR?

"Wrapping up Parthian's first round of investment was the perfect way to cap off the year and was my highlight of 2022."

WHAT'S THE FOUNDING VISION OF THE COMPANY?

"Parthian seeks to bridge the gap to affordable sustainability by bringing new life to Lithium-ion batteries. Parthian's objective is to maximize the value extracted from the Li-ion battery supply chain by ensuring no battery component is prematurely wasted."

RECOGNITION OF PARTHIAN BATTERY SOLUTIONS WORK IN SUSTAINABILITY AND IMPACT

In 2022, recognized by Bloomberg as one of the Top 50 Innovative Startups in America: What to Watch in Every State.

Selected as one of 12 entrepreneurs into the Nasdaq Entrepreneurial Center's Spring 2022 Milestone Makers cohort, all working towards the UN's SDG #7 Clean and Affordable Energy and #13 Climate Action.



FOUNDERS DRIVING IMPACT WITH UNIQUE ENVIRONMENTAL AND CLIMATE TECH SOLUTIONS

NICHOLAS ANGEL
CO-FOUNDER



OWEN WAGNER
CO-FOUNDER



Wagner Angel Transportation Technology Services, Inc. (W.A.T.T.S.) is a West Virginia University Benjamin M. Statler College of Engineering student-led start-up personal rapid transit software and manufacturing company specializing in the renovation of existing rail / tire-bound mass transit systems. With a focus on utilizing AI, cutting-edge technologies, and efficient green systems, W.A.T.T.S. plans to upgrade existing mass transit systems into the 21st century pushing for the deployment and use of more efficient, smart mass transit systems.

This start-up seeks to make a sustainable impact through the reuse of pre-existing infrastructure such as causeways for rail / tire-bound mass transit systems, keeping material costs low and the environmental impacts of large infrastructure projects down. Its innovation employs the use of green technologies such as supplemental solar power, a greater focus on alternative materials, and the design and deployment of efficient mass transit systems to offset the need for traditional vehicles.

WHAT'S YOUR PERSONAL MISSION STATEMENT - AS A FOUNDER?

"To never back down from a project no matter the scale, complexity, or difficulty because those projects are the ones that make the biggest impact."

WHAT'S YOUR HIGHLIGHT OF THE YEAR?

"The entirety of 2022 has been a highlight of progression for W.A.T.T.S. and subsequently me. From taking W.A.T.T.S. from an idea to becoming incorporated in West Virginia, to joining Vantage Ventures, participating in the National Science Foundation's Innovation Corps (I-Corps™) program, to getting immersed in the West Virginia community, it has been a remarkable experience running W.A.T.T.S. There is nothing else I would rather be doing."

WHAT'S THE FOUNDING VISION OF THE COMPANY?

"Increase the safety and efficiency of rail bound mass transit systems, not only for passengers but also for the system operators. We see mass transit as a way to increase the interconnectivity and advancements in the United States by allowing individuals to travel greater distances efficiently and reliably without worrying about derailments, delays, and shutdowns of their respective transit systems. For operators, our vision is to ease the burden of maintaining and operating these rapidly aging systems. Our vision is to upcycle these rail-bound mass transit systems by deploying new tracking and guidance technologies to detect obstacles on the track, autotomize individual vehicle control, and get existing rail-bound mass transit systems off of analog or early digital control software technology. This will allow for these systems to meet the efficiency, demand, and security standards of the 21st century while reducing the amount of work needed to operate and maintain these systems."

FOUNDERS DRIVING IMPACT UTILIZING DATA, ANALYTICS AND TECHNOLOGIES LIKE ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE

Entrepreneurs leveraging their knowledge of artificial intelligence (AI) and machine learning are making a difference across diverse business areas. Leveraging data science, including predictive analytics, big data, business intelligence, and more, our Founders are creating impactful solutions from the courtroom to chronic disease states to Main Street and helping shape a stronger and more just future.



Analytica Legalis

**LUKE YINGLING
FOUNDER AND CEO**



Seeing an unmet need in litigation analytics, native West Virginian and graduate of the West Virginia University College of Law, Luke Yingling created a tech start-up to leverage artificial intelligence to analyze briefs and help lawyers win in court. Analytica Legalis is the first company to measure the philosophy of the law and analyze the sentiments expressed by judges regarding legal arguments and other factors important to the outcome of a case.

Through a one-of-a-kind application of artificial intelligence, the Analytica Legalis platform analyzes federal and state courts and judges. Its platform leverages a corpus of legal decision-related literature and artificial intelligence-based analytics to help attorneys refine and develop data-driven arguments. In October of 2022, Analytica Legalis closed its initial seed round was \$750,000 from investors in West Virginia.

WHAT'S YOUR PERSONAL MISSION STATEMENT - AS A FOUNDER?

“Create opportunities, develop exciting tools that solve practical problems, and contribute to the economic resurgence of West Virginia by demonstrating that innovative companies can thrive here.”

WHAT'S THE FOUNDING VISION OF THE COMPANY?

“Bring science to the art of lawyering by measuring judge sentiments and preferences to help litigators achieve competitive advantage and realize new efficiencies.”

RECOGNITION OF ANALYTICA LEGALIS' WORK IN DATA SCIENCE AND ANALYTICS

Named one of the 15 Legal Technology Startup Winners at the 2022 Startup Alley ABA Techshow.



FOUNDERS DRIVING IMPACT UTILIZING DATA, ANALYTICS AND TECHNOLOGIES LIKE ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE



CARRIE GAMPER AND MARK DVOROZNAK
CO-FOUNDERS



BASE Sports Group (BASE) is led by a team with nearly 50 years of experience in the sports industry – they possess sponsorship experience from amateur, collegiate, and professional sports, including national and endemic brands. Co-founded by D1 woman collegiate athlete and former West Virginia University Baseball player, their platform brings a sophisticated and measured approach to brand engagement in amateur sports.

By prioritizing an analytics-first approach, merging first-party data, custom research, and other key indicators to deliver industry-leading sponsorship measurement, this start-up is involved with sporting events or tournaments, where it connects communities with rightsholders and brands. They are building a portfolio of facilities and events that offers access to a highly valuable demographic.

WHAT'S YOUR PERSONAL MISSION STATEMENT - AS A FOUNDER?

"The kids come first. We are bringing strong brand partnerships to youth and community sports that enhance the experience and lower the cost burden to young athletes and their families. Sports has been an important part of our lives. We sincerely believe we can make a positive impact in the space."

WHAT'S YOUR HIGHLIGHT OF THE YEAR?

"Growth. We have welcomed several new brands to the youth market, and we have new facilities and events that we are fortunate enough to represent. We have seen the events we work with have record-breaking attendance years. We have grown exposure by welcoming ESPN and other media partners to cover our events (while also gaining exposure for our partners). We look forward to building on this momentum in 2023."

WHAT'S THE FOUNDING VISION OF THE COMPANY?

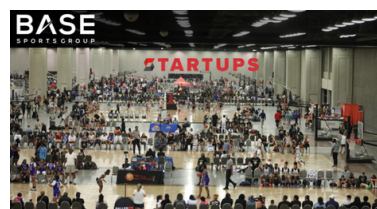
"BASE Sports Group aims to connect family and brands that support them while creating powerful community experiences through sports."

RECOGNITION OF BASE SPORTS GROUP WORK IN DATA SCIENCE AND ANALYTICS

Accepted and graduated from the prestigious 2022 San Diego Sport Innovators (SDSI) Accelerator Cohort.

2022 SportTechie feature of BASE Sports Group.

BASE Sports Group featured in The Baltimore Business Journal with their initiatives with Coppermine and Carroll County High Schools.



FOUNDERS DRIVING IMPACT UTILIZING DATA, ANALYTICS AND TECHNOLOGIES LIKE ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE



Natural language processing, machine learning, and Artificial Intelligence technologies are ubiquitous. The code underlies outcomes as diverse as delivering a better customer experience in financial services, improving productivity in car manufacturing, or quickening scientific discovery.

DataRobot opened an office at Vantage Ventures believing the next generation of data science talent to build upon their award-winning solutions could be found in West Virginia. This start-up has partnered with West Virginia University to tap into West Virginia's diverse talent pool to solve complex problems. Their AI toolkit tackles entrenched problems including budgeting and financial fraud, pandemic and emergency response, pain and addiction, Alzheimer's disease, and more. [Read more about DataRobot's efforts.](#)

RECOGNITION OF DATAROBOT'S WORK IN DATA SCIENCE AND ANALYTICS

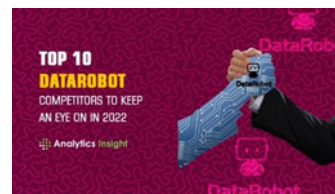
Named by Forbes as one of the 10 best examples of a low or no-code AI platform.



Named a Leader in The Forrester Wave: AI/ML Platforms, Q3 2022.



Named one of the 10 Most Promising Artificial Intelligence Companies of 2022 by Analytics Insight.



Recognized as a Leader in IDC MarketScape: Worldwide MLOps Platforms 2022 Vendor Assessment.



Weatherford signed a multi-year agreement with DataRobot to deliver advanced artificial intelligence solutions in their digital platforms, including the ForeSite® production optimization and Centro™ well construction platforms.



FOUNDERS DRIVING IMPACT IN DIVERSITY, EQUITY & FINANCIAL INCLUSION

We are proud to showcase the impact of our West Virginia Founders who are promoting equity and diversity — enabling their customers to effect real, sustainable change.



**CRYSTAL GOOD
FOUNDER**



Black by God serves as an emerging storytelling organization that cultivates, curates, and elevates Black voices from West Virginia. Its medium creates a hub where everyone can participate in creating relevant, accurate and culturally conscious local news and information for the African American Appalachian community. The publication's goal is to provide information grounded in the realities of Black life through a different kind of journalism; a media platform where Black citizens are part of the reporting process as storytellers and amplifying personal experiences.

This startup uses cutting-edge media and communications tools and fosters an interactive media platform serving to empower the local African American community by amplifying its stories, events, history, and culture. Its mission is to make critical support more accessible to first-time founders that are underrepresented in the news landscape and helps community journalism entrepreneurs to achieve sustainability on their own.

WHAT'S YOUR PERSONAL MISSION STATEMENT - AS A FOUNDER?

"My mission is to build an information portal that documents, archives and tells West Virginia stories that inspire and educate. Our work at Black by God is to thread and connect resources and information."

WHAT'S YOUR HIGHLIGHT OF THE YEAR?

"Seeing Black by God on CNN and watching the paper double our reach and subscribers!"

WHAT'S THE FOUNDING VISION OF THE COMPANY?

"Black by God is a multi-genre online newsletter, print newspaper, and website that focuses on providing news and storytelling that centers Black voices from the Mountain State. Founded in the tense summer of 2020 in response to the lack of Black media in central Appalachia, Black by God is the brainchild of the publisher, artist, entrepreneur, and activist Crystal Good. We aim to fill a news gap for the 3% of West Virginians who have been without sufficient news coverage since the last Black newspaper in the state, the Beacon Digest of Charleston, shuttered in 2006. Black by God moves in the spirit of Black newspapers that have existed in West Virginia since the late 1800s. The modern publication covers various topics, including profiles of young Black policymakers, discussions of equity and inclusion work, and updates on Black-owned businesses in the state. Black by God also offers a Folk Reporters program that trains ordinary citizens to interpret public meetings through an ethnographic lens and report their observations in a way that contributes to Black community knowledge and civic engagement."

FOUNDERS DRIVING IMPACT IN DIVERSITY, EQUITY & FINANCIAL INCLUSION

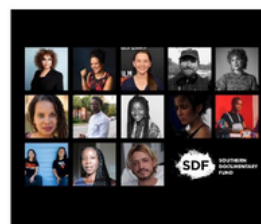
RECOGNITION OF BLACK BY GOD'S WORK IN SUPPORTING DIVERSITY, EQUITY & FINANCIAL INCLUSION

Honored as one of nine recipients of the 2022 inaugural Catalytic Capital investment grant by Invest Appalachia. Work will consist of technical assistance in doing a feasibility study and business plan for social enterprise development supporting Black-owned businesses.



Black by God Founder Crystal Good was honored by the Southern Documentary Fund (SDF) for her production work on Dear Appalachia. The Southern Documentary Fund (SDF) selected ten projects from a diverse group of filmmakers across seven Southern states to receive Production Grants of \$10,000 each.

[Learn more here.](#)



Founder Crystal Good was featured this past December in The New York Times when she joined Yo-Yo Ma for his first visit to West Virginia.

[Read the article here.](#)



Heard weekly on WHYY and other NPR member stations, The Pulse tells stories at the heart of health, science, and life-changing innovations. Black by God was featured on The Pulse for their piece highlighting racial disparities in Black birth outcomes in West Virginia, and the need to support Black expecting mothers, Black doulas, and midwives offering their expertise and protection. [Listen to the podcast here.](#)



In 2022, Black By God in partnership with Element Federal Credit Union and Banzai Inc. created COIN. The goal of COIN is to offer general financial literacy and awareness of how systematic racism impacts financial literacy. Its curriculum offers clear, in-depth lessons that help readers dive into the financial topics they care most about, and put users back in control of their money.



In partnership with Vantage Ventures, Media 2070, The Diversity Pledge Institute, WVU Reed College of Media - NewStart Program, WVU Center for Black Culture and Research, WVU Health Affairs, The Diversity Pledge Institute, and 100 Days of Appalachia, Black by God arranged to host the mini-documentary "Black in the Newsroom" during 2022 for the Vantage and WVU Community. The viewing was followed by a distinguished panel of BIPOC journalists and Academics discussion on promoting change for future journalists.



Crystal Good, 2022 recipient of the Carter G. Woodson Truth Teller Award from the West Virginia Mine Wars Museum for her work in storytelling to highlight the lives and contributions of Black Appalachians.



FOUNDERS DRIVING IMPACT IN DIVERSITY, EQUITY & FINANCIAL INCLUSION



To enable a positive economic impact in smaller, rural communities, Core10 focuses on supporting community banks, credit unions, and fintechs with digital transformation technology. One of their defining long-term goals is to help 1,000 families economically “thrive” in the place they call home by 2030” as part of their Hereshore® outsourcing alternative program. Each new employee hire, project, customer, and partnership brings them closer to reaching this goal.

Core10 recruits and deploys experienced, trained developer and implementation professionals to solve technology (i.e., FinTech) challenges for some of the United States' largest financial services firms. As a leading provider of API integration and SaaS implementation services to the fintech and finserv communities, Core10 assembles the best talent in Tennessee and West Virginia to provide a dedicated, cost-effective development resource for the financial technology sector. They’re out to bring hundreds of jobs to America’s heartland with the aim of helping our communities thrive.

At the end of 2022, Core10 closed a \$6.5 million Series B round led by Patriot Financial Partners and JAM FinTop.

RECOGNITION OF CORE10’S WORK SUPPORTING EQUITY, SUSTAINABILITY, AND FINANCIAL INCLUSION

Successfully completed System and Organization Controls SOC 2® examination in accordance with the AICPA.



Chosen to participate in the 2022 ICBA #ThinkTECH Accelerator Demo Day, showcasing their digital banking and lending platform, Accrue, and why Core10 built it for community banks.



FOUNDERS DRIVING IMPACT IN DIVERSITY, EQUITY & FINANCIAL INCLUSION

The logo for Ridge, featuring the word "RIDGE" in a bold, sans-serif font. The letter "I" is replaced by a stylized evergreen tree icon.

BO MAHR
CO-FOUNDER



MAX GOTTlieb
CO-FOUNDER



Founded and based in Appalachia, Ridge is a first-of-its-kind national neobank providing digital banking services grounded in the triple bottom line: people, planet, and prosperity. This neobank provides consumers and businesses with digital financial services grounded in equity and sustainability, through the use of environmental investments, community development, and financial inclusion.

Ridge is committed to revitalizing the communities of our region by using funds generated by our services across the country to help remediate environmental issues and create sustainable economic opportunities. The heart of Ridge is its Impact Fund which takes a portion of Ridge's revenue from each transaction and, through an advisory board of conservation and community development experts, invests in conservation efforts, outdoor recreation, and community development.

WHAT'S YOUR PERSONAL MISSION STATEMENT - AS A FOUNDER?

"As a co-founder of Ridge, I assess each decision through the lens of doing good, while doing well. As a team, we at Ridge are seeking to not only create a successful business in the traditional sense, but we are also endeavoring to create a more complete business in the modern sense. Conserving nature, revitalizing communities, and reimagining what is possible with sustainability and places like Appalachia reside at the center of our Ridge mission."

WHAT'S YOUR HIGHLIGHT OF THE YEAR?

"Executing our first term sheet with the investor who is leading our pre-seed round certainly marks a seminal moment of this last year. That highlight would likely not have been possible without the wonderful team at Vantage, who have provided invaluable assistance and insights at every point in Ridge's startup journey."

WHAT'S THE FOUNDING VISION OF THE COMPANY?

"Ridge is founded on two central ideas. The first is that companies can succeed financially and better the world around them in the process. At Ridge, we believe that we have social responsibility to help conserve our environment, to help rebuild largely left-behind communities, and to do both simultaneously through performing our central business activity — helping our users protect, grow, and use their money. Second, Ridge seeks to rethink what is possible in places like Appalachia and to rewrite the widely accepted narrative for those areas. Rural Americans need no longer to be left behind in discussions of economic and social prospects. Instead, through Ridge, we hope to make clear that people from places like Appalachia — who often face serious challenges but have been written-off — can conceptualize, create, and compete on a larger scale."

RECOGNITION OF RIDGE'S WORK SUPPORTING EQUITY, SUSTAINABILITY, AND FINANCIAL INCLUSION

[Selected into Georgetown Venture Lab 2022 Startup Accelerator Cohort](#)

Ridge Co-Founders Max Gottlieb and Bo Mahr featured on The One Away Show by Bryan Wish on Youtube, Apple Podcasts, Spotify, or Soundcloud.

[Listen to the podcast here.](#)



FOUNDERS DRIVING IMPACT IN DIVERSITY, EQUITY & FINANCIAL INCLUSION



JONATHAN OHLINGER
CEO



Vantage Ventures Founder VEEPIO's fintech e-commerce platform uses technology to change how athletes can earn money from their names, images, and likenesses (NIL). Its unique content optimization tool and e-commerce platform for the NFL and NFL Alumni mobile apps. Their platform handles all aspects of NIL sponsorships, from brokering the deals to monitoring all analytics, recording all NIL activity, customizing a student athlete's profile for distribution, and securing payment for the student-athlete.

VEEPIO's Co-Founder and Chief of Fan Experience & Engagement Najee Goode was recently interviewed highlighting the importance of NIL with student-athlete financial literacy. VEEPIO has facilitated several deals for student-athletes providing student-athletes with financial literacy and other educational opportunities. VEEPIO helps and enables corporate sponsors to develop a talent pipeline of educated, dedicated, diverse, and hardworking young adults to whom they might not have previously had access. [View the WDTV broadcast clip.](#)

WHAT'S YOUR PERSONAL MISSION STATEMENT - AS A FOUNDER?

"Link Athletes to New Possibilities."

WHAT'S YOUR HIGHLIGHT OF THE YEAR?

"Getting awarded our 1st patent from the US Patent Office after 6 years. And executing partnerships with 8 NFL teams."

WHAT'S THE FOUNDING VISION OF THE COMPANY?

"To create an exchange for attention. VEEPIO is derived from (VPO) which is an acronym for Video Public Offering."

RECOGNITION OF VEEPIO'S WORK SUPPORTING EQUITY AND FINANCIAL INCLUSION

In 2022, VEEPIO was named the digital agency of record for the HBCU Week Foundation, Inc., overseeing digital marketing activities for the foundation providing a single mobile application that will house sponsored content from all 101 individual historically black colleges and universities (HBCUs). Each HBCU will be able to use VEEPIO's technology to activate sponsors and monetize content, retaining complete data ownership.



- [Read the press release.](#)
- [Interview featuring VEEPIO's Co-founder Najee Goode.](#)

VEEPIO registered two trademark patents with scientific and electric apparatus/instruments in 2022.

FOUNDERS DRIVING IMPACT BY DEPLOYING DIGITAL IDENTITY, CYBERSECURITY, AND ENCRYPTION TO STRENGTHEN VITAL SYSTEMS



In their pursuit to make the world a safer and more convenient place, Rank One Computing develops industry-leading bio-authentication algorithms, using cutting-edge artificial intelligence. It uses intelligent computer vision to integrate the fastest and most accurate facial, object, and text recognition software and is one of the most trusted providers of facial, object, and text recognition algorithms to U.S. military, law enforcement, and commercial organizations.

It's now one of the latest of a growing number of technology companies finding a home in West Virginia with the support of Vantage Ventures and technology leaders, investors, and financial institutions from the state. Industry-leading tech firms including DataRobot and Rank One Computing have opened West Virginia offices, signifying the state's commitment to supporting entrepreneurs and embracing the technology economy.

"As a West Virginia native, it's been a lifelong goal of mine to grow a vibrant technology sector in the state," said Swann. My long-time friends at Vantage Ventures share that goal which made for an easy decision to open our newest office with them in Morgantown. We're thrilled to be part of West Virginia's transformation into a tech start-up state." - Rank One Computing CEO Scott Swann

RECOGNITION OF RANK ONE'S SUPPORTING CYBERSECURITY AND TECHNOLOGY

Rank One Computing's Facial LiveScan 2.0 launched in 2022, combining the latest in face recognition analytics, accuracy, quality check, liveness and anti-spoof detection. This enhancement provides a flexible, scalable solution to developers of ID proofing, passenger kiosks, identification card credentialing, or time and attendance solutions to ensure that users are submitting facial imagery that complies with predefined standards.



In partnership with Aveshka, Rank One Computing edged out competitors to win the U.S. Marshals Service (USMS) Justice Prisoner Alien and Transportation System (JPATS) Biometric Identification Software Development Kit (SDK) support. [Read more here.](#)

FOUNDERS DRIVING IMPACT BY DEPLOYING DIGITAL IDENTITY, CYBERSECURITY, AND ENCRYPTION TO STRENGTHEN VITAL SYSTEMS



DAVID SIMMS
FOUNDER



Skypunch Technology's flagship product is the world's first immutable and end-to-end cryptographically verifiable online voting system. The platform audits the history of each ballot to be certain nothing was altered in any way.

In 2023, this startup will be working directly with cybersecurity students to conduct cybersecurity auditing work as an ongoing project.

WHAT'S THE FOUNDING VISION OF THE COMPANY?

"Thanks to the advent of some revolutionary technological advancements Skypunch Technology endeavors to help the world's democracies conduct their elections more efficiently and securely than has heretofore been possible. This is done by permitting voters to vote online from the comfort of their own homes and at a time convenient to them to ensure no voter is disenfranchised from participating in democracy."

"Skypunch also empowers voters to directly play a role in auditing an election by exercising the option of performing cryptographic verification of their own ballot well after having submitted it—something that has never before been possible. Skypunch-driven elections are also able to report results within seconds of voting officially closing, even when using ranked choice voting which has a history of taking a long time to tabulate."

FOUNDERS DRIVING IMPACT REDUCING THE ENVIRONMENTAL FOOTPRINT OF DATA CENTERS



STEVEN WHITE
CO-FOUNDER AND CTO



Founded in March 2021 by data center industry veterans Thao Nguyen and Steven White, TORMem Inc.'s technology platforms increase the flexibility of software-defined server provisioning and reduce capital expenditure by breaking the link between servers and physical memory.

The availability of massive memory resources provided by TORMem Inc.'s solutions enables in-memory computing, in-memory databases, and other memory-intensive applications on non-specialized server hardware at a fraction of the cost of specialized high-performance computing (HPC) gear with the latest technology.

WHAT'S YOUR PERSONAL MISSION STATEMENT - AS A FOUNDER?

"As a founder, I strive to contribute towards every company activity, regardless of the type of work involved, to ensure success. No task can be beneath a founder."

WHAT'S YOUR HIGHLIGHT OF THE YEAR?

"The highlight of 2022 was during the Super Compute 22 conference in Dallas when we met the scientists from Oregon State University who realized the significance of TORMem's products and asked to begin running genome sequencing trials that they currently cannot perform due to hardware limitations."

WHAT'S THE FOUNDING VISION OF THE COMPANY?

"TORMem was founded to optimize data centers for today's rapidly evolving software demands by providing massive pools of high performance memory at an affordable price point."

FOUNDERS DRIVING IMPACT

MEDTECH AND DIGITAL TECHNOLOGIES

MedTech companies have a critical role in driving the future of health, using transformative technology to enhance products and services, enabling 4P medicine, and driving value-based care. Here are some of our Founders who have helped accelerate the adoption of digital technologies in Healthcare.



SERGIY YAKOVENKO
CO-FOUNDER



VALERIYA GRITSENKO
CO-FOUNDER



NEUROWIRED

Co-founded by globally recognized neuroscientists who deploy a protected analytic platform to enable faster than real-time human-to-machine interactions.

The company is in discussions with a Fortune 30 company among others interested in leveraging its capabilities to support Web3 applications.



WALKING MIRACLES FAMILY FOUNDATION

Walking Miracles Family Foundation was started by Brett Wilson, a childhood cancer survivor and an adolescent cancer survivor of non-Hodgkin's lymphoma from Hurricane WV. Through technology and telehealth, the foundation helps caregivers, families and survivors impacted by childhood, adolescent and young adult cancer in West Virginia by navigating and connecting them to support networks and resources. Walking Miracles helps defray the cost of travel associated with treatment through our partnerships, programs, and affiliations. Patients, their families, and caregivers are never charged for the travel assistance, patient navigation, counseling, or survivorship guidance Walking Miracles provides.

With its unique Patient Navigator system, Walking Miracles Family Foundation assists pediatric and young adult cancer survivors in West Virginia thrive throughout and beyond the cancer experience. Their patient navigators provide travel assistance, and survivorship education, and connect our clients to resources and referral networks.

FOUNDERS DRIVING IMPACT THROUGH NEXT GENERATION POWER STORAGE MANUFACTURING



Vantage Ventures supports Founder and CEO Sanjiv Malhotra and his team at [Sparkz](#) efforts to build next-generation power storage in the U.S. Sparkz signed an agreement to build their Giga factory in Taylor County, West Virginia. Sparkz will utilize the repurposed space for manufacturing batteries for off-road and commercial vehicle markets with a primary focus on mining, farming, and delivery vehicles — creating 350 jobs through a first-of-its-kind partnership with the United Mine Workers Association.

Sparkz has been widely acknowledged for its efforts in advancing innovation in this critical sector. By bringing more battery manufacturing to the United States, we minimize our reliance on foreign supply chains for our energy needs. [Read the press release.](#)

RECOGNITION OF SPARKZ SUPPORTING SUPPLY CHAIN DRIVING INNOVATION

Founder and CEO Sanjiv Malhotra was featured in the Washington Post discussing his vision and efforts at Sparkz. Sanjiv, whose father worked at a coal mine in India, highlighted his capabilities to build a domestic production plant to supply batteries made from more sustainable elements found in West Virginia.

[Read the article here.](#)



Sparkz featured by [Forbes](#)! The plant will produce storage devices with no cobalt, a raw material mined in the Democratic Republic of Congo and processed in China. [Read the article here.](#)



FOUNDERS DRIVING IMPACT BY PROVIDING EMERGING TALENT WITH OPPORTUNITIES AND APPRENTICESHIP



CARY LANDIS
FOUNDER



Specializing in a development platform for building and launching SaaS applications with greater speed, SaaS Maker offers enterprise architecture that handles the hard parts of SaaS applications: subscriptions, trial accounts, commerce, multi-tenancy, role-based security, hosting, notifications, and other complexities. With SaaS Maker, developers use point-and-click tools to go to market in days instead of months or years. Users save on development costs, generate revenues, innovate faster, reduce stovepipes, and deliver higher-quality applications.

In January 2023, SaaS Maker will kick off a first-of-its-kind Low-Code / No-Code workshop for entrepreneurs building high-growth software as a subscription company in West Virginia. Participating incumbents will learn how to deploy this next generation of coding capabilities to build your payment rails, web analytics, and other user experience requirements venture investors are seeking.

WHAT'S YOUR PERSONAL MISSION STATEMENT - AS A FOUNDER?

"To inspire and empower the masses of SaaS entrepreneurs to unleash their inner genius."

WHAT'S YOUR HIGHLIGHT OF THE YEAR?

"We received a grant to launch the SaaS Factory, an initiative that helps innovators launch SaaS businesses with minimal or no investment by providing hands-on workshops, training, and access to low-code tools."

WHAT'S THE FOUNDING VISION OF THE COMPANY?

"To bring SaaS entrepreneurship to the masses by lowering the barriers to entry with new tools and business models."

RECOGNITION OF SAAS MAKER SUPPORTING EMERGENT TALENT

[SaaS Maker 3 Paves Way for New Era of Software Innovation \(apnews.com\)](#)

[The Transformational Impact of Low-code on the SaaS Industry in 2023 \(einpresswire.com\)](#)



FOUNDERS DRIVING IMPACT BY PROVIDING EMERGING TALENT WITH OPPORTUNITIES AND APPRENTICESHIP



JUSTIN WHITMAN
FOUNDER



UMuseUs is an active social networking platform for musicians, venue owners, and music lovers to get engaged in the power and love of music. Their mission is to provide platforms, venues, and resources that empower everyone to share, discover, interact, create, and more.

This start-up is creating an impact and activating communities with music education.

WHAT'S YOUR PERSONAL MISSION STATEMENT - AS A FOUNDER?

"I'm a firm believer that if you're going to push some boundaries...it better be both disruptive and positive. If I could give just one piece of advice, it's to remember that a goal without a plan is just a wish...so stop wishing."

WHAT'S THE FOUNDING VISION OF THE COMPANY?

"Our mission at UMuseUs is to provide platforms, venues, and resources that empower everyone from Musicians to Music Lovers to Share, Discover, Interact, Create, and more."

THE ENTREPRENEURSHIP & INNOVATION LAW CLINIC WITH WVU COLLEGE OF LAW



WVU offers pro-bono law assistance (by appointment) to our Founders and startups. Clients can meet with legal professionals to discuss client projects and legal issues affecting entrepreneurs.

Our Founders learn the basic skills necessary to attract and interview potential clients, organize a business plan, communicate orally and in writing with a client and third parties, conduct research, draft transactional documents, and prepare for, and manage, closings.

The Clinic counsels clients in key legal areas, including:

- Business contracts
- Business entity selection and formation
- Business licenses and permits
- Certain intellectual property protection
- Choice of entity/entity formation
- Commercial real estate leasing and acquisition
- Compliance with regulatory requirements
- Corporate governance
- Founder and initial investor agreements
- Funding/financing
- Employment law
- Employee management
- Loan, operating, and shareholder agreements
- Trademark, copyright, and other basic intellectual property matters



OUR COMMUNITY

Partnership and collaboration with our community, customers and stakeholders across our industries, allow us to multiply our efforts and scale our impact.



SOCIAL ENGAGEMENT HIGHLIGHTS



COMMUNITY EFFORTS AND UNIVERSITY COLLABORATION

HARVARD BUSINESS SCHOOL COLLABORATION WITH VANTAGE VENTURES ON CASE STUDY -

“West Virginia: Finding the Right Path Forward.” Our team also hosted two events with Harvard Business School students at Vantage Ventures discussing the current efforts and opportunities of West Virginia and how it is our mission to innovate, evolve, and scale towards a tech startup state.

4 PANEL DISCUSSIONS CELEBRATING NATIONAL ENTREPRENEURSHIP -

We broke National Entrepreneurship Week into a two-month feature entitled the Vantage Ventures Entrepreneurship Series. These in-person events hosted a series of panel discussions centered around the pillars of our core mission at Vantage Ventures and to our delight, ended up creating connections amongst so many diverse populations in the entrepreneurship ecosystem. Each panel featured an intriguing and talented group of our Founders, CEOs and community from industry sectors connected to technology, business, entrepreneurship, and innovation.

- Cybersecurity: The Latest Trends
- Fintech: Perspectives for the Future
- The Digital Era: Creating Impact & Technology for Success, Biotech and MedTech:
- The Future of AI, Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) Entrepreneurs Are Inherently ESG-Oriented – Come Meet Ours.

REGIONAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PARTNERSHIP (RED) -

Participated and partnered with the Regional Economic Development Partnership (RED) as they hosted the WVU / WVU Medicine Statewide Growth and Impact panel. Coordinated panel included Rob Alsop, Vice President of Strategic Initiatives at WVU, Albert L. Wright, Jr., President and CEO of WVU Health Systems, John M. Willey, Partner, AI Success at DataRobot and Todd Timmerman, RVP Healthcare & Public Sector at DataRobot.

2022 BRIDGING INNOVATION WEEK -

The Vantage Ventures team attended Bridging Innovation Week and organized pitch competitions featuring our Founders: Nickel Finance; Parthian Battery Solutions; SwifTAGS; Skypunch Technology. During the week we organized demo sessions with UMuseUs and DataRobot, and judged the West Virginia Statewide High School Business Plan Competition. Vantage Ventures coordinated a Fireside Chat with WVU President Gordon Gee and DataRobot CEO Dan Wright and hosted a Networking Reception at The Equities House, sponsored by AHM Digital, Harry Bell, Kerri Barger and LaCroix Water.

2022 WEST VIRGINIA BUSINESS SUMMIT -

Our team traveled to the West Virginia Chamber's Annual Meeting and Business Summit, the largest gathering of business, industry, education, financial, and political leaders from around the state. The networking and business opportunities, as well as the exchange of ideas helps set the stage for further economic growth in West Virginia.

STUDENT-RELATED ENGAGEMENT & EDUCATIONAL SESSIONS

SEMESTER STUDENT / GRADUATE PROJECT WORK WITH VANTAGE VENTURES START-UPS

Our Executive in Residence Bob Waggoner facilitated 7 student projects with our start-ups focusing on their key business needs. Here is a snapshot of the focused areas of their work:

- Analytica Legalis (Undergraduate Team of 6 students) – Developed / designed critical processes required for the commercialization of the firm's software, focused on building B to B sales and marketing processes.
- BASE Sports Group monetizing data (Graduate Team of 6 MBA students) – Developed a strategic analysis to identify and size markets for the monetization of customer data.
- BASE Sports Operations Development (Graduate Team of 6 MBA students) – Analyzed and designed recommendations for the development of critical operational processes, initially focused on CRM and sales support.
- Bravo Consulting Group (Graduate Team of 5 MBA students) – Analyze customers, market and competitors to support the development of go-to-market strategy for client's new security offering.
- Parthian Battery Solutions (Undergraduate Team of 5 students) – Documented and sized the Parthian end market (i.e. residential solar installation) for West Virginia and developed a go-to-market strategy.
- VEEPIO (Graduate Team of 4 MBA students) – Analyzed the WV Market for NIL opportunities, with a focus on female athletes.
- VEEPIO (Undergraduate Team of 5 students) – Documented and analyzed the market opportunities for Veepio, including value proposition analysis and competitor identification and assessment.

DATA DRIVEN WV FIRESIDE CHAT

Dr. Brad Price and Joshua Meadows of Data Driven WV joined Vantage Ventures to host a fireside chat for Management Information Systems (MIS) students with State Auditor JB McCuskey and Head of Fraud Monitoring Gordon Lane. The Auditors' office discussed their deployment of artificial intelligence tools to augment its public sector remit of managing over a billion dollars in spending to a packed room.

This engaging discussion demonstrated for all that innovation is on the rise in all corners of West Virginia.

WV PUBLIC EDUCATION COLLABORATIVE

Joined by Executive Director of the WV Public Education Collaborative, Donna Peduto, our team hosted two separate events for collaborative staff featuring Founders UMuseUs and Iconic Air. West Virginia's STEAM Technical Assistance Center is committed to helping educators and students fall in love with STEAM experiences so West Virginia's next generation can hone essential skill sets that will prepare them for college and STEAM-based careers.

STUDENT-RELATED ENGAGEMENT & EDUCATIONAL SESSIONS

2022 EXECUTIVE CLUBHOUSE AND REAL TALK SPEAKER SERIES

Vantage Ventures hosted monthly impactful Executive Clubhouses and Real Talk Speaker Series moderated by Head of Community Tanya Smigocki and Executive Director Sarah Biller. These 30-minute virtual gatherings allowed for a thoughtful group of entrepreneurs, industry executives, academics, and venture investors to join in and listen to an accomplished speaker or entrepreneur host chat on topics relevant to the entrepreneurial ecosystem. Our speaking series allows Vantage Ventures to bring accomplished entrepreneurs and industry experts in to engage with the community, promoting the entrepreneurial spirit within the Mountain State.

Some of our guest speakers included:

- William "Bill" Harker: President and Co-Founder of Ashe Capital Management, LP
- Joe Kapp: President / Co-Founder, National Center for Resource Development
- Gary A. Ledonne: Teaching Associate Professor / Executive in Residence at the WVU Chambers College
- Chris McElroy: WVU Alumni and CEO of Schneider Downs
- Roya Maher: Founder, A3L Federal Works
- Dr. Carrie White Executive Director, Morris L. Hayhurst LaunchLab

WVU MORRIS L. HAYHURST LAUNCHLAB

In partnership with Dr. Carrie White, Anne Jones and WVU's Morris L. Hayhurst LaunchLab, our Vantage Ventures Director of Operations Quintina Mengyan served as a judge for their "Get My Drift" undergraduate pitch competition. Founder Justin Whitman of UMuseUs also helped judge the "April Arts Pitch Competition." Whitman served as a guest speaker to Dr. White's marketing and entrepreneurship class and offered mentorship to a few of the student entrepreneurs.

WVU'S BUSINESS HONORS COLLEGE AT VANTAGE VENTURES

Partnered with Dr. Li Wang, Director of WVU's Business Honors College to host an interactive educational session for 90 first-year Honors students from the Chambers College exploring the vibrant WVU Entrepreneurial Ecosystem. Panelists included: Sarah Biller, Executive Director of Vantage Ventures, Dr. Carrie White, Executive director of the Morris L. Hayhurst LaunchLab, Tara St. Clair, Program Director of Encova Center for Innovation & Entrepreneurship, Owen Wagner, Co-Founder of W.A.T.T.S. and Vantage Ventures Founder and Anna Cummings, Student Entrepreneur and Founder of Earring BackTrack.

WEST VIRGINIA INVESTORS SOCIETY

Our Executive Director Sarah Biller and Vantage Ventures Founders spoke to the WV Investors Society.

WVU CENTER FOR CAREER DEVELOPMENT

Vantage Ventures Director of Operations Quintina Mengyan served as guest speaker for the WVU Center for Career Development.

STUDENT-RELATED ENGAGEMENT & EDUCATIONAL SESSIONS

STEAM ENGAGEMENT FEATURING WEST VIRGINIA ARTISTS

During Black History Month Vantage Ventures coordinated a community art exhibit featuring the talent of West Virginia University Black student artist Cydney Thomas. Cydney debuted and exhibited eight pieces of her digital and oil paint canvas prints at Vantage Ventures, which remained on display throughout February and March.

FOUNDER SPEAKING SERIES FOR ENTREPRENEURIAL STUDENTS

Partnered with Dr. Hyeonsuh Lee and Dr. Ryan Angus to host 4 in-person Vantage Ventures Founders panel discussions for first-year entrepreneurial students at West Virginia University.

Students had the chance to learn more about Vantage Ventures and some of our Founders and engaged in the discussions of how our Founders utilized the opportunities through Vantage Ventures and West Virginia to start and amplify their businesses, and why they chose the Mountain State.

Participating Founders included: Iconic Air, Parthian Battery Solutions, Rank One Computing and UMuseUs.

WVU OFFICE OF TECHNOLOGY TRANSFER

Vantage Ventures Director of Operations Quintina Mengyan served as guest speaker for the WVU Office of Technology Transfer.

GLOBAL SUPPLY CHAIN PRESENTATION

Vantage Community Mentor Michael J. Stolarczyk was recognized in 2022 as one of the Top 50 Global Thought Leaders & Influencers on Supply Chain. His commitment, patience, insight, and leadership to the Vantage Community has been such a help in the success and development of our Founders.

We were honored to host Michael on-site at Vantage Ventures this fall for an interactive in-person presentation on global supply chain innovation. Attendees enjoyed his presentation, networking, and received a copy of his book, "Logical Logistics - A Common Sense Primer for Your Supply Chain."

WANT TO GET INVOLVED?

Our startups are actively looking for founding team members, business mentors, potential customers, and investors.



We would welcome an opportunity to connect you directly to our amazing entrepreneurs.

For more info or to get started, please use the QR code above or visit us at vantageventures.io.

VANTAGE
VENTURES

MEET THE STARTUPS

ANALYTICA LEGALIS

Sector: Data and IOT

Contact: Luke Yingling, Founder and CEO

Analytica Legalis is an AI-powered platform enabling attorneys to more efficiently and comprehensively compare their briefs to specific courts and / or judges' jurisprudence in advance of submission or arguments. This company has raised seed funding.



ASCENDWV

Initiative: Community Builder

Contact: Paris Winfrey, Assistant Director

AscendWV is the nation's premier remote-work program, aimed at recruiting outdoor-enthusiast professionals to the Mountain State. The first 50 remote workers in the Morgantown, WV cohort will be in residence at Vantage Ventures starting in the fall of 2021.



BANXITO

Sector: Security (FinTech)

Contact: Evens Augustin, Founder

Banxito's mobile application enables users to generate a one-time use credit card number for one-off purchases and mitigate the challenges of fraud or theft. The company has a diverse founder.



BASE SPORTS GROUP (BASE)

Initiative: Technology (Data Analytics)

Contacts: Carrie Gamper and Mark Dvoroznak, Co-Founders

Base Sports Group is a sponsorship rights management company focused on maximizing revenue for the multi-billion youth sports venue marketplace and reducing the friction in the matching of sponsors with venues. The company has a female co-founder and revenue.



BLACK BY GOD

Sector: Digital Media

Contact: Crystal Good, Founder

Black by God is an emerging West Virginia digital and print media company organized to share the stories of black communities and black-owned businesses. The company has a diverse female founder.



BRAVO CONSULTING GROUP

Sector: Infrastructure (Cloud Computing)

Contact: Gino Degregori, Founder

Bravo provides cloud, analytic, and content technology services to the federal government, intelligence community as well as regulated industries such as financial services and healthcare. The company has a diverse male founder. The company has revenue.



MEET THE STARTUPS

BREWNET

Sector: Infrastructure (Supply Chain)

Contact: Chris DeFazio, Founder

Brewnet improves supply chain efficiency for West Virginia craft brewers. Brewnet is a next-generation brewery management software platform. Its creative platform for craft master brewers will give customers a window into the craft brewing process.



CERTANTUM STRATEGIES

Sector: Strategic Planning

Contact: Gregory Caprara, Founder and Strategic Consultant

Certantum provides clients with help answering the three questions found in all organizations, Where are we? Where do we want to be? How do we get there? Certantum works with For-Profit and Nonprofit organizations across multiple verticals.



CORE10

Sector: Security (FinTech)

Contact: Jeff Hanson, CEO and Lee Farabaugh, Co-Founder

Core10 recruits and deploys experienced, trained developer and implementation professionals to solve technology (i.e., FinTech) challenges for some of the United States largest financial services firms. The company has a woman co-founder, revenue and closed its Series B fundraising in late 2022.



CURBY

Sector: Data (Climate / ESG Data)

Contact: Shawn Hutchinson, Founder and CEO

Curby provides businesses a platform to inform and empower their employees to reduce their home's carbon footprint. This new class of employee benefits enables employers to help their next generation of talent address their environmental interests and also capture the carbon credit.



DATAROBOT

Sector: Data and IOT

Contact: Jay Schuren, CCO

DataRobot's enterprise Artificial Intelligence platform and automated decision intelligence tools enables professionals from any industry across the globe to collaborate in extracting business value from data. DataRobot is a tech unicorn headquartered in Boston with operations in Morgantown.



DIRECT ONLINE MARKETING

Sector: Strategic Planning

Contact: Jonathan Bentz, Marketing Manager

Established in 2006, Direct Online Marketing (DOM) is a top 200 Premier Google Partner digital marketing company. We've assisted clients from every inhabited continent sell into more than 150 nations from our locations in Pittsburgh, PA, and Wheeling, WV.



MEET THE STARTUPS

FREEDOMTRUST

Sector: Security (FinTech)

Contact: Josh Bryant, Digital Asset Advisor

Freedom Trust is a FinTech Digital Asset Management Platform that offers secure and compliant access to Bitcoin and other cryptocurrencies through licensed custodians.



GENERATION WV

Initiative: Community Builder

Contact: Olivia Sauvageot, Communications and Outreach Manager

Generation West Virginia is a statewide organization dedicated to attracting, retaining, and advancing young people in the Mountain State.



ICONIC AIR

Sector: Data & IOT (Climate / ESG Data)

Contact: James Carnes and Kyle Gillis, Co-Founders

Iconic Air is a data analytics company that provides its clients in the defense, energy and other sectors automated sustainability reporting. Iconic Air was the first West Virginia start-up to be named to the prestigious Forbes 30 under 30 list. The company has revenue and closed a \$5 million investment round from Silicon Valley-based venture firms in 2022.



INVIBRAGEN

Sector: Life Sciences (BioTech)

Contact: Dr. Stephen Valentine, Founder

Invibragen is a biotechnology company that provides product solutions for effective mass spectrometry analyses in the pharmaceutical and clinical industries.



KOREVARIANCE

Sector: Technology Development

Contact: Jared Mazezka, VP Business Development

Korevariance is a full-service, full-stack software development and digital agency that implements strategies for its customers that increase brand awareness and customer acquisition. The company has revenue.



NEUROWIRED

Sector: Life Sciences (MedTech)

Contact: Dr. Sergiy Yakovenko, Dr. Val Gritsenko, and Dr. Ariel Thomas, Co-Founders

Neurowired is a MedTech start-up that provides a faster than real-time and intuitive biomimetic approach to decode electromyograms into actions. Its hardware and software capabilities also have applicability in the defense, gaming, and financial services industries among others. The company is in a NDA with a Fortune 30 company.



MEET THE STARTUPS

NEWPOINT GAS, LLC

Sector: Infrastructure (Renewable Energy)

Contact: Wiley Rhodes, Founder

Newpoint Gas, LLC's zero-emission technologies convert retired coal-fired power plants (CFPP) to use blue/green hydrogen as fuel with three precedent-setting results. In upcycling the retired generation station, Newpoint Gas, LLC achieves (1) net-zero emissions dispatchable power, (2) provides employment opportunities in cutting edge hydrogen energy technology, and (3) includes the ability to supply commercial-scale clean-fresh water, which is produced from the combustion of hydrogen.

Newpoint Gas, LLC
Innovative Oil & Gas Solutions

NEXUS NOW CONSULTING

Sector: Strategic Planning

Contact: Mary Warner Cook, Principal

Nexus Now will help you leverage this wave of positive change; working with you to develop a strategy, make the connections you need, and provide sales and marketing tools to be successful.



NICKEL

Sector: Financial (Fintech)

Contact: Jonathan Powers, Co-Founder

Nickel is creating an advanced personal finance, payments, and charitable giving hub shaped by and for our communities. Nickel is a next-generation fintech app that helps consumers, businesses, and nonprofits pay, save, and donate, via an intelligent and easy-to-use financial socialization platform.



ORIONBLOCKSYSTEMS, INC.

Sector: Security (Cyber)

Contact: Jacob Lysick, CMO

Orionblocksystems is creating a biometric hardware security module interfacing Blockchain technology to alleviate centralization of data storage & authentication, alleviating exploitation, and human error.



PARTHIAN BATTERY SOLUTIONS

Sector: Infrastructure (Renewable Energy)

Contact: Samuel "Auggie" Chico, Founder

Parthian Battery Solutions allows EV batteries to forgo undesirable battery termination methods by repurposing them into stationary energy storage systems. The company was recognized by Nasdaq as one of twelve 2022 Milestone Makers from across the globe who are meaningfully working towards achieving the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goal 7 around clean and affordable energy. The company has revenue and closed a pre-seed round in 2022.



RANK ONE COMPUTING

Sector: Security (Digital Identity and Bio Authentication) + Data & IOT

Contact: Scott Swann, CEO

Rank One Computing (ROC) leverages cutting-edge artificial intelligence and computer visioning to provide best in class as measured by NIST facial recognition. ROC's industry-leading bio-authentication algorithms are used extensively by the defense, law enforcement, FinTech and other verticals. The company has revenue.



MEET THE STARTUPS

RIDGE

Sector: Security (FinTech)

Contact: Max Gottlieb and Bo Mahr, Co-Founders

Ridge is a Neobank in the heart of Appalachia providing consumers and businesses with digital financial services grounded in equity and sustainability, using environmental investments, community development and financial inclusion capabilities.

The logo for RIDGE features the word "RIDGE" in a bold, sans-serif font. The letter "I" is replaced by a stylized mountain peak icon.

SAAS MAKER

Sector: Technology Development

Contact: Cary Landis, Founder

SaaS Maker is a specialized development platform for building and launching SaaS applications many-times faster. Its enterprise architecture handles the hard parts of SaaS applications: subscriptions, trial accounts, commerce, multi-tenancy, role-based security, hosting, notifications, and other complexities.



SKYPUNCH TECHNOLOGY

Sector: Infrastructure (Elections Software)

Contact: David Simms, Founder

Skypunch Technology's flagship product is the world's first immutable and end-to-end cryptographically verifiable online voting system.



SPARKZ

Sector: Infrastructure (Industrial power storage and Electric Vehicle batteries)

Contact: Sanjiv Malhotra, Founder

Sparkz manufactures a cobalt-free, American-made lithium-ion battery while continuing its groundbreaking research and development focused on re-engineering the battery supply chain for total North American materials sourcing. Sparkz West Virginia operations have established a first-of-its-kind partnership with the United Mine Workers Association for employees.



SPECTRUM GAMING PROJECT

Sector: MedTech (Autism)

Contact: John Barton, Executive Director

Social skill deficits make it difficult for autistic children and adults to live in a world defined by social interaction. The Spectrum Gaming Project seeks to overcome those barriers, by providing needed support systems, and make social skill groups more accessible.



SWIFTAG SYSTEMS

Sector: MedTech

Contact: Dr. Zachary Wright, Co-Founder and CEO

SwiftAGS is a ground-breaking, cost-effective laboratory animal management technology company.



MEET THE STARTUPS

TORMEM INC.

Sector: Infrastructure (data center optimization)

Contact: Thao Nguyen, Co-Founder and CEO

TORmem's proprietary hardware solution optimizes data management by providing memory pooling and memory disaggregation products for large-scale hosting providers and high-performance computing applications.



UMUSEUS

Sector: Digital Media

Contact: Justin Whitman, Founder

UMuseUs is an active social networking platform for musicians, venue owners and music lovers.



VEEPIO

Sector: Security (FinTech)

Contact: Jonathan Ohliger, Najee Goode, Grant Wiley, Co-Founders

VEEPIO is a content optimization tool and ecommerce platform for the NFL and NFL Alumni mobile apps as well as the West Virginia University athletics department.



WALKING MIRACLES FAMILY FOUNDATION

Sector: Digital Health

Contact: Brett Wilson, Founder

Through technology and telehealth, the foundation helps caregivers, families and survivors impacted by childhood, adolescent and young adult cancer in West Virginia by navigating and connecting them to support networks and resources.



W.A.T.T.S

Sector: Infrastructure (Public Transportation Optimization)

Contact: Owen Wagner and Nick Angel Co-Founders

Wagner Angel Transportation Technology Services, Inc. (W.A.T.T.S.) is a software company leveraging artificial intelligence, cutting edge technologies, and efficient green system structures to enable the upgrade of existing mass transit systems into the 21st Century.

CONCLUSION

These past years have seen rapid and positive development for Vantage Ventures and our Founders. We are encouraged by progress to date with respect to our engagement, interest, and socio-economic change, and we also recognize that our efforts are still new, and that there are many challenges yet to be addressed.

We have what it takes to ensure economic opportunity for every West Virginian—to benefit our own as well as people across the nation and the globe—and we won't stop until we get there.

In 2022, as the world continued to open back up, we were once again able to experience the power of our community and human connections. To engage with our customers, employees, university partners, and next generation of talent. And to collaborate with organizations large and small, local and global, to drive lasting and meaningful impact.

WITH SINCERE GRATITUDE AND HOPE FOR THE FUTURE,

VANTAGE
VENTURES