

New group supports women entrepreneurs

BY BRIDGET ELAM
THE CHRONICLE

On Feb 28, a new women's group hosted a launch party as a way to get the word out about its mission: to help women start, slay and stay in business.

Founded by Chisa Pennix-Brown, Shemikia Wallace and Cierra Graham, Real Glowgetters is a non-profit organization that was created to help women entrepreneurs grow their businesses and promote brand recognition. For the month of March, the organization will have open membership and is looking for women who desire one-on-one coaching and mentorship to help expand their entrepreneurial endeavors. Officially started in August 2018, the Real Glowgetters' Passion Like Fire Launch Party and Live Podcast served as a coming out party for the group at the Venture Café in Winston-Salem.

The event opened with an introduction from Real Glowgetters' co-founder, Chisa Pennix-Brown, who clearly pointed out that the group was not a social club. Posted on the website and reiterated by Pennix-Brown, the organization's list of things it is not includes:

We are not a multi-level marketing company. We do not discriminate against women or people who choose to identify as women.

We are not your competition or any other women's group. We seek to enhance those who want to be a part of the positivity and the opportunities that come with being a member.



Submitted photo
Chisa Pennix-Brown (left), along with Sylvia Reid, speak with audience members at the Real Glowgetters' Passion Like Fire Launch Party and Live Podcast on Feb. 28 at the Venture Café.

The featured speaker, who brought words of encouragement to attendees, was Sylvia Reid. She is the owner of iPivot Life, a company that offers life coaching and motivational speaking. About her membership with the Real Glowgetters, Reid said, "I know what she (Pennix-Brown) offered. And if it was going to be more condensed and more volume to it, I wanted to be a part of it. And that's one of the main reasons why I joined."

"In this group, you get more detailed information on business and tools you can use. She'll send you networking things that might be beneficial to you and your business. So, it's more one-on-one," Reid continued.

The event had a question-and-answer session. It also allowed current members to give their testimonials regarding the growth they've seen since joining the group.

Members of Real Glowgetters own businesses that range from makeup artistry to information technology to life coaching.

Currently 13 members strong, the Real Glowgetters are hoping to expand their membership to approximately 30 members each year. According to Pennix-Brown, that number allows for growth but also keeps a personal feel for members.

"It is hard already to get 13 members together all at the same time," Pennix-Brown laughed. "We strategically host events in different areas to provide opportunities for members to be seen. They also let people make purchases with them, to grow their businesses."

"We are making sure we fill the needs of what people want. We can't be everything to everybody but the things our members have asked, we direct them to the person or the organization that can help. So far we haven't had anyone that we haven't been able to help. That makes a big difference."

For more information about the Real Glowgetters, membership sign-up and upcoming events, visit the website at www.realglowgetters.org.

New airport board hears about Aerotropolis Task Force at its first meeting

SPECIAL TO THE CHRONICLE

The new Smith Reynolds Airport Board held its first meeting on Tuesday, Feb. 19, and was briefed on the recent efforts conducted by an Aerotropolis Task Force that is co-chaired by County Commissioner Chair David Plyler and Winston-Salem Mayor Allen Joiner. The Task Force was formed after a

study that was conducted by Dr. Jack Kasarda and Brent Lane of Aerotropolis Business Concepts LLC to explore how Smith Reynolds Airport can become more of an economic driver for the entire community.

Winston-Salem Chamber of Commerce President Mark Owens attended the meeting and talked about the Chamber's role and how to best include the airport in local economic development efforts. "Throughout the process, we've been able to find out what a true gem our airport is and the many great opportunities we have with the surrounding

areas," Owens told the Airport Board. Since the study was released last year, a task force made up of community leaders has been actively looking at how the airport can connect to the activities happening at the Innovation Quarter, Whitaker Park and local universities, along with how it can attract new innovations like drones and vertical take-off and landing (VTOL) aircraft.

county resources, including \$1.1 million recently allocated by county commissioners to address some of Smith Reynolds' capital maintenance needs. The Airport Commission of Forsyth County, which was established to govern the airport in 1949, has now been replaced by the Airport Board, which is made of seven members appointed by the county commissioners.

It's a new board filled

with familiar faces. It consists of the five members of the former Airport Commission, which are Scott Piper, James Shaw, Thomas McKim, Perry Hudspeth and County Commissioner Ted Kaplan. Former Chamber CEO Gayle Anderson and Inmar CEO David Mounts, who were part of the Airport Advisory Board that helped guide the airport through its reorganization last year, are also now part of the Airport Board.

"The transition has worked out as seamlessly as we could've possibly hoped," said Piper, who is Airport Board chair. Piper said the county services the airport now has access to have been helpful. He said the Aerotropolis concept is a critical part of the airport's future and bringing awareness to what an asset Smith Reynolds is to the innovation community. The study was originated by Anderson when she was Chamber CEO, and now has the support of the city, the county and local business leaders.

Smith Reynolds, a 700-acre general aviation airport located on North Liberty Street, is currently used for corporate and recreational aviation and has commercial tenants who provide services like flight training and maintenance overhaul and repair (MRO) on large passenger aircraft. A recent state study found that the airport and its related aviation and aerospace assets have an \$801 million impact on the local economy and support 3,585 jobs. This was the highest impact among North Carolina's 62 general aviation public airports.

The airport has numerous capital projects planned. Construction is expected to begin this summer on a voter-approved bond project for a \$16.6 million Forsyth Tech Aviation Center at the airport that will train students in MRO work. The airport and Forsyth Tech plan to partner with nearby high schools to encourage students to participate in the program. There's also plans to build an additional ramp to park aircraft on and to renovate the terminal building, both of which are tentatively expected to begin construction next year.

The next Airport Board meeting will be March 21 at 4 p.m.



Submitted photo
New airport board meets for the first time on Feb. 19.

The task force is also looking at how to market available land and building space at the airport and potential uses for other county properties located near it.

Owens said the process includes outreach to the community surrounding the airport to make sure that the resulting development and the jobs that are created benefit everyone.

Aerotropolis was just one of several issues related to the airport that the new board heard. The airport, which is owned by Forsyth County, officially became a county department this year. The organizational change gives the airport access to more

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