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FirePoint selected to operate new Defense Innovation OnRamp Hub, connecting small business with defense innovation opportunities

By Strategic Communications



FirePoint Innovations Center was selected to deliver Defense Innovation OnRamp Hub programming for the National Security Innovation Network through the newly established Great Plains Mission Acceleration Center. The OnRamp Hub will be the only one located on a university campus in the United States.

The FirePoint Innovations Center at Wichita State University announced it has been selected to deliver Defense Innovation OnRamp Hub programming for the National Security Innovation Network (NSIN) through the newly established Great Plains Mission Acceleration Center (MAC), an innovation and collaboration hub designed to connect small businesses, academia and the Department of Defense (DoD) to support defense-focused technology development.

One of five facilities in the national network operating a Defense Innovation OnRamp Hub program, the new Wichita State location will bring together small and medium-sized businesses (SMBs) across Kansas and the Great Plains region to partner with the DoD, academia and even venture capital investors to accelerate tech innovation and manufacturing to meet national defense and security needs. The network of OnRamp Hubs serves a mutual benefit of helping SMBs tap into DoD contracting opportunities, which can be tough for small organizations to access, and enabling DoD to source groundbreaking new technologies and find supply chain and manufacturing partners in the region.

“The OnRamp Hub program is designed to tear down barriers between the private sector, defense and homeland security operations to accelerate technology deployment,” Steve Cyrus, FirePoint executive director. “We’re extremely excited to bring this new opportunity to businesses here in Kansas and the region to give them a competitive advantage.”

The only OnRamp Hub in the nation located on a university campus, FirePoint was chosen to operate the program over two other facilitators in the state. The site, located on the Innovation Campus at Wichita State, also leverages the university’s applied learning model that helps collaborators source up-and-coming talent and innovation in the university’s high-tech programs.

“FirePoint was chosen to host this facility based on our agnostic approach and ability to work across different sectors, plus our capacity and expertise with the U.S. Army Futures Command to support aviation innovation,” Cyrus said. “This program allows us to be part of a national network to expand opportunities for both local business and DoD partners.”

Cyrus says Wichita State is the ideal location for this kind of innovation and collaboration hub. With a heavy presence of aviation and manufacturing in the region, Wichita boasts one of the highest populations of engineers per-capita, and it is a manufacturing powerhouse with regional growth in manufacturing expected to exceed 7%, despite a nearly 7% decline nationwide.

“It’s really a perfect fit, and we’re grateful for the support of everyone at Wichita State, the DoD and Senator Jerry Moran’s office for helping us to make this happen,” he said.

To learn more about the Great Plains MAC program, visit www.gpmac.org, and for more information about FirePoint’s other programs, visit www.firepoint.info.