



**When:** Tuesday, February 13, 5:30-7:30 PM

**Where:** NIU EIGERlab, NIU-Rockford, 8500 E. State St., Rockford

**Cost:** \$15 \*Food and drink provided, [please RSVP](#)

Register for the **Innovation Tuesday Meetups** online via [Meetup](#) or by [email](#). If you have any questions, please contact Sherry at 815.753.2192.

**March's Innovation Tuesday Meetup topic is:**  
**The Corporate Refugee Startup Guide | Speaker: Author David Gee | March 13, 5:30-7: 30 PM**

## Progress Post *FastPitch* Competition: Grand Prize Winner's Launch



### **Trevor Gibbs networks with 2017 FastPitch Competition attendees**

*It has been said that necessity is the mother of invention.*

Such was the case for Dr. Trevor Gibbs, an anesthesiologist who was often frustrated by a lack of space for his equipment during surgery. Since he began practicing in 2007, he has been thinking about a better way to organize and hold all the supplies necessary to put patients to sleep in a hygienic and organized manner. After eight years, Gibbs said to himself, "That's it, I don't know how, but I'm going to figure out a way to invent a device."

During a recent Thinker Venture podcast, Gibbs reflected on his entrepreneurial journey so far.

His first call after completing his Internet research led him to SCORE--the nation's largest network of volunteer, expert business mentors. He first connected with a mentor who had engineering experience. With his SCORE mentor's referrals in hand, the following day he met with an intellectual property (IP) attorney. His next step was to begin a relationship with NIU EIGERlab.

Mike Cobert of NIU EIGERlab's Center for Product Development talked with Gibbs about what he wanted to do and connected him with an engineer who could help.

In talking with other inventors in the medical field, Gibbs was assured that the NIU EIGERlab and SCORE professionals were valuable and credible partners he'd heard horror stories of manufacturers closing their doors, keeping the inventor's IP and expensive molds with no further communication, and was thankful for referrals to experts with strong reputations.

[Click here](#) for the complete ***Voice*** article.

## Client Successes | Post 2017 *FastPitch* Competition Progress!

### Elisabeth Stecki | Whineware | Third place winner

Much has happened since competing in the 2017 FastPitch Competition! Our Travel Sufficient Alcohol (TSA) Kits were a huge success at our first industry tradeshow--AmericasMart Atlanta 2018!

We're happy to report we've: made connections with retailers to sell TSA-Kits in stores and airport gift shops in Illinois, Florida, and Georgia this coming March!

We partnered with the 2017 FastPitch Dale Falconer, Spirit of Entrepreneurship Award winner Emarc Malavolti to make Fresh2Go promotional handouts at our booth.

What's next? Our second trade show at the Chicago Travel and Adventure Show, February 10-11; original TSA-Kits will be available for sale to the public; our Flask TSA-Kit 2.0 and our new Wine-Kit will be available this spring! I'd like to thank NIU EIGERlab for this wonderful experience!

[Learn more.](#)





**Chad Wilson | Electric Vehicle Technologies | Student and Clean Tech winner**

Since the 2017 FastPitch Competition, Jordan, myself, and the rest of the team have been working towards the completion of our first prototype. We recently installed the electrical wiring that allows for turn signal functionality, voice activation, and a working headlamp--just to name a few. Additionally, we're waiting for our motor to be manufactured and shipped. Once we receive the motor, we'll be very close to completing the prototype after over a year's worth of work.

Looking forward, we'll be using this prototype as a proof of concept to show investors and future partners. We really hope to continue gathering intellectual, financial, and human resources to

create a thriving electric vehicle startup company. We plan on attending auto shows, networking, and growing our team.

**Dapo Kolawole | Citispoon App**

Citispoon is a community-based restaurant recommendation and discovery app that allows users to find the best restaurants in close proximity with the shortest wait times. As well as, giving small businesses measurable incentives to promote their brands and special deals directly from the app.

Citispoon App recently launched in the App Store & Google Play and we are excited to share this amazing product with both those who dine out and restaurant owners.



We pitched Citispoon at the 2017 FastPitch Competition, where we experienced amazing ideas from fellow presenters. Although we didn't win, we walked away with the fire to keep building out our idea, and an awesome experience.

Since then, we've presented at 1 Million Cups Chicago and Rockford and attended StrtupBoost New York and Fund Conference, where we pitched to potential investors. We hired our first intern from DePaul University who's helping us with social marketing. Lastly, we both graduated from an incubator and moved into our office space located in downtown Chicago.

All that being said, the journey continues and we are very excited about our product's potential, and the entrepreneurial experiences that lie ahead. [Learn more.](#)

***Stay tuned for additional FastPitch Competition related presenters progress in our upcoming newsletters!***

## Have a product idea in either DeKalb, Elgin, Naperville or Schaumburg? We can assist!



### **NIU EIGERlab is proud to announce new office hours at the DeKalb County Business Incubator, Elgin Area Chamber of Commerce, NIU-Naperville and Harper Community College in Schaumburg**

Our expanded coverage is due to an increased demand from the Small Business Development Centers (SBDC), SCORE mentors and business development professionals in the Chicagoland area. We've made it easier for innovators, startups, and small businesses to receive the assistance they need to turn their ideas into products.

Our new office hours will allow the C4PD to save entrepreneurs from these four locations, both their valuable time and financial resources.

**Elgin Development Group**  
31 South Grove Avenue  
Elgin, Illinois 60120

**REV3 at NIU Naperville**  
1120 E Diehl Rd.  
Naperville, IL 60563

**SBDC- Harper College**  
Harper Professional Center  
650 E. Higgins Rd, Suite 18 N  
Schaumburg, IL 60173

**DeKalb County Business Incubator**  
Community Outreach Building  
2500 N. Annie Glidden Rd., Ste. F  
DeKalb, IL 60115

**Coming soon: NIU College of Engineering**  
DeKalb campus

**To make an appointment, please contact us at 815.965.3522 or [sales@eigerlab.org](mailto:sales@eigerlab.org).**

The C4PD is a full-service product development center that will manage the product development cycle from the idea, to design, to prototyping, to manufacturing, packaging, and shipment to customers. The C4PD staff is ready, willing and able to assist with any step in the process with which you need help.

NIU EIGERlab is a centrally located, state-of-the-art mixed-use incubator serving the region with leading edge business, engineering and product development support services. Whether you're a new or existing entrepreneur, inventor, a start-up or a privately held company interested in growth or transition, EIGERlab is the region's one-stop resource for accelerating revenues and profits.

**Rev3 Innovation Center** at NIU-Naperville is focused on driving the third revolution of digital technology in DuPage County. We are a diverse community of freelancers, entrepreneurs, and small business tech startups. We offer coworking memberships, private office space and event space in Naperville, IL for startup companies.

## Tired of Starbucks? Daily membership offered | GROW your business at NIU EIGERlab's Coworking Spaces

*We offer memberships at two locations!*

Membership options include:

- **Social memberships | Mailbox service**-\$30 per month
- **Part-time open coworking space**-\$60 per month
- **Full-time open coworking space**-\$125 per month
- **Dedicated semiprivate cubicles**-\$250 per month
- **Daily membership**-\$12 per day, \$10 per day, three or more days



*Please call to schedule a tour:*

**NIU-Rockford**, 8500 E. State St.,  
Rockford, IL | 815.753.2192

**Center for Product  
Development (C4PD)**, 5299 Zenith  
Parkway, Loves Park, IL  
815.965.3522

[Visit our website](#)

## Retired? Semi-Retired? Consider Giving Back to Your Community by Becoming a SCORE Mentor

*NIU EIGERlab, SCORE, and SBDC collaborating to support entrepreneurs*



NIU EIGERlab and the Small Business Development Center at the Rockford Chamber of Commerce are well on their way to creating a new group of SCORE mentors to assist regional entrepreneurs and existing businesses.

The present goal is to identify additional individuals in the community with interest in being a SCORE counselor or helping to recruit counselors.

The Rockford SCORE office will be supported by and housed at NIU EIGERlab, 8500 E. State St. There is a need for 10 to 15 counselors and all counselors will be trained. **We do have a core group who has elected to assist, so we're well on our way to achieving the goal.**



*Being a SCORE volunteer is a way to give back to your community, connect with business owners and pass on your knowledge to the next generation of entrepreneurs in your community*

**Anyone who is interested in being a SCORE counselor is encouraged to call Sherry, 815.753.2192.**



NORTHERN ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY

**EIGERlab Innovation Network**

*Innovation, Acceleration and Product Development*



## Rockford MakerSpace is NOW open



### Rockford MakerSpace Grand Opening and Founders Club Establishment

***Rockford, IL, January 21, 2018 - Rockford MakerSpace (RMS) is announcing its Grand Opening scheduled for June 9th, 2018, as well as the establishment of the Founder's Club, a way for Makers to help accelerate the growth of RMS and lock in reduced monthly dues.***

RMS has been open on a limited basis since June of 2017 working through a process of establishing the organizational structure, transforming our building into a functional environment suited for Making, and forming partnerships with institutions in the community who share our vision.

As word gets out about RMS, it has become clear that there is a real demand for space where members of the Greater Rockford Region can come together and share resources and talents to work on projects for personal, professional or community needs. To meet this demand, RMS is announcing its Grand Opening, at which point the space will be fully operational and open to new members who want to Make with us.

[Click here](#) for the complete news release.

**Located in downtown Rockford, the Makerspace currently open to the public:**

**Wednesday evenings | 7 PM | Raspberrians and Open Shop**

**Saturdays | 2 PM | Open Shop**

**Friday, February 9, 7 PM - Intro to Laser Cutting/Engraving**

**The Rockford Makerspace has the following equipment and more!**

**3D Printing**

**Laser Cutting**

**Metalworking**

**Woodworking**

**Electronics**

**Glass Working**

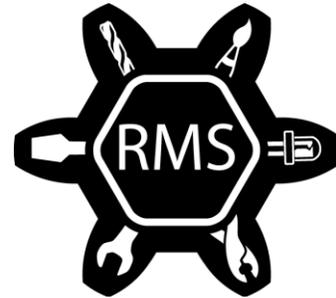
**Silk Screening**

Not sure how to use equipment or want to learn a new skill? No problem - the space is all about helping each other to learn.

Paying members have 24/7 access to the Makerspace. While the Makerspace is developing, the membership dues are what you feel it is worth to you each month.

Rockford Makerspace is a 100% volunteer-run not-for-profit organization and is currently looking for active members to help continue to develop the space and organization.

For more information, visit the [website](#) or e-mail [contact@rockfordmaker.space](mailto:contact@rockfordmaker.space).



## Illinois Small Business Development Center

**We can help you to start your business**

Ever considered your own business? Do you dream of being your own boss? This informative one hours session helps future entrepreneurs understand many of the steps and requirements of starting a business.

**No matter the size of your business, the IL SBDC network can provide guidance in the following areas:**

Business Planning

Legal Structure

Sales

Strategic Marketing

Accounting

Finance

Commercialization

Social Media

Human Resources/Training

**Location:** Rockford Public Library | East Branch | 6685 E. State. St., Rockford, IL

**February's dates | Fridays: 2/2, 2/9, 2/16, 2/23 | 10:30-11:30 AM**



For more information and registration, please contact us: [SBDC@RockfordChamber.com](mailto:SBDC@RockfordChamber.com) | 815.316.4301 or 815.566.1953 | [website](#)

## Thinker Ventures

### What's all the Buzz?

Thinker is a business-development company. Eighty percent of our work is helping small and medium-sized businesses run and grow better. Some of our best work is with forward-thinking leaders and regional or national business opportunities that need to be unstuck. Twenty percent of our work is with startups. We dream big, refine ideas and implement across disciplines to get on the path to producing revenue.

[Click here](#) to determine how Thinker may assist whether you would consider your business midmarket, small or startup.

# Thinker

VENTURES



### What Works Podcasts

The Thinker What Works Podcast features timely stories from young entrepreneurs, seasoned executives and industry leaders.

#### Latest episodes

["Always selling"](#)  
with Josh Patterson  
["Quiet leadership"](#) with Dan Minnick

[Click here](#) for the entire list of Thinker podcasts.

### Kauffman Foundation's 1M Cups Events "Educate, Engage & Connect" Thinker Ventures | Wednesdays, 9 AM

Join us Wednesday for 1 Million Cups. 1MC was started by the Kauffman Foundation in Kansas City, Missouri. The foundation launched 1MC in 2012 to begin building a community of small-business owners. Today, there are 1 Million Cups meetings in more than 125 communities. Every Wednesday, thousands of entrepreneurs get together for a few cups of coffee and a chance to learn, mentor or make connections. [Learn more.](#)



**Feb. 7: Jazz Keyes of The Local**

**Feb. 14: Joshua Patterson of Wabongo Leadership Council**

**Feb. 21: Francisco Anderson of World Financial Group**

**Feb. 28 - Todd Reinhardt, The Creative Cube**



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## DMDII's Vision

The Digital Manufacturing and Design Innovation Institute is a unique public-private partnership acting as a world-class, first-of-its-kind manufacturing hub. Based in Chicago, the Institute has the capabilities, innovative spirit and collaborative expertise to transform American manufacturing.

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## IMEC | Manufacturing Improvement Specialists

***Kick off your 2018 training  
with a boost in continuous  
improvement!***



**Lean Manufacturing 101 with  
Simulation | February 27 | NIU Rockford**

This one day workshop demonstrates the basic concepts of lean manufacturing and the tools and methodology necessary to implement lean on the shop floor. The interactive simulation reinforces the lean tools presented and helps you walk away with the resources needed to implement lean in your workplace.

[Register](#)

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## Entrepreneurial Events



**ONGOING: 1M Cups Rockford | Held weekly on Wednesday mornings, 9-10 AM | 2/7, 2/14, 2/21, 2/28 | Thinker Profit, 317 W Jefferson St., Rockford | [Learn more.](#)**

**February 7: Jazz Keyes of The Local**

**February 14: Joshua Patterson of Wabongo Leadership Council**

**February 21: Francisco Anderson of World Financial Group**

**February 28:**

**Todd Reinhardt, The Creative Cube**

**Seeking speakers to present! A free, national program designed to educate, engage and connect entrepreneurs. [Learn more.](#)**

**ONGOING: Rockford Makers | The Raspberrians! Build, Project, Open House, Make Night | Held weekly on Wednesday evenings at 6 PM | 2/7, 2.14, 2/21, 2/28 | Rockford MakerSpace, 203 N Church St, Rockford**

Bring & build your own projects OR get involved in our current group project(s). [Learn more.](#)

Forget your website. Forget your call center. Forget today's storefront. The future of brand interactions is changing beneath our feet and fingertips. In this new world of customer engagement, consumers will soon be interacting with brands in both customer service and commerce through voice, chatbots and more. \*Must register in advance. [Learn more.](#)

**Salsa Business Network holds a monthly luncheon meeting on the first Friday at a variety of locations in the Northern Illinois Region.** Anyone in the community is welcome to attend and network.

[Learn more.](#)

**Webinar: How to Market Beyond Your Website | 2/1, 12-1 PM**

Forget your website. Forget your call center. Forget today's storefront. The future of brand interactions is changing beneath our feet and fingertips. In this new world of customer engagement, consumers will soon be interacting with brands in both customer service and commerce through voice, chatbots and more. **\*Must register in advance.** [Learn more.](#)

**2018 Boone County Business Expo, 2/3, 9 AM-3 PM | Community Building Complex, 111 W. 1st St., Belvidere**  
[Learn more.](#)

**Rockford Chamber's Business Women's Council | February 6, 11:30 AM-1 PM | Mary's Market Banquet Facility, 4431 E State St | Rockford**  
No matter how you approach it -- looking to build yourself into a better leader or wondering how to build leaders from your current workforce -- everyone has room to grow in the field of leadership. So how do you build great leaders in this culture where multiple generations of people think so differently? [Learn more.](#)

**Rockford Chamber's Breakfast Buzz - State of the Regions' Real Estate Market | February 14, 7:30-9 AM | Rockford University, 5050 E State St, PURI Business School Building, Room**  
Featuring Rockford Area Realtors CEO, Steve Bois, and Government Affairs Director, Conor Brown.  
[Learn more.](#)

**Belvidere Area Chamber's Women's Business Breakfast Network, February, 20 7:30-9 AM Community Building Complex of Boone County, 111 W. 1st Street, Belvidere**  
7:30 AM Breakfast | 8 AM Program and Featured Speakers: Erica Butz, Marketing Dir.-AI Grace Appliance "The Beatles to Whirlpool" | Amanda Mehl, Boone County Health Dept Administrator, "From Mosques to Merengue Class" Life Lessons Learned Abroad | Beth Phillips, Mortgage Banker Alpine Bank, "My Own World Series" Learn more. Reservation deadline, February 10; phone 815.544.4357.

**Lunch & Learn: How to Efficiently Manage an Entity | February 20, 12-1 PM | Irontek, 635 Third St., Beloit, WI**  
Join us at Irontek for the last in a series of Lunch & Learns brought to you by Three Pillars Wealth Management. This week, it's all about the numbers! Will and Katie will be addressing P&L statements, balance sheets, and most importantly - your bottom line. Lunch will be provided. [Learn more.](#)

**SCORE-Business Startup Day: Improve your odds of success | 2/22, 9 AM | DeKalb County Business Incubator, 2500 North Annie Glidden, DeKalb | \*Registration required-limit of 12**  
**NOTE**-this class is currently full. Please contact the SCORE group regarding your interest in a second class being added. Did you know that entrepreneurs with a written plan are 16% more likely to succeed? This two-hour program will help you build a one-page model of your business especially focusing on: Value propositions-- what makes your business special? Target Market -- who are your customers? what are their key traits? How big is the market? [Learn more.](#)

**gBETA Accelerator Program submission deadline, February 23**  
gBETA is a program of nationally ranked startup accelerator gener8tor. gBETA is a free, seven-week accelerator for early-stage companies with local roots. Each program is capped at five teams and requires no fees and no equity. [Learn more.](#)

**Rockford Area Economic Development Council (RAEDC), Transition and Succession Planning Seminar | 3/1, 4-7 PM | Rockford Country Club, 2500 Oxford St.**  
It's never too late to build a great business. Join John H. Brown as we unpack the critical issues of selling and buying a business. John conveys the importance and benefits of Exit Planning and demonstrates that planning for the eventual exit from your companies should not be, and doesn't have to be an overwhelming process. [Learn more.](#)

**Roscoe | Rockton RORO Expo | March 3, 9 AM-4 PM and March 4, 10 AM-3 PM, Roscoe Middle School**  
Space is limited so register today. [Learn more.](#)

**Northern Illinois Center for Nonprofit Excellence (NICNE), A National Imperative luncheon | 3/23 | Save the date**

Keynote-Susan Dreyfus, CEO, Alliance for Strong Families and Communities | The newly released "National Imperative" report focuses on the economic and social impact of human services community-based organizations (CBOs) and the need to strengthen and preserve their pivotal role in our society.

**Northern Illinois Center for Nonprofit Excellence (NICNE), We're All In: Creating and Maintaining an Organizational Culture of Philanthropy | 5/18 | Save the date**

This full-day fund development symposium will feature national, regional, and local experts presenting on an array of topics related to fund development.

**Women's Business Development Center's Connect & Celebrate | September 14 | Hyatt Regency O'Hare**

Keynote luncheon, Industry roundtables and more. Save the date--additional details coming soon.

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**NIU EIGERlab | NIU-Rockford, 8500 E. State Street, Rockford, Illinois 61108 | 815.753.2192**  
**NIU EIGERlab Center for Product Development, 5299 Zenith Parkway,**  
**Loves Park, IL 61111 | 815.965.3522**