

https://www.bgdailynews.com/news/wilson-to-lead-regional-tech-council/article_30b0f21a-066d-5664-877e-4c9575a8ffd9.html

Wilson to lead regional tech council

By DON SERGENT don.sergent@bgdailynews.com

Jul 3, 2024



Rob Wilson

Submitted

Whether you're working alongside a robot in a manufacturing plant, placing your fast-food order on a screen, or asking your friendly digital assistant how to spell algorithm, you know that technology is continuing to play a bigger role in our everyday lives and in the business world.

MORE INFORMATION



Holley expanding presence at Innovation Campus

As Siri or ChatGPT would surely tell you, the future of pervasive tech is here, and you'd better get on board.

That's exactly what a new partnership between the Bowling Green Area Chamber of Commerce and Western Kentucky University's Innovation Campus is designed to do.

Beshear tours WKU Innovation Campus

Chamber announces tech council at 89th annual celebration

Created earlier this year, the Regional Technology Council based at the Innovation Campus is gaining steam

Augmented reality
company cuts ribbon
on new regional
headquarters

Telehealth provider
Lunae lands at
Innovation Campus

under the leadership of volunteer
Director Rob Wilson.

“We have more than 100 people now
on our distribution list,” said Wilson,
a 31-year veteran with the Evansville,
Indiana-based Keller Schroeder
technology consulting firm. “We have
members from businesses and
individuals.

“It’s great to see birds of a feather
come together and talk about things
of interest to them.”

The list of technology topics of
interest for businesses is growing
faster than the World Wide Web,
prompting Chamber of Commerce
President and CEO Ron Bunch to get
on board with the idea of a tech
council.

“When I was in Danville, Virginia,
every region of Virginia had a
regional technology council,” Bunch
said. “I saw what potential there was.

“Since we’ve had success in
economic development, we’re able to
spend more time building the
technology part of the economy. With

(WKU) President (Timothy) Caboni's vision for the Innovation Campus, this is a good time to partner with them and create a nice alignment."

Both Bunch and Wilson know that promoting technology can lead to collective problem-solving and brainstorming that has the potential to translate into business growth.

Wilson said peer groups concentrating on data analytics, product development and cyber security are already established or in the works. And his vision for the tech council that will encompass southcentral Kentucky and even a broader region goes well beyond those small groups.

"Every spring we want to do an emerging tech summit with local, regional and national speakers," Wilson said. "We want to advance our collective capabilities so we have a tech-ready workforce.

"Then the chamber can tell companies wanting to move here that we have this in place."

Although Bowling Green is known for its large manufacturing base, Bunch said technology “is deeply embedded in everything we do.”

New companies like the Envision AESC battery plant setting up shop in the Kentucky Transpark are prime examples of the emergence of technology, but Bunch said the integration of tech into traditional manufacturing, health care and other segments of the economy has been coming for years.

“Manufacturing for decades has been very technology-intensive,” he said. “All our manufacturers are technologically advanced. Otherwise, they wouldn’t be competitive globally.”

“As you see Envision AESC and other tech companies become more visible, that will bring attention to other companies.”

The evolution and growth of tech isn’t news to Amanda Havard, who is serving as chairperson of the Regional Technology Council.

Co-founder of the Lunae telehealth company that set up shop in the Innovation Campus last year, Havard said she has seen technology “go from an IT (Information Technology) department to where it’s part of the infrastructure of how the total company works.”

Havard is leading a 10-person board of directors appointed by the chamber and the Innovation Campus, and they’re already making plans for speakers, events and peer groups that can further the growth of tech in the region’s business community.

“We want to share knowledge and de-mystify some concepts like AI (artificial intelligence),” Havard said. “The tech council can be a trusted source to guide local businesses.”

– *Follow business reporter Don Sergent on Twitter @BGDNbusiness or visit bgdailynews.com.*