(Re)Introducing the Tech Council of Delaware!

Shortly after joining the Technology Councils of North America (TECNA) in March 2022, the Delaware IT Industry Council (D-ITIC) attended TECNA’s Summer Conference held in Pittsburgh, PA. As a new council, formed in October 2021, the conference provided an opportunity for D-ITIC leaders to learn from other tech councils and industry leaders, benchmark against peers in similar markets, and solicit feedback from various TECNA members. Following the conference, the Delaware IT industry Council decided to rebrand the organization as the Tech Council of Delaware (TCD) to ensure parity with other tech councils across the country and position the council for long-term sustainability and future success. In December 2022, TCD held a soft launch event where they unveiled their new name and logo, as well as a number of exciting new initiatives, to more than 50+ sponsors, partners, and community stakeholders.

While their name and brand have changed, the organization’s mission, vision, and goals remain the same: build and expand an inclusive tech talent pipeline, create a strong tech ecosystem in Delaware, and strengthen the state’s position and perception as a tech hub. In addition to the new name and logo, the Tech Council of Delaware team has been busy building out several other key components as part of their rebranding including creating a new website, procuring an association management platform, implementing paid memberships, launching four new committees, and producing a tech data dashboard. The team has also been leading the effort to establish the state’s first-ever sectoral partnership for the tech industry called the First State Tech Partnership (FSTP).

The new website will be a complete redesign to align with the council’s new name and branding. It will be a one-stop shop for members, partners, and potential funders, and will feature information on the council and its goals, the First State Tech Partnership, upcoming events, and various resources. The new site is expected to launch in the first quarter of 2023.
The association management platform, via YourMembership, will serve two major functions for the council. On the front end, it will integrate their new website with a feature-rich platform for members. On the back end, it will support the council’s management of both their internal operations and external member relations in a single cohesive platform. YourMembership also enables seamless coordination of events, which will be an increasing focus of the council going forward.

The council does not currently have a paid membership structure in place, but with YourMembership implemented in the first quarter of 2023, the council plans to deploy a paid membership model for individuals and organizations. Individual memberships are available to both aspiring tech professionals and current tech professionals; organizational memberships are available for corporations and start-ups, education and workforce providers, government agencies, and community organizations. Annual memberships will be a modest flat rate for both individual member types and most organizational member types. Corporate memberships will scale based on the number of tech employees working in Delaware, which will help promote membership from small startups to some of the larger employers in the state. The council continues to build out membership benefits to ensure they are offering exceptional value for council members.

The council is also in the process of launching four new committees to advance the work of the organization. New committees include the Tech Leaders Roundtable, Tech Talent & Workforce Committee, Tech Community Partners Collaborative, and Tech Professionals Network. In addition to the new committees, they plan to incorporate existing committees already doing noteworthy work across the state. These committees will each have dedicated workspaces in the association management platform where they can leverage the various platform features to collaborate with committee members and drive their work forward.

Another focus area of the council centers on tech workforce data and research. They recently contracted with a data consultancy, eIMPACT, who specializes in tech workforce and employment data, to build an interactive dashboard specific to Delaware’s tech industry. The custom dashboard features key data, trends, and peer region comparisons across a variety of employment and diversity metrics. The dashboard will be available to members and quarterly webinars will be held to review and discuss the latest trends and important tech insights.

In addition to their rebranding efforts, the council has also been working to launch Delaware’s first sectoral partnership for the tech industry titled, the First State Tech Partnership. The FSTP is a collaboration between the Tech Council of Delaware, employers, educational institutions, tech workforce providers, and community organizations to close skills gaps, build diverse talent pipelines, and eliminate structural barriers that prevent underrepresented residents from connecting to, and thriving in, high-quality tech careers. As a workforce intermediary, the Tech Council of Delaware leads the First State Tech Partnership in creating innovative workforce solutions and training programs that provide employers with skilled talent while also supporting underrepresented Delawareans with launching careers in the tech industry. FSTP workforce programs feature an ‘earn-and-learn’ model wherein selected candidates are hired by employer partners, in temporary or contract roles, while completing the on-the-job and classroom-based training required for promotion into the permanent, higher-salary position. This best-practice model provides a more seamless transition into permanent employment, allows employers to develop the talent they desire, and produces a direct economic benefit to program participants, employers, and the State of Delaware overall. The council has been
leading project teams to design several workforce programs, including a cybersecurity program, an advanced manufacturing program, and a summer internship program for rising high school juniors and seniors. All programs are expected to launch in 2023.

After a year of growth and establishing the foundation in 2022, the Tech Council of Delaware looks forward to solidifying their position as a bona fide tech council in 2023. The team plans to complete rebranding projects and launch the first workforce program under the First State Tech Partnership early this year. The team has already saved the date for the 2023 TECNA Summer Conference in Seattle, WA and looks forward to sharing details of their startup journey as well as continuing to learn from the TECNA member community.

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