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**Think Dutchess Alliance for Business Receives Excellence in Economic Development Award  
from the International Economic Development Council**

WASHINGTON, DC (October 02, 2018) – Think Dutchess Alliance for Business received a Bronze Excellence in Economic Development Award for its *The Innovation Challenge*, a project in the category of Special Event of the International Economic Development Council (IEDC).

The honor was presented at an awards ceremony on Tuesday, October 2, during the IEDC Annual Conference, which was held September 29 – October 3, in Atlanta, Georgia, United States.

"We are grateful to the IEDC for recognizing this event," says Sarah Lee, Executive Director of Think Dutchess. "Through connecting outstanding entrepreneurs to business leaders, mentors, financing, sites and services—the event provided opportunities for investment and growth throughout the county. Our inaugural event was a huge success and we are happy to announce that applications are now open for the next one. Entrepreneurs should get their business plans ready!"

The Innovation Challenge was Think Dutchess' first entrepreneurial pitch competition. Organized to support projects that strengthen our community and economic vitality, the competition attracted young and promising entrepreneurs in the early stages of business to take advantage of the amenities available in Dutchess County. The event supported business retention and attraction efforts through targeting the best and brightest Established and Early Stage Businesses.

"This year our judges reviewed some extraordinary projects that advanced both communities and businesses. We congratulate all the award winners, and thank everyone who nominated their projects for sharing their success with fellow IEDC members. What we learn from each other helps us to grow and advance as a profession. We look forward to even greater participation from



economic developers across the globe in the 2019 awards program.” -Craig Richard, CEcD, FM, President and CEO, Tampa Hillsborough Economic Development Corporation located in Tampa, Florida, and 2018 IEDC Board Chair.

### **About the Innovation Challenge**

Entries for the second Innovation Challenge are now open! The contest is open to any Hudson Valley seed stage businesses or early stage businesses less than 36 months old in the process of seeking funding, advanced business support, and looking to locate in Dutchess County. Entrants will be required to submit business plan summaries which will be judged by an esteemed selection committee. Four semi-finalist, two in each category, will receive businesses pitch support to compete in a live Pitch Competition in May, 2018. One winner in each category will receive a prize package consisting of invaluable business resources and cash. Deadline for entries is December 31, 2018. Contestants can apply here: <https://thinkdutchess.com/news-events/innovation-challenge/#anchor-scroll-to>

### **About Think Dutchess Alliance for Business**

Think Dutchess Alliance for Business, is the one-stop shop for business development needs and activities in Dutchess County, New York. A business-led, nationally recognized economic development corporation, Think Dutchess’ mission is to attract, retain, and expand for-profit and not-for-profit businesses in Dutchess County. Think Dutchess’ organizational structure includes programs in business retention, expansion and attraction; financial counseling and deal structuring; permitting and zoning; commercial real estate; innovation and technology; strategic marketing and municipal advisory. For more information about Think Dutchess Alliance for Business, visit [www.thinkdutchess.com](http://www.thinkdutchess.com)

### **About the International Economic Development Council**

The International Economic Development Council (IEDC) is the world's largest membership organization for economic development professionals. Economic developers promote economic well-being and quality of life in their communities by creating, retaining, and expanding jobs that facilitate growth and provide a stable tax base. From public to private, rural to urban, and local to international, our members represent the entire range of economic development. Learn more at [iedconline.org](http://iedconline.org).

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