THE CITY OF
PORTSMOUTH ℠

Hampton Roads Scored Grand Prize During Smart Infrastructure Challenge
Five Southside Cities Join Forces to Compete for Smart City Infrastructure Funding

(**HAMPTON ROADS, VA – October 31, 2018**) – Hampton Roads has been named the Grand Prize Winner in the 2018 Smart Infrastructure Challenge "Smart and Connected Development" track by Venture Smarter. Council members Andria McClellan (Norfolk) and Ben Davenport (Virginia Beach) delivered a compelling pitch on behalf of the region during the Second Annual Smart Regions Conference October 25 in Columbus, Ohio. Their regional presentation received the highest overall score.

In collaboration with the Hampton Roads Planning District Commission (HRPDC), the five Southside cities (Chesapeake, Norfolk, Portsmouth, Virginia Beach and Suffolk) competed as a region against over 69 response teams from around the country for grant funding, project financing and support for their innovative, smart infrastructure plans. The challenge culminated in a showdown where each team gave a Shark Tank-style presentation to a panel of judges. The Hampton Roads' submission included a suite of eight projects centered on the **Regional Connectivity Ring** (RCR), a dark fiber, open access ring, which will connect all five Southside cities to the transoceanic cables, accelerate the growth of digitally-empowered communities and serve as the foundation for smart region development.

The conference brought together city leaders, government innovators and public-and private-sector partners for networking and exchanging ideas. McClellan and Davenport emphasized on how the region can use cutting-edge technology to enhance public safety, economic development, education, and service delivery for all citizens.

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"Climate change and flooding are major concerns for Hampton Roads and all coastal communities. Working as a region puts us in a strong position to share data and solutions for addressing these issues," said Norfolk Council Member Andria McClellan, "Through Internet of Things (IoT) sensors and other innovative technology, we can transform into a smart, connected coastal community of the future, becoming a benchmark for cities confronted by these same challenges. Resilience is a critical component of our smart city journey."

Virginia Beach Council Member Ben Davenport who started the regional technology initiative was excited, but not surprised.

"We get this type of outcome when we work together as a region," Davenport said. "The technology we invest in today will protect our residents and improve quality of life well into tomorrow. The Regional Connectivity Ring will provide unlimited data transfer at significantly higher speed and in a secure environment. Economic impacts associated with the ring will help create jobs, promote digital inclusion and strengthen public safety."

Representatives from the City of Chesapeake and City of Norfolk, as well as the City of Virginia Beach Smart City Organization for Regional Enhancement (SCORE) team were in attendance.

For more information or to view the regional submission visit: smartregions.org/challenge.

About the 2018 Smart Infrastructure Challenge
The 2018 Smart Infrastructure Challenge calls for regional teams to add a layer of smart and connected technologies into infrastructure planning and relative efforts. Teams have until October 25th to create a project vision and presentation to compete for grant resource, support, and access to project financing. A letter of intent must be submitted by May 31, 2018 to qualify for participation and support.

About Venture Smarter
Venture Smarter is developing strategies and technologies to innovate how leaders across industries, sectors, and agencies can work together on smart development and infrastructure projects throughout cities and regions. Venture Smarter's founders are mission-driven industry experts coming from The White House, Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers (IEEE), State Department, U.S. Senate Leadership, technology startups, and other leading organizations. The company is based in Cincinnati, OH, with offices in NYC, and Washington DC.

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