

Conover Station Recognized as 2015 Harvard Ash Center Bright Idea in Government

Conover, NC – February 18, 2015 – The Ash Center for Democratic Governance and Innovation at the John F. Kennedy School of Government, Harvard University, recognized today **Conover Station Redevelopment Project** as part of the 2015 Bright Ideas program. This year’s cohort includes 124 programs from all levels of government—school districts; county, city, state, and federal agencies; as well as public-private partnerships—that are at the forefront in innovative government action. The City of Conover purchased a vacant, downtown former factory site in 2005. Since that time, the city has transformed the once derelict site into an example of community-based revitalization for the future. By obtaining over \$6.4 million dollars in grant funding, the city has completed a LEED certified rehabilitation of a 1924 mill building into a new public library and community space and constructed a new 6.8 acre public park. Conover also partnered with the Manufacturing Solutions Center (MSC) to build a revolutionary new facility to promote job creation. The MSC has been working for over two decades to assist industries, both locally and nationally, through materials testing, streamlining design and manufacturing innovations. MSC has worked with over 1,100 different business and industrial clients in 48 states and 35 countries. Most recently, a new \$4.4 million dollar commercial building and fitness center is under construction at the Conover Station site that will be the largest new building constructed in the downtown in decades.

“The Bright Ideas program demonstrates that often seemingly intractable problems can be creatively and capably tackled by small groups of dedicated, civic-minded individuals,” said Stephen Goldsmith, director of the Innovations in Government Program at the Ash Center. “As exemplified by this year’s Bright Ideas, making government work better doesn’t always require massive reforms and huge budgets. Indeed, we are seeing that, in many ways, an emphasis on efficiency and adaptability can have further-reaching effects than large-scale reforms.”

This is the fourth cohort recognized through the Bright Ideas program, an initiative of the broader Innovations in American Government Awards program. For consideration as a Bright Idea, programs must currently be in operation or in the process of launching and have sufficient operational resources and must be administered by one or more governmental entities; nonprofit, private sector, and union initiatives are eligible if operating in partnership with a governmental organization. Bright Ideas are showcased on the Ash Center’s [Government Innovators Network](#), an online platform for practitioners and policymakers to share innovative public policy solutions.

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About the Ash Center for Democratic Governance and Innovation

The Ash Center for Democratic Governance and Innovation advances excellence in governance and strengthens democratic institutions worldwide. Through its research, education, international programs, and government innovations awards, the Center fosters creative and effective government problem solving and serves as a catalyst for addressing many of the most pressing needs of the world's citizens. For more information, visit www.ash.harvard.edu.