

Contact: Matt Hollander, Oregon RAIN PR Coordinator, matthew.a.hollander@gmail.com, 541-225-7032

For Immediate Release

Jan. 19, 2017

RAIN to Kickoff 2017 with Speed Pitch Competition, Coastal Pre-accelerator Debut *\$500 prize package for top speed pitch company*

Florence, Ore. — Newly-appointed coastal venture catalyst David Youngentob, of the Oregon Regional Accelerator and Innovation Network (RAIN), has wasted no time raising the bar for Florence entrepreneurs. On Tuesday, he will host the Startup Speed Pitch Kickoff, where he will also announce details on the inaugural RAIN Coastal Pre-accelerator program.

“This is an exciting opportunity for local innovators to jump start their business venture. We’re presenting a short-term challenge in the speed pitch competition, but our real hope is that everyone leaves inspired to move their idea forward by applying to our pre-accelerator program,” said Youngentob, who was hired as RAIN’s Coastal Venture Catalyst last November.

The kickoff event will be held Tuesday, Jan. 24, at 5:30 p.m., at the Kenneth B Gallery (1458 1st Street, Florence). The event is free to attend, and light food and beverage will be provided. Attendees will have time to network with fellow innovators and will vote for the winner of the speed pitch competition — which comes with a \$500 prize package. For more information, including registration, visit <http://bit.ly/FloCoKickoff>.

The speed pitch portion of the program is open to anyone with an idea to start a business in Florence, plans to sell nationally or internationally, and create jobs. Each company will have one minute to pitch. Companies that would like to pitch can email Youngentob at david@oregonrain.org, with the subject line “Speed Pitch.”

Youngentob said of the companies that have already signed-up to pitch, some have products already being sold in markets, while others are merely in the idea stage. Companies do not need to pitch to be considered for the pre-accelerator, but the event doubles as an opportunity for entrepreneurs to receive feedback that may strengthen their application to the pre-accelerator.

The pre-accelerator is a 12-week, bootcamp style program for the best and brightest startup companies in Coastal Lane County. The application process opens February 4 at bit.ly/FloCoPreaccelerator, and closes on February 27. Four to six companies will be selected for the program, which begins on March 22.

RAIN began hosting educational and networking events for entrepreneurs on the Oregon Coast in October, 2015. However, this is the first multi-week program designed to take an early stage startups from concept stage to launch stage.

“The introduction of the pre-accelerator program is a testament to the entrepreneurs in Florence. From the very beginning, they’ve bought into everything that RAIN has offered. And we know that they are ready to take the next step,” said RAIN venture catalyst Caroline Cummings.

About Oregon RAIN

The Regional Accelerator & Innovation Network (RAIN) is an Oregon consortium of government, higher education, and the business community. RAIN was founded by the State of Oregon’s Regional Solutions network and funded by the 77th Oregon State Legislative Assembly to advance the formation of high-growth innovative startup companies located in Lane, Linn, Benton, and Lincoln Counties.

In coordination with the Cities of Corvallis and Eugene, as well as communities throughout the region, RAIN is partnered with two accelerators to create a collaborative environment to assist entrepreneurs in establishing viable companies that generate jobs, wealth and opportunities for the region. RAIN Corvallis is served by the Oregon State University Advantage Accelerator. The RAIN Eugene Accelerator is a partnership between the University of Oregon and the Eugene Area Chamber of Commerce. For more information about RAIN, visit www.oregonrain.org.

###