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**A CELEBRATION AND OBSERVANCE DAY-WEEKEND FOR
INNOVATION AND ENTREPRENEURIALISM IN AMERICA
AND GREATER MORGANTOWN, WV**

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Innovation and entrepreneurialism are not only the spirit of America, but the machinery that has powered America to its greatness during the past two centuries. That machinery, and even the spirit, is being challenged and stressed by a combination of many factors that are taking its toll on our future as a nation. Even the American spirit can endure only so much suppression until it may be overcome by frustration and complacency. Many of these factors stifling innovation and entrepreneurialism are also the same ones chipping away at our basic freedom in America. So what can be done to preserve and restore our creative heritage, freedom, and ability to be innovative and entrepreneurial?

The pioneers of innovation are somewhat unsung heroes in America. Innovators have many common characteristics, and likewise, entrepreneurs also have many characteristics in common, although perhaps, somewhat different from innovators. However, the combination, especially working in unison, and with freedom and only natural constraints, is what has made America so strong. We quite appropriately observe and celebrate our true warriors, who do physical battle for our country, with Armed Services Day. We celebrate the birthdays of our great leaders with Presidents Day, and there are many other well deserved observances for contributors that have made our nation great, and protect and respect it, such as, Flag Day. Several other observance days reflect achievements and accomplishments of our citizens, and honor them such as, Father's Day, and Mother's Day which was first celebrated in Grafton, WV.

However, the heroes possessing these precious combinations of innovative and entrepreneurial qualities are also truly special. The visionaries with the technical tools, and the resourcefulness to invent, produce, and market **products** have given us our flourishing economy and high standards of living over the years. They are the ones who have been so successful in not only creating and inventing everything from gadgets to processes and new approaches, but having the basic talent, fortitude, and attitude to take risks and fully engage their entrepreneurial skills to create new, sustainable, small and large businesses. They are not only the espousers, but the results-oriented doers who get the job done! These innovators and entrepreneurs are truly unique and of critical value to America in real terms, as well as, our fundamental psyche and mantra! Creating a new **product** and turning it into a new profitable business is what the United States of America desperately needs at this time for a variety of reasons. It not only needs to be invented here, but manufactured here, and sold to the world! Thousands of state and federal laws are passed each year, and institutional constraints, bureaucratic processes, and other obstacles grow rampantly to stifle innovation and entrepreneurialism. America is competing in the world with a 20 to 30% handicap. It seems as though as our culture and our nation age, the impediments to innovation and entrepreneurialism continue to increase. It penetrates every sector of our nation from school systems, universities, and government institutions, to all of the **dwindling** private sector businesses and industries. We must reverse this trend if our social, economic standards, and expectations for America are to be maintained, and our nation is to survive!

Every effort needs to be made to protect the doers and their freedom to perform and provide them with all possible incentives. The first place to start is to fully recognize and reward them, and educate America on the vital role they play in our existence and quality of life, as well as, our stature among nations. Thus, it seems

extremely important to recognize these determined heroes and their contributions to our heritage and our future, as a society, and as a nation. It would be helpful and most appropriate to acknowledge and celebrate their accomplishments and contributions every year. In the process, we can help instill the inventive mindset in our **youth** early in life. In accordance with these objectives a National Innovation and Entrepreneurialism Day-Weekend has been invented and proclaimed! The nature of this day of observance and celebration will vary across America in accordance with the ingenuity and appropriateness of each and every community. Suggested plans and guidelines include, but are not limited to: Parades, speeches, exhibits and demonstrations of inventions, science, arts, and new technologies and new products in malls and conference centers and on the sidewalks and parking lots, tours of research, manufacturing, and other innovative business centers, innovative entertainment, networking areas for inventors, entrepreneurs, financiers and employers, creating local honor rolls for innovators and entrepreneurs, and creating local chapters of a new National Society of Innovators and Entrepreneurs (NSIE) to advance the cause in America.

Morgantown Relevance

Morgantown has a wealth of intellectual, educational, innovation, research, technology, business and industrial enterprises, and a huge population of resourceful people who are extremely successful in their respective disciplines and businesses. We have many federal-government, state-government, university, and private sector entities including high-tech small businesses that make Morgantown a very special community in the U.S. These innovative and entrepreneurial citizens are the ones who created our amenities and vibrant community with qualities to deserve the award of America's Best Small City. We have a wealthy heritage and long history of innovation and entrepreneurialism dating back over a century. In 1900 there were 16 glass factories that employed 1949 people and had production valued at \$1,871,795, and ten years later had 28 flint glass plants with 6,033 workers, and ultimately became known as among the best hand blown glass in the world. The glass industry has disappeared, except for Davis & Lynch, and Morgantown lost its identity as a glass city with glass festivals, and lost its famous shirt factory. However, through its innovative people, it has morphed into one of the leading small research and technology development communities in America. The percentage of the population with college degrees is not only the highest in the State, but one of the highest in America. Morgantown is home to NETL, NIOSH, Rockefeller Neurological Sciences and Research Center, and many high tech small businesses. The city has many researchers and inventors with hundreds of patents. Even WVU has a freshman that is the first WVU student to be inducted into the National Museum of Education's National Gallery for America's Young Inventors, and our local high school is renowned for its robotics. Morgantown needs to claim this title, celebrate it, and market it to the world as one of the most creative and innovative communities anywhere. This is truly a prestigious accomplishment for our City that boosts the image of the entire Mountain State. Marketing our true image in this regard can have huge benefits in recruitments to Morgantown, and should greatly impact our economic development.

Cities across West Virginia are known for various festivals and have certain identities: Elkins-Forest Festival, Spencer-Walnut Festival; Buchannan-Strawberry Festival; Kingwood-Buckwheat Festival; Fairmont- Italian Festival & Coal Festival; Lewisburg-Chocolate Festival; and others such as Apple Butter and Ramp Festivals. Lewisburg and Fayetteville have recently won Nation's Coolest Small Town in America awards. The greater Morgantown area needs to reestablish its identity and celebrate it with an appropriate festival. How appropriate it would be to have a festive inventors, science, engineering, technology and innovative small businesses festival! In fact, a greater Morgantown town-and- mall Innovation and Entrepreneurial Mardi Gras would seem to be the perfect event befitting this great community!

This past October a group of distinguished Morgantown inventors and entrepreneurs got together and championed the founding of the National Society of Innovators and Entrepreneurs (NSIE) to advance the cause in America, and to help facilitate holding the first Celebration and Observance Day Weekend for Innovation and Entrepreneurialism here in Morgantown, WV! This event would be a significant economic development tool by bringing to Morgantown many visitors of an inventive genius to exhibit, demonstrate, network and sell or promote their wares. WV high school students and university students throughout the U.S. could enter their inventions into contests. High school recruits and college students and their families from afar who have an interest in technology innovations should find it an exciting attraction. It would be an excellent opportunity for businesses, industries, educational, and research centers to showcase their facilities. In the process, innovators, inventors, and entrepreneurs across the spectrum and from across the country, can meet their counterparts and exhibit their inventions and network with investors and manufacturers in an array of social, celebration, entertainment and business activities. In fact, Morgantown, with all of its diverse research and technology development, does not have a social event where they can even meet their fellow researchers, innovators, and small business entrepreneurs. Seldom may their paths cross. This would be a cross-fertilization activity, inspiring the imaginations of youth and adults alike. Local researchers, inventors, and entrepreneurs could be recognized and nominated and selected for awards each year at a banquet, and even be inducted into a local I & E Hall of Fame. Although awarded by professional societies in their respective disciplines, it would be desirable to also locally celebrate the achievements of these true heroes, and for all citizens in the community to get to know their neighbors, and the local people responsible for creating our future technology and economy.

The perfect time of the year for this event, considering the weather and University activities, would be the third weekend in October. This City-wide coordinated date would not compete with other holidays. It is not too hot or too cold, the fall colors are beaming, WVU has settled in after the start of the fall semester. If planned on an away football game weekend, the entire City and its resources could be focused on contributing to and involved in celebrating this event. This would be a prestigious and entertaining event for the City, for the entire family, and local residents, as well as, a significant economic development event.

A local coordinating committee needs to be established, with help from several supporting organizations, including tourism and travel bureaus. Corporate sponsors and advertisers would need to be recruited to cover costs of awards. This is where we leave it open for suggestions, and local institutions, organizations, and community leaders to organize and implement the event.