



NEWS RELEASE

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LEADERSHIP SOUTHSIDE GRADUATES CLASS OF 2025 *GRADUATES HONORED AT CHAMBER ANNUAL AWARDS BANQUET*

[Danville, VA] – The Danville Pittsylvania Chamber of Commerce is thrilled to announce the graduation of the Leadership Southside Class of 2025. The class was recognized at the Chamber’s Annual Awards Banquet last week at the Institute for Advanced Learning and Research.

Leadership Southside is the Dan River Region’s premiere leadership development program for the business, education, public, and nonprofit sectors.

With this year’s 33rd graduating class, Leadership Southside boasts over 600 alumni. The Chamber is proud to include this year’s Class of 2025 graduates in this alliance of leaders who are striving to move both their careers and their communities forward.

Here’s what one of this year’s graduates had to say about Leadership Southside:

“Before Leadership Southside, I viewed leadership primarily as a position of authority—someone who sets direction and ensures tasks get done. But through the program, my perception has evolved. I now see leadership as more relational and service-oriented. It’s about influence, empathy, and being able to bring people together around a shared vision. The program emphasized self-awareness, communication, and community engagement, which helped me realize that effective leaders don’t just lead tasks—they lead people.”

- **Sherri Dickens**, *Manager of ATDM Student Services* at the Institute for Advanced Learning and Research

Congratulations to the following 35 graduates who successfully completed the program:

Name of Participant	Place of Employment
Abby Manasco	Manasco Realty
Amadeo Cabrera	Hitachi Energy
Amber Stone	Sovah Health
Amy Newell	Danville-Pittsylvania Community Services
Andrea Gillus	Danville Public Schools
Anjanette Farmer	PATHS
Caleb Ayers	Institute for Advanced Learning and Research
Carrington Chambers	Danville-Pittsylvania Community Services
Christopher Newnam	Hitachi Energy
Eben Leigh	United Way Danville-Pittsylvania County
Eric Minter	City of Danville, Fire Department
Henrietta Weaver	City of Danville
Jared Links	Kickback Jacks
Javier Perez Derat	Hitachi Energy
Jerry Hankins	First National Bank
Jessica Dalton	Danville Community College
Joel Keneipp	Polynt Composites
Justin Scarce	Institute for Advanced Learning and Research
Kimberly Whitehead	Signode
Laura Brown	2 Witches Winery & Brewery
Mallorie Gomersall	Tyson Farms
Maria Vasquez	ValleyStar Credit Union
Megan Bowling	URW Credit Union
Mitchell Smith	Virginia International Raceway
Richard White	Hobbs and Associates
Rodney Logan	Hitachi Energy

Samantha Bagbey	City of Danville, Economic Development and Tourism
Seth Hawker	City of Danville, Community Development
Shanel Beard	Epic Health Partners
Sherri Dickens	Institute for Advanced Learning and Research
Sheryl Royal	City of Danville
Stefanie Hamilton-Jackson	PLDR Law
Dr. Takiwi Milton-Babalola	Danville Public Schools
Tiffany Calloway	Goodyear Tire & Rubber Co
Tracy Fink	Institute for Advanced Learning and Research

Leadership Southside is a ten-month program that typically meets on the third Tuesday of each month from August-May. Session topics include leading a team, conflict resolution, nonprofit board leadership, communication skills, crisis leadership, equitable leadership, presentation skills, purpose-driven leadership, and transformational leadership. Throughout the program, participants have access to several assessments, including CliftonStrengths, the Enneagram, and a 360 assessment, to learn more about their own leadership style. In January, participants travel to Richmond for Chamber Day at the Capitol to hear from and engage with members of the General Assembly.

The Chamber is grateful to the program's content sponsors for making these sessions possible:

- **Mojo Consulting Group;**
- **River District Consulting Group;** and
- **Epstein Clark Consulting.**

Applications are open now for the 2025-2026 program year. Those interested can apply at www.dpchamber.org/leadershipsouthside. Applications are due by 5 p.m. on Friday, June 27, 2025. Only complete applications will be considered.

The Chamber has contracted with Rachel Covington to lead and facilitate the program. Rachel has led this program since 2018. For more information about Leadership Southside, please contact Rachel at rcovington@dpchamber.org.

The Chamber is grateful to its Innovation Partners and other regional funders, without whom this program would not be possible.

The Danville Pittsylvania County Chamber of Commerce accelerates business growth by connecting its members to dynamic resources and networks. The Chamber's number one goal is to help area businesses of all sizes to grow and prosper.

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