

ADDING SPICE TO NEW LONDON: RD86 MAKES IMPACT AS A HOSPITALITY TRAINING GROUND

As an engine for innovation, business development, and regional growth, the end game for any TRIP program is for the project to develop into a self-sustaining entity that supports the region.

TRIP counts RD86 as one such project. What started as Cultivator Kitchen at the end of 2017, with a plan to serve the region as a restaurant incubator program, has evolved in its first year into a diversified hospitality company that works as an applied learning platform to train hospitality professionals from throughout the region.

The RD86 Space, located at 86 Golden Street, serves as the nerve center for the program in downtown New London. This polished casual dining and event space has become known for its Brooklyn-style brunch available Saturdays and Sundays from 10am - 3pm. Dinner service happens Tuesday through Saturday night from 4pm - 10pm. There is live jazz every Wednesday evening. Voted Best Restaurant in New London County 2019 by Connecticut Magazine's Readers' Choice, RD86 excels by offering great food and attentive service in a simple yet refined environment.

Part of what makes RD86 innovative is an approach that uses business operations as an applied learning platform. This creates an environment that supports employees to develop the skills and entrepreneurial mindset to take the lead in other establishments or start their own business as an entrepreneur.

The RD86 Cultivator Kitchen program is specifically designed to help budding entrepreneurs prototype their business concept to refine their model, get data to support bank-ability, and build an audience before launching - if that is something they decide to pursue after the Cultivator testing phase. Future RD86 plans include expansion into an event venue that provides pop-up space for business development through "lean startup" prototyping.

As a hospitality company, RD86 is distinct from many restaurants by combining food, music, and art to create experiences that showcase the diverse cultures of Southeastern Connecticut. On Tuesday, March 5th, RD86 is celebrating the rich culture of Mardi Gras with a Dixieland jazz band and special Creole menu, with no additional costs at the door. The following week RD86 brings the luck o' the Irish to New London with a St. Patrick's Day weekend



Submarine commissioning catered by RD86.

featuring Irish Breakfast, Corned Beef, and more both Saturday and Sunday for brunch and dinner. More information can be found on the RD86 website, [here](#).

"We love New London and want more people to discover the place by producing experiences that draw in people who might otherwise go to Mystic or the Casinos," said Hannah Gant, one of the entrepreneurs behind RD86. "Success for us comes from people returning to explore New London further to try other restaurants and establishments. We all win by working together to offer something unique."

RD86 also does catered function as their space or off-site of any scale. Just a few weeks ago they flawlessly fed over 700 people for the kickoff event for the commissioning of the USS South Dakota, SSN-790, the most recent Virginia-class submarine produced by General Dynamic Electric Boat. Guests included regional and state community leaders and representatives like Joe Courtney.

TRIP is proud to be part of making RD86 a success in service of spurring a more vibrant downtown in New London in ways that innovatively creates opportunity for others to pursue their dreams. We look forward to supporting their continued growth.

JANUARY INNOVATORS CIRCLE:

The January Innovators Circle, held at RD86 in downtown New London, provided a creative platform for expanding further on the ideas and projects that were seeded in the first innovators circle in 2018. New and returning community leaders gathered and discussed potential challenges that face the Thames River region, and how our communities and businesses can band together to support the current momentum of growth. The date of the next innovators circle is still to be decided. For more information about participating in the Innovators Circle, contact Emma Palzere-rae at director@thamesriverinnovation.org.



Upcoming Events:

Naval & Maritime Consortium:

- March 8th, Membership Only Event
For more information about the benefits of Consortium membership, please contact a.halvordson@thamesriverinnovation.org

Ignite:

- March 6th, 12:00 – 1:00 p.m.,
IMPROV FOR SCIENTISTS
(and others who want to have fun)
BioCT Innovation Commons
93 Shennecossett Rd, Groton, CT 06340



- March 16th, 2019
MARINE MAKER DAY
Project Oceanology
1084 Shennecossett, Groton, CT 06340

Community Concierge:

- March 14, 2019, 5:30 to 8:00 p.m.
CONNECTIONS
New London's Lyman Allyn Art Museum
625 Williams St, New London, CT 06320
Meet neighbors and longtime eastern CT locals while enjoying complimentary food and refreshments. Learn more and sign up at CommunityECT.com.

Naval & Maritime Consortium Welcomes New Members

- OR&L Construction Corp.
- New London Seafood Distributors, Inc.
- New England Metal Finishing, Inc.
- DAA Solutions
- Atlantic Diving and Welding, Inc.
- Noelle Simpson Slifka LLC
- The Hillery Company
- Robinson and Cole
- Joining Technologies
- CT Center for Advanced Technology (CCAT)
- Mistras Group

TRIP in the News:

Naval & Maritime Consortium holds membership event

The Day, January 22, 2019

Groton City to hold public hearing on Plan of Conservation & Development

The Day, January 13, 2019

THAMES RIVER INNOVATION PLACE

THAMESRIVERINNOVATION.ORG