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Black tech entrepreneurs are focus of new Charlotte initiative

By Ely Portillo



The newest tenant at a former missile plant and distribution center in Charlotte's North End is a community initiative focused on promoting black technology entrepreneurs.

Called BLKTECHCLT, the group has leased 1,200 square feet at Camp North End. It's a subsidiary of community development consulting firm Build the Good, and has operated out of various spaces such as Google Fiber's First Ward location since launching in 2016.

The group is opening their Camp North End space on Saturday, sponsored by a one-year grant from the OrthoCarolina Foundation. BLKTECHCLT is focused on skills-building workshops, connecting entrepreneurs to loans, capital and mentors and helping black tech workers connect with corporate employers.

"We're beyond enthusiastic to expand our work through BLKTECH Interactive's initiative across North Carolina with the installation of BLKTECHCLT at Camp North End," said Sherrell Dorsey, founder of Build the Good, in a statement.

Camp North End is a 75-acre former industrial site off Statesville Avenue, a massive collection of former warehouse and factory space that developer ATCO Properties & Management plans to renovate, refurbish and reuse. In its previous iterations, various parts of the site have been used as a Ford, a Rite Aid distribution center, a missile assembly plant and a munitions dump.

New York-based ATCO paid \$13.5 million for the site in 2016, the latest change in a rapidly shifting part of Charlotte.

"BLKTECHCLT represents the best of what the North End Smart District should be," said Damon Hemmerdinger, co-president of ATCO.