



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**

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**Regional Partnership Develops New Entrepreneur Development Center**

ROANE COUNTY, TN - Proton Power, Inc. has entered into a partnership with the Roane Chamber and the Knoxville Entrepreneur Center (KEC) to create a center to support business startups. Sizzle TechStart is the creation of Dr. Sam Weaver, President/CEO of Proton Power and his wife, Dr. Carol Jane Weaver, President of Sizzle. Through partnerships with local economic development agencies, Proton Power hopes to duplicate the success it realized by utilizing the space where it began in 2007.

In 2007, Dr. Weaver purchased a farm house on property within the Roane Regional Business and Technology Park. There he began three new small businesses, two of which have since become successful companies that outgrew the space. Proton Power now has six separate office spaces available for co-working in the farm house building where it all began. Each of these spaces are available for discounted rates and would include equipment, utilities, and shared administrative support.

Programming and support programs, offered through the Knoxville Entrepreneur Center (KEC) and the Roane Chamber, make this opportunity unique and helpful for new businesses in need of guidance and direction on best practices for business owners.

“When you think about a steak, it’s the sizzle, not the meat, that creates the excitement,” said Dr. Weaver when describing how he and his wife created the name and concept for the business incubator.

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“I think I know what entrepreneurs need,” Weaver added. “They need the space to set up and work. Sizzle TechStart will make it easier for them to get started.”

Harry Abouelata, President, ARiES Energy knows exactly what it means to grow out of this support and environment. “Working out of the offices of Sizzle TechStart was an excellent way to start our business,” said Abouelata, who was presented with the Traction Award at Startup Day hosted by KEC. “With the number of trips I was making to Chattanooga and Nashville, I felt like I had a head start on my day. The setting on the river in a historical cabin was absolutely breathtaking.”

The partnership between Proton Power, the Roane Chamber and KEC is a new approach to the development of rural entrepreneurial opportunities. “We believe this partnership is the realization of a vision for developing rural economies,” said Roane Alliance President Wade Creswell. “With broadband access available in more rural areas, access to support for startup businesses is now just as achievable and even more important in rural counties as it is in urban settings.”

Jim Biggs of the Knoxville Entrepreneur Center added, “We greatly admire Dr. Sam Weaver's work at Proton Power and congratulate Harvey Abouelata for his recognition with ARiES Energy at this year’s Startup Day. These are two amazing startup success stories and we are proud to partner with Roane Chamber and Sizzle TechStart to help facilitate quality programming at their new incubator.”

Proton Power will host an open house with a ribbon cutting on December 3 at Sizzle TechStart from 8:30 to 10 am. To learn more visit [SizzleTechStart.com](https://SizzleTechStart.com), or call Roane Chamber Director Paulette Ray at (865) 376-2093 or Sean Hensley of Proton Power at (865) 376-9002.

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# Roane

ALLIANCE

The Chamber is a partner organization under The Roane Alliance – Roane County’s economic development organization. Other partners who operate under the Alliance umbrella with the Chamber include the Industrial Development Board and the Visitors Bureau. To learn more

about how the Roane Alliance promotes economic development and seeks increased opportunities for all Roane County citizens, please visit [www.roanealliance.org](http://www.roanealliance.org).

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