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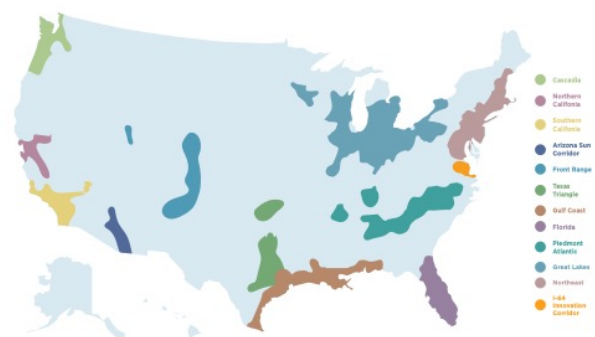
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**Global Internet Experts behind Marseille, France's success,
Inspire Attendees at the 2nd Annual Convergence 2021 Conference to Make
the Richmond-Hampton Roads megaregion the next Global Internet Hub.**

WILLIAMSBURG, Va. ChamberRVA and the Hampton Roads Chamber held their second annual Convergence 2021 event today in Williamsburg, Virginia showcasing the work of RVA757 Connects in advancing the Richmond-Hampton Roads megaregion, also known as the I-64 Innovation Corridor. This year's conference focused on the transformational strategy of making the I-64 Innovation Corridor a Global Internet Hub.

US Megaregion Map

International speakers at Convergence 2021 provided insights on how Marseille, France became a global Internet hub in five years. Local speakers from Henrico, Virginia Beach, Virginia Commonwealth University, and Old Dominion University shared examples of how the Richmond-Hampton Roads megaregion's expanding Internet infrastructure is attracting industries, growing 21st century jobs, providing student experiential education, and advancing our community's social equity and quality of life. Event attendees called for the creation of comprehensive strategic plan to make the I-64 Innovation Corridor the next Global Internet Hub.



Megaregions are the new competitive unit in the global economy and are defined by the movement of goods, people, and capital between nearby metropolitan regions. Twelve U.S. megaregions now account for more than 70 percent of our nation's population and jobs. The Richmond-Hampton Roads megaregion spans 8,000 square miles and is currently home to three million people; 1.4 million are in the workforce.

Brian Anderson, President & CEO of ChamberRVA, said: "The vast majority of Richmond's and Hampton Road's assets complement each other. The two regions should compete where we have scale and work closer together where we don't. There's no better example of this synergistic inter-regional collaboration than the world-class digital infrastructure we are building together."

Raymond White from Virginia Beach Economic Development agreed that complementary Internet infrastructure assets and efforts are already in place from one end of the megaregion to the other. “Currently, Virginia Beach houses three subsea cables connecting the United States to Europe and South America. Africa is next. At the other end of the I-64 Innovation Corridor, the QTS Data Center in Henrico County houses the Richmond NAP, where the sub-sea cables converge with major terrestrial fiber optic networks. QTS is the world’s fourth largest data center.”

Internet hubs are physical locations where carrier networks, content delivery networks (CDNs), social networks (Facebook), cloud services, hosting, and IT service providers *colocate and interconnect*. This often happens in a massive data center or within several data centers connected in the same region with the help of an Internet Exchange Point (IXP) that facilitates open interconnection. Subsea cables usually become a catalyst for the formation of large Internet hubs.

Internet hubs in the age of the IoT (Internet of Things) provide many advantages for a community, supporting smart city applications related to improved energy distribution, streamlined trash collection, decreased traffic congestion, and improved air quality. Internet hubs also provide their residents, businesses, and organizations greater Internet reliability and speed, lower costs, and improved access to underserved areas. As a direct consequence of COVID, Internet hubs will be even more attractive to employers and remote workers who depend on reliable, home-based access.

Global Internet Hubs are measured by the volume of traffic that goes through that location. The basic factors that drive global Internet hub status include:

1. Access to international subsea cables
2. Data centers
3. Robust network of local fiber optic cables
4. Inexpensive power and/or access to renewable sources of energy
5. Inexpensive land
6. Low risk of natural disaster
7. Proximity to large populations
8. Tech-savvy workforce
9. Economic incentives
10. Enlightened leaders and supportive community

The Convergence 2021 international speakers behind the success of Marseille, France touched on many of these factors that catapulted Marseille into Global Internet Hub status. Specifically, they mentioned the high concentration of international subsea cables, accumulation of content providers, reputation as an open and competitive port city, enlightened leaders, supportive community, and strong public-private partnership.

Vinay Nagpal, President of InterGlobix, Chairman of NVTC Data Center & Cloud Community, and Founding Member & Executive Director of IEIC applauded the collaborative work of Richmond and Hampton Roads regional leaders for their foresight and tenacity in building the I-64 Innovation Corridor’s digital infrastructure. “The I-64 Innovation Corridor’s digital infrastructure is impressive by global standards. The business leaders of both regions are collaborating across the public and private sectors and delivering on many of the factors that drive Global Internet Hub status. Our region has

already started seeing the economic benefits of this collaboration and it's only a matter of time before the I-64 Innovation Corridor becomes a Global Internet Hub similar to Marseille."

Not all Internet hubs are alike. According to Anthony Romanello, Executive Director of Henrico Economic Development Authority: "The key to our megaregion's Internet infrastructure strategy is that we are not trying to become or replace Ashburn in Loudoun County, where an estimated 70% of the world's Internet traffic passes. Our megaregion is home to the world's largest carrier- and data center-neutral Interconnection Ecosystem, DE-CIX. The I-64 Innovation Corridor's Internet strategy is to become the center for the fastest, most diverse, and most resilient Internet traffic to Europe, South America, and Africa."

According to John W. Martin, President & CEO of RVA757 Connects: "Becoming a Global Internet Hub will do more for Hampton Roads' and Richmond's economy and quality of life in the 21st century than the construction of I-64 and I-95 did for our regions in the 20th century."

Bryan Stephens, President & CEO of the Hampton Roads Chamber, closed Convergence 2021 saying: "Becoming a Global Internet Hub is our megaregion's transformational opportunity to create, support, and grow our 21st century economy in a way that will benefit everyone in Hampton Roads and Richmond for generations to come."

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RVA757 Connects is a 501(c)(3) organization dedicated to improving the economic success and quality of life for residents in the RVA and 757 regions. The organization is an inclusive, mutually supportive network of leaders representing community, business, and higher education. RVA757 Connects identifies, supports, and advances major opportunities, initiatives, and projects that will benefit both Richmond and Hampton Roads for generations to come.

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ChamberRVA is dedicated to building a dynamic network of businesses that are working together to create a more livable, equitable, and prosperous future for everyone who calls RVA home.

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Hampton Roads Chamber is the premier pro-business organization serving as an Impactful Advocate, Powerful Economic Partner, Inspiring Ignitor, and Regional Collaborator setting the conditions for businesses to succeed.

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