

# SEDIC

## Southeast Defense Innovation Center

### South Carolina Partner Outreach Directory | April 2026

#### Purpose

This directory identifies the highest-priority South Carolina organizations for SEDIC network affiliation. These are the specific individuals authorized to enter into Letters of Intent, Partnership Intermediary Agreements, and center MOUs. Contact sequencing: Tier 1 organizations should be contacted in April 2026 before any competitor establishes the relationship. Tier 2 organizations should follow in May–June 2026.

*Strategic framing for all outreach: SEDIC is not asking SC organizations to apply for the hub. SEDIC is inviting them to be recognized charter spoke-partners in the Southeast's first DIU OnRamp Center — a two-state network anchored in Charlotte that amplifies their existing DoD relationships with national-level DIU access.*

### TIER 1 — Contact April 2026 (Most Critical)

These three organizations form the backbone of SEDIC's South Carolina presence. Each has an active DoD relationship, a formal state mandate, and immediate motivation to partner with Charlotte. No other hub applicant is likely approaching them simultaneously — which creates a narrow first-mover window.

#### 1. Palmetto Tech Bridge / NIWC Atlantic — Charleston

TIER 1 — HIGHEST PRIORITY   Palmetto Tech Bridge / NIWC Atlantic	
<b>Location</b>	1 Innovation Drive, Hanahan, SC 29410 (North Charleston, on NIWC Atlantic installation)
<b>Mission / Focus</b>	Official Navy Southeast defense innovation hub. Connects Navy/Marine Corps to non-traditional partners — startups, academia, small businesses. Focus: cybersecurity, autonomous systems, assured communications, advanced manufacturing. Explicit mandate to serve 'South Carolina and the greater Southeast region.'
<b>Why SEDIC</b>	This is the single most important SC contact. PTB has a formal PIA with SC Competes. Its geographic mandate explicitly covers Charlotte. As a named SEDIC spoke partner, PTB would give SEDIC a documented Naval innovation relationship — directly analogous to what the Palmetto Tech Bridge provides the SC ecosystem. PTB's director sits within NIWC Atlantic, which employs 4,500 workers in Charleston. This relationship validates SEDIC to ARI and DIU as a genuine DoW-connected center.
LEAD CONTACT	
<b>Name</b>	Michael Kozma
<b>Title</b>	Director, Palmetto Tech Bridge   NIWC Atlantic (appointed August 2025)
<b>Phone</b>	(843) 218-4000 [NIWC Atlantic main]
<b>Email</b>	palmettoTechBridge@navy.mil (program inbox)   michael.kozma@navy.mil (direct — verify current)
<b>Approach</b>	Lead with SEDIC's two-state hub-and-spoke architecture. PTB's mandate explicitly says 'Southeast region.' Propose PTB as SEDIC's named Naval innovation spoke for SC, giving PTB a Charlotte connection and access to the DIU OnRamp network without duplicating their mission. Ask Kozma for a 30-minute intro call in April. Reference the PTB-SC Competes PIA as a model for SEDIC affiliation.
SECONDARY CONTACT	
<b>Name</b>	NIWC Atlantic Public Affairs
<b>Title</b>	Media / Outreach coordination
<b>Email</b>	niwcatlantic.pao@navy.mil

## 2. SC Competes / SC Defense — Columbia (statewide)

TIER 1 — CONTACT IMMEDIATELY   South Carolina Council on Competitiveness (SC Competes)   SC Defense Initiative	
<b>Location</b>	1201 Main Street, Suite 1600, Columbia, SC 29201
<b>Mission / Focus</b>	Nonpartisan, business-led nonprofit managing SC's industry initiatives. SC Defense — launched March 2026 — unifies SC Logistics, SC Tech, and SC Aerospace into a single statewide defense initiative. Has a formal PIA with Palmetto Tech Bridge / NIWC Atlantic. Hosted B2B defense matchmaking with SC Dept of Commerce in March 2026 at Rock Hill — 12 miles from Charlotte.
<b>Why SEDIC</b>	SC Competes just launched SC Defense six weeks ago. It is the most recently organized statewide SC defense initiative and it has no existing partnership with any DIU applicant. Its March 2026 summit was held in Rock Hill — the closest SC city to Charlotte — signaling an explicit Charlotte-corridor strategy. Susie Shannon is already aligned to the Charlotte economy. SEDIC should be SC Defense's first inter-state center partnership. This relationship gives SEDIC SC statewide industry network coverage immediately.
LEAD CONTACT	
<b>Name</b>	Susie Shannon
<b>Title</b>	President and CEO, South Carolina Council on Competitiveness
<b>Phone</b>	(803) 760-1400 [SC Competes main]
<b>Email</b>	sshannon@sccompetes.org (verify current at sccompetes.org)
<b>Approach</b>	Call Susie Shannon directly. Reference the Rock Hill summit as evidence that SC Competes is already oriented toward the Charlotte market. Propose SEDIC as SC Defense's inter-state center partner — giving SC Defense immediate connection to Charlotte's NCRC platform, UNC Charlotte NDI3, and the DIU application pipeline. Ask for a meeting in April. This should be a peer CEO conversation.
SECONDARY CONTACT	
<b>Name</b>	SC Competes Aerospace/Defense Director
<b>Title</b>	Director of Engagement & Aerospace Initiatives (see sccompetes.org/about/our-team for current name)
<b>Email</b>	info@sccompetes.org

## 3. South Carolina Research Authority (SCRA) — Statewide (Charleston, Columbia, Greenville, Anderson)

TIER 1 — CONTACT APRIL–MAY 2026   South Carolina Research Authority (SCRA)	
<b>Location</b>	HQ: MUSC Innovation Center, 645 Meeting St., Charleston, SC 29403   Additional centers in Summerville, Columbia, Anderson/Greenville, and Greenville One Center (2 W. Washington St., Greenville, SC 29601)
<b>Mission / Focus</b>	State-chartered public nonprofit (1983). Funds and supports SC technology startups, accelerates academic research commercialization, operates six innovation center facilities statewide. Formal PIA partner of Palmetto Tech Bridge. SC Launch Inc. (investment affiliate) invests in member startups. \$13M+ annual operations.
<b>Why SEDIC</b>	SCRA is the organizational infrastructure of SC's innovation economy. Its six statewide innovation centers — including the Columbia/USC Innovation Center that co-houses McNair Aerospace — are natural SEDIC vendor recruitment and company pipeline nodes. SCRA's existing PTB partnership means adding SEDIC would extend that DoD-connected network to Charlotte without SCRA having to build new federal relationships independently.
LEAD CONTACT	
<b>Name</b>	Bill Kirkland

<b>Title</b>	Interim President and CEO, SCRA (appointed October 2025 by Governor McMaster)
<b>Phone</b>	(843) 760-3200 [Charleston HQ]
<b>Email</b>	adriane.grimes@scra.org (Communications Director — use for initial outreach)   scra.org/contact-us
<b>Approach</b>	Contact SCRA's communications director Adrienne Grimes first to request a meeting with Bill Kirkland. Frame SEDIC as a statewide innovation network that would give SCRA member startups a pathway to DIU OnRamp access — specifically the OTA and CSO contracting mechanisms that SCRA companies currently struggle to navigate alone.
<b>SECONDARY CONTACT</b>	
<b>Name</b>	Catherine Hayes
<b>Title</b>	Director of Industry Solutions, SCRA Greenville (Upstate SC Alliance contact — closest to Charlotte corridor)
<b>Email</b>	catherine.hayes@scra.org   (843) 709-2553

## TIER 2 — Contact May–June 2026 (High Value)

These organizations have strong dual-use defense assets and active DoD relationships. Contact them after securing Tier 1 commitments, so you can introduce SEDIC with existing SC partner endorsements.

### 4. McNair Center for Aerospace Innovation and Research — USC Columbia

<b>TIER 2   McNair Center for Aerospace Innovation and Research   University of South Carolina</b>	
<b>Location</b>	1000 Catawba Street, Suite 120, Columbia, SC 29201 (co-located with SCRA Columbia-USC Innovation Center)
<b>Mission / Focus</b>	USC research center: composites, advanced manufacturing, UAS/drones, 3D printing, AI, digital transformation. \$30M in annual research grants. 41,000 sq ft facility. Active DoD research including Army Aviation collaboration with SC Army National Guard. Direct dual-use focus.
<b>Why SEDIC</b>	McNair is the USC-affiliated equivalent of UNC Charlotte's NDI3 — a university-based aerospace research center with active Army collaboration. Its co-location with SCRA makes it naturally connected to the broader SC innovation network. McNair's work in advanced composites and UAS is directly relevant to SEDIC Portfolios 1 (Applied AI), 3 (Cyber), and 5 (Uncrewed Systems).
<b>LEAD CONTACT</b>	
<b>Name</b>	Dr. Paul Ziehl
<b>Title</b>	Director, McNair Center   Associate Dean for Research, Molinaroli College of Engineering
<b>Phone</b>	(803) 467-4030
<b>Email</b>	ziehl@cec.sc.edu
<b>Approach</b>	Contact Dr. Ziehl after securing SCRA affiliation (since SCRA co-hosts McNair). Frame SEDIC as providing McNair's DoD dual-use research with a direct pathway to DIU commercialization support — the exact gap between successful prototype and fielded technology that DIU OnRamp hubs are designed to close.
<b>SECONDARY CONTACT</b>	
<b>Name</b>	JC White
<b>Title</b>	Associate Director for Defense Programs Oversight, McNair Center
<b>Email</b>	jcwhite@email.sc.edu (verify current)

## 5. South Carolina Technology and Aviation Center (SCTAC) — Greenville

TIER 2   South Carolina Technology and Aviation Center (SCTAC)	
<b>Location</b>	2 Exchange Street, Greenville, SC 29605   CEO Office: One North Main Street, Suite 201, Greenville, SC 29601
<b>Mission / Focus</b>	2,600-acre international business park. Home of world's ONLY F-16 production and sustainment site (Lockheed Martin). \$6.1B annual economic impact. 110+ companies including Michelin, 3M, Solvay Carbon Fibers. ITIC automotive proving ground on-site. South Carolina's largest general aviation airport (Donaldson Field).
<b>Why SEDIC</b>	SCTAC is the most tangible argument for SEDIC's dual-use manufacturing credibility in SC. An active F-16 production line 90 miles from Charlotte is a direct SEDIC portfolio asset — no other hub applicant can make that claim. Jody Bryson is connected to SC Competes, Upstate SC Alliance, and the SC Governor's office. His endorsement would carry significant weight with ARI and DIU.
LEAD CONTACT	
<b>Name</b>	Jody Bryson
<b>Title</b>	President and CEO, SCTAC (since 2007; 2025 SC Hall of Fame inductee)
<b>Phone</b>	(864) 277-3152
<b>Email</b>	jbryson@sc-tac.com
<b>Approach</b>	SCTAC and Charlotte share the I-85 corridor. Call Jody directly as a peer business leader — reference his Hall of Fame recognition and the Lockheed F-16 program as a direct SEDIC asset. Propose SCTAC as the named aerospace/advanced manufacturing spoke for the Greenville-Spartanburg corridor. Ask for a site visit.

## 6. Clemson University International Center for Automotive Research (CU-ICAR) — Greenville

TIER 2   Clemson CU-ICAR	
<b>Location</b>	5 Research Drive, Greenville, SC 29607 (adjacent to SCTAC, accessible via Donaldson Field)
<b>Mission / Focus</b>	250-acre advanced-technology research campus. Automotive engineering graduate programs (first BS in automotive engineering in US, 2025). DoD research: VIPR-GS Center for autonomous military ground vehicles (with Army and Applied Research Associates). Advanced composites, digital engineering, autonomy, propulsion systems.
<b>Why SEDIC</b>	CU-ICAR has an active Army research partnership for autonomous ground vehicles — directly supporting SEDIC Portfolio 5 (Uncrewed Systems). Its proximity to SCTAC creates a natural Upstate SC defense innovation node. David Clayton's background in SC Dept of Commerce and economic development makes him an ideal SEDIC network builder rather than just a research institution contact.
LEAD CONTACT	
<b>Name</b>	David Clayton
<b>Title</b>	Associate Vice President of Economic Development and Executive Director, CU-ICAR
<b>Phone</b>	(864) 283-7100 [CU-ICAR main]
<b>Email</b>	dwclayt@clemson.edu
<b>Approach</b>	Reference CU-ICAR's Army autonomous vehicle program as direct SEDIC alignment. Clayton is an economic developer at heart — emphasize the center-building and regional competitiveness angle. Propose CU-ICAR as SEDIC's advanced autonomy and mobility research spoke for the Upstate SC corridor.

## TIER 3 — Contact July–September 2026 (Supporting Assets)

These organizations represent significant defense manufacturing capacity in SC. Contact them during the vendor database build and newsletter outreach phase, once Tier 1 and 2 spoke relationships are formalized.

### 7. Elbit Systems of America — North Charleston

TIER 3   Elbit Systems of America	
<b>Location</b>	9028 Palmetto Commerce Parkway, Ladson, SC 29456 (Palmetto Commerce Park, North Charleston area)
<b>Mission / Focus</b>	150,000 sq ft defense manufacturing campus opened 2023. Builds next-generation howitzer systems, armored combat vehicles, 50-mm turrets for U.S. Army. \$380M projected annual economic impact. 300 jobs. Partnering with BAE Systems on Bradley replacement turret.
<b>Why SEDIC</b>	Active Army production contractor 3.5 hours from Charlotte. As SEDIC grows its vendor database and supply chain network, Elbit is a Tier 1 prime contractor that Charlotte-area component manufacturers could supply. SEDIC's convening role can introduce Charlotte and NC small business subcontractors to Elbit's SC supply chain.
<b>LEAD CONTACT</b>	
<b>Name</b>	Scott Baum
<b>Title</b>	Vice President of Strategy and Growth, Elbit Systems of America (confirmed at 2023 facility opening)
<b>Phone</b>	(843) 860-1742 [facility main]
<b>Email</b>	Via Elbit Systems corporate: info@elbitsystems.com   LinkedIn outreach to Scott Baum recommended
<b>Approach</b>	Focus on SEDIC's vendor database and supply chain connection role. Elbit is a prime — not an innovation partner per se. But connecting Elbit to Charlotte-area small manufacturers and NDI3 research capabilities positions SEDIC as a dual-use supply chain builder.

### 8. Greenville Technical College Center for Manufacturing Innovation (CMI) — Greenville

TIER 3   Greenville Technical College Center for Manufacturing Innovation	
<b>Location</b>	575 Millennium Boulevard, Greenville, SC 29607 (on CU-ICAR campus)
<b>Mission / Focus</b>	Advanced manufacturing workforce training. CNC machining, robotics, mechatronics. Internationally recognized. Joint program with Clemson University. Workforce pipeline for SCTAC, CU-ICAR, and Upstate SC manufacturers.
<b>Why SEDIC</b>	SEDIC's workforce development narrative requires a community college partner in SC, analogous to the role of Robeson Technical Community College at NCRC in Kannapolis. CMI's location on the CU-ICAR campus makes it the natural SEDIC workforce node for the Upstate SC manufacturing corridor.
<b>LEAD CONTACT</b>	
<b>Name</b>	Director, Center for Manufacturing Innovation
<b>Title</b>	See cmigreenville.com for current director (David Clayton served as founding director; current leader TBD via site)
<b>Phone</b>	(864) 250-8000
<b>Email</b>	info@cmigreenville.com   cmigreenville.com

<b>Approach</b>	Contact CMI after CU-ICAR and SCTAC relationships are established, as both will provide warm introductions. Position SEDIC as expanding CMI's geographic reach into the Charlotte defense manufacturing corridor.
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## Recommended Outreach Sequence — April–June 2026

When	Contact	Organization	Ask
Week 1 (April 2026)	<b>Michael Kozma</b>	Palmetto Tech Bridge	<i>30-min intro call. Propose named SEDIC spoke. Request letter of support.</i>
Week 1 (April 2026)	<b>Susie Shannon</b>	SC Competes / SC Defense	<i>Peer CEO call. Propose SC Defense as SEDIC's SC statewide industry partner. Request MOU discussion.</i>
Week 2 (April 2026)	<b>Adrienne Grimes → Bill Kirkland</b>	SCRA	<i>Request 45-min intro meeting. Propose SCRA innovation centers as SEDIC company pipeline nodes.</i>
May 2026	<b>Dr. Paul Ziehl + JC White</b>	McNair Center / USC	<i>Site visit to Columbia. Propose McNair as SEDIC's SC academic R&amp;D spoke.</i>
May 2026	<b>Jody Bryson</b>	SCTAC Greenville	<i>Site visit to Greenville. Propose SCTAC/Lockheed F-16 as SEDIC's aerospace manufacturing spoke.</i>
June 2026	<b>David Clayton</b>	CU-ICAR Clemson	<i>Meeting at CU-ICAR campus. Propose as SEDIC autonomy and mobility research spoke.</i>
July–Sept 2026	<b>Scott Baum / Elbit</b>	Elbit Systems N. Charleston	<i>Vendor network call. Position SEDIC as supply chain connector for Elbit prime contracts.</i>
July–Sept 2026	<b>CMI Director</b>	Greenville Tech CMI	<i>Workforce development partnership discussion via CU-ICAR introduction.</i>

## Universal SEDIC Talking Points for All SC Outreach

*Use these talking points consistently across all SC outreach to build a coherent regional narrative.*

### 1. SEDIC is not competing with your organization — we are amplifying it.

You have built the SC defense innovation ecosystem. SEDIC gives it a front door to the national DIU network.

### 2. South Carolina has no existing DIU presence. None of the 8 existing hubs covers this region.

Charlotte/SEDIC is specifically designed to fill the Southeast gap. SC is the natural southern spoke of that network.

### 3. Charlotte and SC share the I-85/I-77 corridor — we are the same economic region.

The Upstate SC-Charlotte metros are more integrated than most state pairs. SEDIC recognizes that geography.

### 4. The ask is simple: a letter of support, a named affiliation, and a shared pipeline.

We are not asking for money or administrative burden. We are inviting you into a national network that strengthens your own DoD relationships.

### 5. SC Defense + SEDIC = the Southeast defense center story that ARI and DIU need to see.

SC's \$3.5B in DoD contracts growing 30% in 5 years, plus Charlotte's innovation infrastructure, makes a two-state argument no single-city applicant can match.

###