

Aiken Opens Tom Young Center for Research and Innovation

Landmark downtown facility to serve as home to innovation leaders, research collaboration, entrepreneurship, workforce development, and community engagement

AIKEN, SC, UNITED STATES, May 27, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- The [City of Aiken](#) and [Aiken Corporation](#) proudly announce the opening of the Tom Young Center for Research and

Innovation, a transformative new downtown destination designed to advance innovation, economic development, entrepreneurship, workforce collaboration, and community engagement in Aiken.

Previously known publicly as Aiken's downtown mixed-use development, the newly named Tom Young Center for Research and Innovation reflects a bold and intentional evolution in purpose—transforming from a development concept into a dynamic center built to help shape Aiken's future economy.

Developed through a collaborative partnership between the City of Aiken and Aiken Corporation, the Tom Young Center for Research and Innovation will serve as a central hub where business leaders, innovators, researchers, educators, entrepreneurs, and community organizations can connect, collaborate, and create.

The center is named in honor of South Carolina State Senator Tom Young, Jr. (District 24 – Aiken County) in recognition of their longstanding leadership, vision, and commitment to the continued advancement of the Aiken community.

"This building represents much more than bricks and mortar—it represents momentum," said Megan Pruitt, Executive Director of Aiken Corporation. "The Tom Young Center for Research and Innovation is a statement about where Aiken is headed. Innovation thrives where collaboration happens, and this facility was intentionally created to bring together the organizations, leaders, and ideas shaping Aiken's future."



Tom Young Center for Research and Innovation Logo

A key differentiator of the Tom Young Center for Research and Innovation is the caliber of organizations that will call the facility home.

Savannah River National Laboratory (SRNL) will occupy the second and third floors of the building, establishing a dynamic downtown hub that extends the laboratory's presence into the heart of the community and creates new opportunities for visibility, collaboration, strategic engagement, and innovation-driven partnership.

Additionally, the University of South Carolina Aiken (USCA) will occupy a portion of the first floor to showcase the [Aiken Energy and Innovation Exchange \(AEIX\)](#)—a forward-looking initiative focused on energy innovation, collaboration, research engagement, and advancing the region's role in emerging industries.

Together, these anchor occupants position the Tom Young Center for Research and Innovation as more than a facility—they establish it as a working ecosystem of research, innovation, higher education, workforce connection, and economic opportunity.

Strategically located in downtown Aiken, the center strengthens the region's economic development infrastructure while creating a visible front door for innovation in the community.

In addition to serving as a hub for research and collaboration, the Tom Young Center for Research and Innovation will also offer flexible, modern event spaces available for public rental—creating a destination for business meetings, conferences, nonprofit events, community gatherings, executive retreats, trainings, banquets, and celebrations.

Available spaces include:

- The Catalyst Hall — a 3,750-square-foot signature venue accommodating up to 276 guests, ideal for conferences, exhibitions, lectures, galas, and large-scale gatherings
- The Strategy Suite — an 850-square-foot executive meeting and training space designed for workshops, board meetings, strategy sessions, and private collaboration
- The Discovery Terrace — an outdoor venue designed for networking receptions, corporate dinners, and elevated gatherings
- The Catering Suite — professional support space designed to support seamless event execution

With integrated technology, flexible layouts, indoor and outdoor hosting options, and scalable configurations, the facility is designed to support both institutional collaboration and community activation.

“This investment in our downtown will help maintain Aiken’s vibrancy,” said City of Aiken Mayor Teddy Milner. “The Tom Young Center for Research and Innovation is a beautiful building in the heart of our downtown that honors our historic fabric while bringing more business, research, and innovation to Aiken.”

As Aiken continues to experience momentum across research, education, advanced industry, entrepreneurship, and workforce development, the Tom Young Center stands as a visible symbol of the community’s commitment to innovation and long-term prosperity.

The opening also reflects Aiken Corporation’s growing role as a convener and catalyst for economic opportunity—bringing together strategic partnerships, innovative ideas, and collaborative solutions that strengthen Aiken’s future.

“This is not simply the opening of a building,” added Pruitt. “It is the opening of opportunity.”

Community members, businesses, and organizations interested in hosting meetings or events at the Tom Young Center for Research and Innovation are encouraged to connect with Aiken Corporation for rental information and tours.

Megan Pruitt
Aiken Corporation
+1 803-522-4728
megan@aikencorporation.org

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