

SOLTECH SOLUTIONS PUTTING DOWN ROOTS IN BETHLEHEM



CASE STUDY



COMMUNITY
Northampton County

REGION
Lehigh Valley

EMPLOYEES
3

IMPACT

- **World's first LED grow light created specifically for interior design**
- **Fueling the startup scene in the Lehigh Valley**
- **Utilizing Pennsylvania's universities to grow**

PLANTING THE SEED

In November 2016, Paul Hodges and two fellow entrepreneurs launched a Kickstarter campaign for the world's first LED grow light made for interior design. Soltech's elegant design, the Aspect, offers museum-quality light, interchangeable lampshades, and 15 different cord colors to match any interior. Its unique low-wattage LED light saves money on electric costs, provides enough light to promote the healthy growth of a variety of plants, and is built to last 17 years.

As the Kickstarter campaign gained momentum, the trio behind the Aspect needed a place to focus on production. They needed to meet increased demand for the light and continue their mission to help people live healthier and happier — all while adding comfort to homes and offices everywhere.

A NEW HOME

When the team behind Soltech started looking for places to operate, they considered green cities like New York City, Boston, and Philadelphia before stumbling on a *CNN Money* article that listed Bethlehem, Pa., as one of the top 100 places to live and launch a company.

After selecting Bethlehem for their new business home, Soltech Solutions received assistance from the Southside Bethlehem Keystone Innovation Zone (KIZ) program, which allowed the entrepreneurs to purchase equipment and speed up operations. The KIZ also helped Soltech form strong partnerships with local colleges and universities, working with students from Moravian College's MBA program and Lehigh University's Technical Entrepreneurship program to develop the Aspect and customer acquisition strategies.

"As far as our location in the Lehigh Valley — everything is here. Some of the best quality of life you can find. Whether you're looking to plant new roots for your company or just want to entertain friends and family on weekends, it's all here — and at an affordable price. I find living and working in the same community has really helped to enhance both my business and social experiences."

— Paul Hodges, CEO and co-founder, Soltech Solutions

SOLTECH SOLUTIONS



Pictured left to right: Chris Clark, Chief Marketing Officer, Michael Planer, Chief Technology Officer, and Paul Hodges, CEO



SUPPORT FROM THE COMMUNITY

Soltech Solutions was surprised by Bethlehem's affordability, central location to large metro areas, and the opportunity available through the Keystone Innovation Zone. More importantly, the city offered an unparalleled sense of community.

Working and living in the same community helped Paul Hodges grow Soltech Solutions, as well as enhance his quality of life. He received great advice and referrals from his neighbors and nearby business leaders, all of whom were committed to serving their community of Bethlehem and making it a great place to work and call home.



Keystone Innovation Zones (KIZ) improve and encourage Pennsylvania's research and development efforts, technology commercialization, and entrepreneurship programs. Centered near institutions of higher education, each KIZ contains different partnerships from their region that include, but not limited to: economic development providers, local governments, financial institutions, and venture capitalists. KIZs represent a smart and sensible way to keep our young entrepreneurs living, working, and driving economic growth in Pennsylvania, creating new opportunities for all of us. Visit dced.pa.gov/kiz to learn more.

