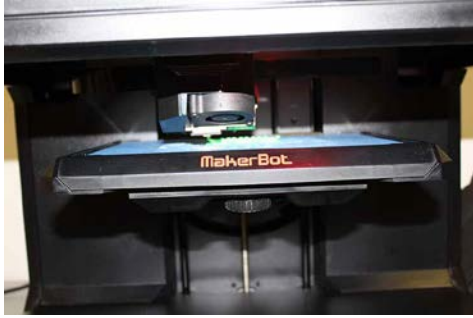


SouthWorks MakerLab opens in Park Forest



A grand opening for the new SouthWorks MakerLab in Park Forest was held on Wednesday, May 6, featuring several notable attendees including Congresswoman Robin Kelly. The event began at Park Forest's Freedom Hall with a viewing of Maker the Movie and words from several speakers followed by a tour of the maker lab... Please click [here](#) for the video or [here](#) for photos taken by Park Forest Director of Communications Jason Miller. Addition photos are [here](#).

The MakerLab is part of the SouthWorks MakerLab Network, a network of MakerLabs across the Southland created through a partnership of Chicago Southland Economic Development Corporation, OAI, Inc., and South Metropolitan Higher Education Consortium- a consortium of 12 community colleges and universities in the region.

The Village of Park Forest in partnership with the South Suburban Mayors and Managers Association (SSMMA) won a competition sponsored by the Small Business Administration (SBA) for a \$50,000 grant from the Growth Accelerator Fund. The SBA received 832 applications for this competition nationwide, and only awarded 50 grants, two in Illinois. The goal of the Growth Accelerator Fund is to assist business accelerators with their mission to support start-ups to grow, become commercially viable, and have real and sustained economic impact. The winners are focused in areas where there are gaps in the entrepreneurial ecosystem. Read more [here](#).