

TechColumbus and Central Ohio win national recognition for Building Entrepreneurial Capacity

Helping entrepreneurs fulfill their entrepreneurial dreams brings TechColumbus' TechStart Team great satisfaction. It's even sweeter when Central Ohio's progress is recognized nationally.

TechColumbus, the region's catalyst for technology-based economic development, and Central Ohio were honored this week with a top award from the State Science and Technology Institute (SSTI), a national organization with broad membership and influence.

TechColumbus was named recipient of SSTI's 2009 Excellence in TBED Awards for Building Entrepreneurial Capacity on Oct. 22 during its 13th Annual Conference in Overland Park, Kan. (TBED stands for technology-based economic development). SSTI's mission is to lead, support and strengthen efforts to improve state and regional economies through science, technology and innovation.

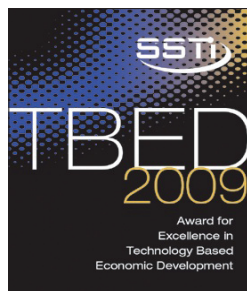
"We're extremely pleased that Central Ohio is getting this kind of national attention," said Ted Ford, President and CEO of TechColumbus. "The TechColumbus TechStart program which provides startup coaching and funding assistance has been a catalyst, but the real

winners are the innovators, the talented entrepreneurs and the companies that we see forming at four times the pace."

"TBED fosters a climate where new and existing companies that develop technology and continuously innovate will thrive," said Dan Berglund SSTI President and CEO.

The awards are the result of a nationwide competition of initiatives that emphasize impact and strategic value as well as TBED transferability for others.

"This recognition of the groundswell in Central Ohio around technology entrepreneurship reinforces the great outcomes occurring here and throughout Ohio," said Will Indest, TechColumbus' Vice President, Venture Development. "Ohio's Third Frontier program, from which our program is primarily funded, is creating jobs, new innovative companies and attracting venture capital from around the country."



Entries competing for the Building Entrepreneurial Capacity award included initiatives that encourage and support entrepreneurs such as enriching the skills and ability of entrepreneurs, increasing the capacity of entrepreneurs to successfully start and grow companies, and improving the environment for entrepreneurial development.

In its application entry for the award TechColumbus highlighted the achievements of its TechStart services as a resource for supporting and developing viable entrepreneurial companies from their earliest phase through their launch as significant contributors to the future of Central Ohio's economy. The efforts of the TechStart team and its partners have resulted in investments of \$11.5 million directly in technology startups and the creation of 912 jobs with an average annual salary of more than \$62,300.

Berglund said many strong programs from across the country were vying this year for the Building Entrepreneurial Capacity award. "This is our most competitive category because there are so many interesting and strong initiatives going on across the country that encourage entrepreneurship," he said. "What stood out about TechColumbus were the suite of services offered, its demonstrated results and

the strong mix of funding from a variety of services. Out-of-state peers who are nationally recognized in this field chose TechColumbus above all others as the award winner. Entrepreneurs have a great resource in TechColumbus."

Other award categories include Expanding the Research Infrastructure; Commercializing Research; Increasing Access to Capital; Enhancing the Science & Technology Workforce; and Improving Competitiveness of Existing Industries.

"Part of our mission is to improve all the tech-based initiatives, and one way to do that is to highlight best practices," Berglund said. "We decided a few years ago that a good way to approach that is through an awards program."

The awards highlight exceptional achievement in addressing the elements found in successful technology-based economies. They offer practitioners and policymakers examples of successful approaches employed by others. Winning initiatives are selected by committees of accomplished technology-based economic development practitioners and policymakers through a competitive process.

Following an open call for entries earlier this year, applicants were invited to share their accomplishments in the form of a narrative built around an identified need, effective approaches to addressing the need and impact realized from the effort.

"For each category, there is a panel of five independent judges who have retired or gone into the private sector," said Berglund. "The judges do a completely independent review and are not required to give an award if they feel the criteria have not been met." SSTI issued just four awards in its six categories last year.

"This is a highly competitive process and very selective," Berglund said. "The winning organizations serve as best practice models in the field for their demonstrated leadership and meaningful impact to state and regional economies."

Past winners include: Technology 2020 (Tennessee); Virginia Council on Advanced Technology Skills; Connecticut Innovations Eli Whitney Fund; Georgia Research Alliance VentureLab; SC Launch! (South Carolina); Maryland Technology Transfer Fund; Innovation Works Seed Fund (Pennsylvania); Connecticut's Center for Advanced Technology Manufacturing Supply Chain Integration; Georgia Research Alliance Eminent Scholars; The Maryland Industrial Partnerships Program.

About SSTI

Since its inception in 1996, Westerville, Ohio-based SSTI has developed a nationwide network of practitioners and policymakers dedicated to improving the economy through science and technology. This network has resulted in unique access to information. SSTI uses this access to assist states and communities as they build tech-based economies, conduct research on best practices and trends in tech-based economic development, and encourage cooperation among and between state and federal programs.

SSTI provides a forum for policymakers and practitioners to work and learn together, attracting professionals from around the country and the globe. An important part of that forum is the group's annual conference. The conferences enable business leaders and entrepreneurs to learn from the nation's leading thinkers and practitioners in technology-based economic development.

"At this moment, every aspect of the U.S. economy is in a period of transformation. And nearly every aspect of getting out of the current mess is related to one or more of the fundamental principles of tech-based economic development," Berglund said. "That's pretty impressive. The public/private programs, policies and investments being made to support tech-based economic development never have been as critical as they are at this moment."

SSTI Awards Evaluation Criteria

Applications are evaluated according to the application's ability to demonstrate the following*:

- The initiative's potential for successful transferability for others.
- The impact of the initiative, the ability to communicate that impact and the appropriateness of the impact measures for the problem being addressed.
- Demonstration of effective partnerships and leadership.
- How the initiative stands out among others in its field.
- The context for the initiative (adjusting for variables such as geography or overall TBED activity in a region).
- The ability to sustain or successfully complete the initiative.

*The above award criteria are general descriptions. For more details please visit www.ssti.org.

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