



News Release

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CHAMBER ENHANCES ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT THROUGH SOUTH-BY-SOUTHWEST PARTICIPATION

Austin Chamber and the Startup America Partnership Collaborate to Charge Start-Up Growth

Austin, TX [March 5, 2012] – Every year, the [South-by-Southwest](#) festival (“SXSW”) brings a dramatic economic ripple effect to the Austin region. In 2011, SXSW was responsible for injecting more than \$167 million into the Austin economy with total attendance of 126,000, a 40 percent increase over the previous best year. This momentum is attributable, in large measure, to growing demand and interest in SXSW Interactive, which was first launched in 1995 and includes emerging media, digital projects, wireless applications, video games and startup ventures.

In 2012, SXSW and the [Austin Chamber of Commerce](#) are working together to translate this enthusiasm and momentum into tangible economic progress and development. At the heart of this effort is the collaboration between SXSW Interactive and Startup America, in which the Chamber and the [Startup America Partnership](#) will co-host a marquee kickoff event on Friday, March 9th. Entitled “A Celebration of American Startups,” this event will include presentations from Startup America head Scott Case, landmark startup CEO’s including Reid Hoffman, Steve Case, Amos Winbush III, Scott Cook, Steve Blank and Ingrid Vanderveldt; and a concert to cap off the night. In addition, [six Austin startups](#) have been selected as finalists for the SXSW Accelerator, being held March 12th and 13th.

“SXSW and The Austin Chamber of Commerce share a common goal: to ensure Austin enhances its standing as a leading center for the creative, dynamic class that will set the agenda for the next 100 years,” said Clarke Heidrick, Board Chairman of the Austin Chamber of Commerce. “From the Chamber’s perspective, this includes proactive efforts to recruit, retain, and start companies that work within a creative industry, such as digital arts, mobile applications, and website development. We are delighted to work alongside SXSW in these efforts, and look forward to a successful 2012 festival.”

The Austin Chamber of Commerce will also participate in a range of activities throughout SXSW, leveraging its sector experts and proven economic development model to inspire and properly support start-ups and small business. These efforts include:

Chamber Engagement

- **“How the Austin Region Supports Technology Companies”** Susan Davenport, Senior Vice President, Global Technology Strategies
- **“Innovation Case Studies: Austin and Beyond”** with Adriana Cruz, Vice President, Global Recruitment & Retention; and
- A hosted panel discussion on **“Encouraging Innovation and Empowering Entrepreneurs,”** with Kansas Senator Jerry Moran, to discuss bipartisan legislation he recently introduced and the urgency of capitalizing on the unique attention policymakers are currently giving to startups.

In addition, Drew Scheberle, Senior Vice President, Education and Talent Development served on the Advisory Board for the 2012 SXSWedu Festival and Rebecca Martin, Senior Vice President, Marketing, volunteered on the Advisory Board for the 2012 SXSW Interactive Festival.

International Delegation Engagement

SXSW 2012 currently has more than 12 international delegations attending the conference from Europe, Asia, Australia, South America and all points in between. This year, the Austin Chamber of Commerce is teaming up with SXSW to host the first dedicated International Meet-up to provide a forum for international delegations to present opportunities in their countries for growth and partnerships, and for local companies to make connections and work toward mutual growth and development.

SXSWedu and Workforce Development

Supporting Austin's reputation as a top source of human capital, the Austin Chamber is working with multiple partners including the City of Austin and local companies to highlight both job seekers and a strong and growing job market through co-hosting the Welcome Booth at the South-by-Southwest Trade Show; and participating in first official Tech Career Expo @SXSW, where dozens of companies will be looking to recruit local talent, with a wide variety of Austin companies participating, including Chamber members **Bazaarvoice, Compass Learning, WhaleShark Media** and **Vast.com**.

On March 8th, additional events include the **Austin, Texas Ed Tech Ecosystem Breakfast**, co-sponsored with [Compass Learning](#); and the **Town Hall on Higher Education with Secretary Arne Duncan** with Austin Community College and TechNet.

The Chamber will also be announcing a new talent portal to aid both talent and job seekers looking to live and work in Austin.

The Austin Chamber will have dedicated meeting and press briefing spaces will be available throughout the conference. In addition, a microsite has been launched with additional resources at www.austinchamber.com/sxsw.

About the Chamber

The mission of the Austin Chamber of Commerce is to provide leadership that facilitates the creation of a prosperous regional economy and effective advocacy for its members.

For more information about the Austin Chamber of Commerce visit austinchamber.com.

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