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Aggie 100 was created by Mays Business School's McFerrin Center for Entrepreneurship. While there are many ways to define success, Aggie 100 focuses on growth as an indicator of job creation, product acceptance, and entrepreneurial vision. Aggie 100 identifies, recognizes, and celebrates the 100 fastest-growing Aggie-owned or Aggie-led businesses in the world.

Our Mission

Create experiences that inspire, educate, and empower the next generation of entrepreneurs.

Our Vision

Become a model of excellence for engaging the world's largest network of entrepreneurs.

Entrepreneurs Made Here.

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A TRADITION OF **Champions**

Mays Business School's McFerrin Center for Entrepreneurship celebrated its annual Aggie 100, recognizing the success of the fastest-growing Aggie-owned or Aggie-led businesses.

Each year the McFerrin Center for Entrepreneurship hosts the Aggie 100 and honorees enjoy an evening filled with celebration, comradery and most importantly the Spirit of Aggieland. By leveraging the education and life-lessons they received at Texas A&M and combining it with passion, hard work and a bit of luck these Aggie entrepreneurs have established themselves as leaders in their fields.

Every spring the center seeks nominations for the Aggie 100 and invites each nominated company to apply for inclusion in the list. Applicants are ranked by compound annual revenue growth percentage over a three-year period, and the 100 fastest-growing applicants are named to the year's Aggie 100.

Since its launch in 2005, Aggie 100 has recognized 973 individual companies, hailing from 25 states and 8 countries. The program has

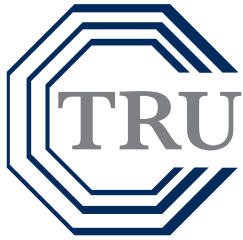
honored companies founded as early as 1916, and Aggie leaders hailing from classes ranging from 1951 to 2016. Over the past 14 years, these companies have generated a combined total revenue of \$56,142,709,444.54. In 2018, 39 new

companies made the 2018 Aggie 100 list for the first time.

"Our 14th Annual Aggie 100 celebration was as successful an event as its honoree companies are," said Blake Petty, Director of the McFerrin Center

for Entrepreneurship. "Each new year, the Aggie 100 shows their excellence in both entrepreneurial achievement and societal impact, and the Class of 2018 is truly special. As fellow Aggies and entrepreneurs, we salute the newest additions to our Aggie 100 family and look forward to their continued success."

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has recognized 973 individual
companies, hailing from
25 states and 8 countries.**



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THE 2018 AGGIE 100



On November 9th, 2018 the McFerrin Center for Entrepreneurship recognized the 2018 Honorees at the 14th annual Aggie 100.

Throughout the evening, attendees enjoyed a showcase of student entrepreneurial activities, along with comments from Mays Business School's Dean, Dr. Eli Jones '82, and A&M Foundation Vice President and Chief Financial Officer, John Huser '89. After the awards dinner concluded, honorees were invited to the Aggie 100 After Party sponsored by the Texas A&M Hotel and Conference Center. Honorees and their guests enjoyed a night of live music, casino tables, a photo booth, arcade games, and hors d'oeuvres. The fun-filled and memorable soiree allowed honorees to continue to celebrate their hard earned success.

To qualify for the 2018 list, a company had to be Aggie-owned or Aggie-led, at least 5 years old and with revenues of at least \$250,000 in 2015. The companies must also operate in a manner consistent with the Aggie Code of Honor.

With businesses in 6 states and Guatemala, the 2018 Top Ten Aggie 100 Honorees had a combined total revenue of \$5,740,712,800. LJA Infrastructure was ranked as the #1 company for 2018 with an impressive growth rate of 188.37%.

The Aggie 100 also presents an annual Summit Award to the Aggie company with the highest three-year average revenue (that company does not necessarily appear on the Aggie 100 list, which recognizes revenue growth). The 2018 Summit Award was presented to American Bath Group of Savannah Tennessee with an average revenue of \$481,879,740. For the first time in program history the Summit Award Winner was also an Aggie 100 honoree. American Bath Group ranked #21 with a 58.33% growth rate.

Congratulations to the 2018 Aggie 100 class!







Pictured from left to right: Dr. Jorge Vanegas, Dr. Eli Jones '82, Mike Baker '80, and Blake Petty '98.

LJA Infrastructure Tops Aggie 100

At the helm of this year's top Aggie 100 company stands Mike Baker '80, president of LJA Infrastructure Inc.



The freight-rail construction firm provides track services for private clients and railroads. Among many specialties, it delivers total rail construction and design solutions, from track installation and removal to bridge construction and drainage solutions. It is one of nine sectors that exist within its parent company, LJA Engineering Inc., headed by Calvin Ladner '80, director and chairman of the board, and Jeff Collins '80, executive vice president and board member.

Founded in 2004, LJA Infrastructure led this year's Aggie 100 list with a three-year annual growth rate of 188 percent. LJA Engineering and its subsidiaries have won five Aggie 100 awards in the past 12 years. A leader in everything from land development to coastal engineering, LJA Engineering has 27 offices spanning Texas and Florida; LJA Infrastructure, which is solely focused on delivering quality rail and design services, is located in Houston.

The firm's mission is to recognize the importance of quality engineering solutions amid a culture of visionary leadership and collaborative delivery. Leading the way are Baker, Ladner, and Collins, three passionate businessmen who are proud of their Aggie heritage.

All three men received their bachelor's degrees in civil engineering from Texas A&M. Baker later went on to earn his master's in business administration from the University of Houston. The Classmates

combined have more than 100 years of experience in the industry and are longtime members of the LJA team.

"This prestigious award identifies, recognizes and celebrates the success of Aggie leaders and entrepreneurs from around the world," Ladner said. "It was through Mike's vision and entrepreneurship that enabled us to achieve the highest-ranked company on the Aggie 100 list this year."

Baker guides his life by a few key rules, most of which have helped him shape the trajectory of LJA Infrastructure's rapid growth. One of his rules—and maybe the most important for building a strong business—is to first create your personal definition of success. "You have to have a long conversation with yourself to determine what success means to you," Baker said. "Success requires work, and I like to say that work is chicken soup for a man's soul. It's OK to not be the best, but it is not OK to not want to be the best," he said.



Scot Walker '90, Assistant Vice President of Communications, Texas A&M Association of Former Students



Mike Baker '80

SUMMIT AWARD 2018

Rick Stonecipher '90
American Bath Group

"I was an old man by the age of 8, and I was serious about the purebred cattle industry at the age of 12." Rick Stonecipher and Texas A&M University both share strong roots in agriculture.

Born and raised on a beef master cattle ranch, Stonecipher was exposed to the thrill of entrepreneurship at a young age. His father was an orthopedic surgeon and the farm was a side business and passion project. Stonecipher and his brother Scott began working on the ranch as young boys, and he contributes a lot of his success to the foundational teachings that the farm provided. "You can't get away from the basics; hard work and determination. It's how we were raised."

We talked a lot about fundamentals during our conversation in late October, about their importance and their universality. Stonecipher described a scene from the famous 1984 film *The Karate Kid* in which Mr. Miyagi teaches young Daniel LaRusso the seemingly pointless skill of how to properly wax a car and repeats "wax on, wax off" at his frustrated pupil. He said this scene perfectly illustrates the importance of building a strong foundation for life and your company. "You have to use the fundamentals to build your foundation. It's not fun but it's important," said Stonecipher. This passion for building upon a strong foundation is a life lesson that he's used to turn a dying company into the first ever business to be recognized as a Summit award winner and Aggie 100 honoree within the same year – an accomplishment that is

no small feat. It's difficult for companies to continue to see accelerated growth once they reach a certain level of revenue, but under the guidance of Rick Stonecipher, American Bath Group has no indication of slowing down.

Rick Stonecipher graduated from Texas A&M in 1990 with a degree in Animal Science. After graduation he returned home to the family ranch where he raised and bred high-quality purebred beefmaster cattle. At the time American Bath Group wasn't

Rick Stonecipher is one of those exemplary Aggies who takes the core values and implements them into his daily life; Excellence, Integrity, Selfless Service, Loyalty, Leadership, Respect.

doing very well. His father's fellow investors had dropped out, leaving him with what was left of the company, so Stonecipher and his brother stepped in as CEO and COO. One might think this is a bold leap from agriculture to manufacturing, but when you've built a strong foundation and understand the fundamentals of business, Stonecipher said that's all you need. "Raising cattle gave me a raw base. I had to do everything from the agronomy



side to the marketing side. It's a long term business strategy." Stonecipher took the lessons he learned from cattle and used them to reinvigorate American Bath Group. "I don't like OK," Stonecipher commented, so he focused on developing a company that was centered on quality and their customers. American Bath Group believes that every person who comes in contact with their company should have an exceptional customer experience. Whether that's a contractor's accounting department paying an invoice or the homeowner who will be enjoying their quality products. "We have an entire team dedicated to customer experience. They work with every group in the company to make sure it's done right. It's not just a slogan for us."

This passion for their customers allowed American Bath Group to emerge from the 2007 housing crisis unscathed. "It was hard on everyone, but we kept our heads down and kept pushing," said Stonecipher. When the economy emerged after the crisis Stonecipher wanted American Bath Group to begin giving back to the community. After experiencing success during such a difficult time, he felt that

"as a company we have a fiduciary responsibility to do the right thing" and established American Bath Group Gives. Currently they support several non-profit organizations such as Shriners Hospital for Children, World Wildlife Foundation, and Wounded Warrior Project. Stonecipher mentioned how surprising it was when this new endeavor took off within the company and became a "unifying cultural value," no small feat for a company that boasts 3,600 employees across 20 states and areas of Canada.

After our interview it was clear that Rick Stonecipher is one of those exemplary Aggies who takes the core values and implements them into his daily life: Excellence, Integrity, Selfless Service, Loyalty, Leadership, Respect. These are all words you can use describe American Bath Group and Stonecipher. When asked about the impact that Texas A&M had on his life, he gave an answer we hear time again from our Aggie 100 honorees, "A&M's culture and people continue to have a positive influence on me and others. They help in your growth and development more so than what you learn in class."

By building a strong foundation based on fundamental principles, Rick Stonecipher has built a company that will last, regardless of economic downturns or changes within the

industry. His passion to never settle for "OK" and ability to seamlessly integrate the A&M core values into his company and life practices have allowed American Bath Group to become the first ever Aggie-owned or led business to make the Aggie 100 list and receive the Summit award. Wax on, wax off.



Honoree:	Rick Stonecipher '90, CEO
Location:	Savannah, Tennessee
Industry:	Manufacturing
Founded:	1993
Average Revenue:	\$481,879,740



Former Rackspace CEO and Chairman Graham Weston '86 has his sights set on transforming downtown San Antonio into a prominent tech hub.

The Weston Way

By Jeannie Ralston

Graham Weston '86 has faced many hurdles and hardships on his way to stunning entrepreneurial success as the founding CEO of tech giant Rackspace. But nothing compares to the one he faced at one of his first start-ups: A loaded gun pointed at his head. By his business partner.

Weston was a junior in agricultural economics at Texas A&M University and had already launched a few small businesses when he thought of opening an ice cream and cookie store on Northgate. The drinking age had just been raised to 21, and he thought college students under 21 would need a new place to hang out. His enterprise, Crumby's, was set for the building next to the famed Dixie Chicken, but the day before opening, his business partner wanted to change the terms of their agreement.

"When I didn't agree, he drew his six-shooter on me—right in my face," Weston recalled. If there was ever a sign that the relationship was doomed, that was it. "I ran from that business," he said.

Crumby's, which the business partner operated for several years, is now replaced by the Dry Bean Saloon. But the impact of that early fiasco stays with Weston to this day, since most anyone with a long career knows you can gain as much from failure as from success. "I learned it really matters who you're in business with, whether it's your employees or your partners," he said.

The notion that people matter has

been one of Weston's guiding forces—and later the basis for a management philosophy—as he has gone on to open a string of booming businesses and to become the de facto face of downtown economic revitalization for the city of San Antonio.

On the Hunt

Of course, there have been many other key factors in Weston's success, starting with pure love—a love of the challenge and excitement of finding a business that clicks. "I always felt I was going to be an entrepreneur, working for myself in some way, because I didn't feel I would thrive in a large organization," he said. "Even in school, I was searching for my first business."

Growing up on his family's Santa Clara ranch in Marion, close to New Braunfels, Texas, as the son of a rancher and entrepreneur, Weston was a member of 4-H and FFA and raised steers in high school.

One of his first forays into business was selling pigs, for which he took out a newspaper ad that read, "Go Hog Wild." He had started taking photos of participants and their show animals at stock shows. At age 16, he convinced

a local stock show to require that every participant have their picture taken. "That was really my win," he said, referring to his effective deal making.

When it came time to choose a college, he only considered Texas A&M University. "Until the end of my junior year in college, I expected to come back and work on the ranch," he said. But ironically, his time in the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences prepared him for another path. "I think of my agribusiness degree as a small business degree," he said. "It trained me to be on my own, doing my own business. I think it was perfect for me."

The agriculture school also taught him how to build a culture that encourages everyone to do their best. "I found the college was tremendously personal," he said. "Professors there really cared about me and that meant something."

Personal relationships were one of the reasons he stayed in the college even after his junior year, when he launched what would become his first major business success. "It began in my dorm room in Puryear Hall," Weston explained. "I saw through my studies at Texas A&M that there was a real opportunity based on comparative data

to change the basis of how property tax rates were assessed." Using available and reliable real-life data, Weston's company could effectively dispute arbitrary tax assessments that were then the order of the day. His company, by then named Assessment Technologies, saved substantial amounts of money for commercial clients like Walgreen's, Trammell Crow and Melvin Simon, the huge shopping mall company.

Weston remembers that his most important course in college was a sales class. "It made me realize how important sales people are to business," he said, again reaffirming his commitment to working with good people. This would become important later at Rackspace, when he elevated the sales person as an important member of the team, while many tech companies looked down on sales staff.

After graduating, Weston set his entrepreneurial sights in a new direction. "Because it was the middle of the financial crisis in the late '80s, I could see that many of my tax clients were being foreclosed," he said. "There were a lot of distressed properties for sale, and that's when I stepped out of my property tax business to focus on buying distressed real estate."

The Big One

But in the kind of scattershot, one-thing-leads-to-another trajectory of entrepreneurial success, his real estate investing led in an indirect way to his home run—Rackspace, which was basically conceived on a San Antonio highway in the late '90s. By then, Weston had bought what he calls his "trophy property": the tallest office building in the city (now called Weston Centre). The internet was just

becoming a real force in business. His office building was equipped with a T1 line, the fastest internet connection at the time, because it was digital rather than dial-up.

"One weekend, I drove from my apartment to my office downtown to use the high-speed internet system," he remembered. "The line was very expensive: \$2,000 per month. So, I thought to myself, 'I should go buy one of these for my big office building and just have all the tenants share it.'"

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and Life Sciences trained
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By his own admission, Weston is not a technical person. The father of three, he offered this joke as proof: "I used to think a hard drive was taking my kids to West Texas." At the same time, he had a friend sharing the office space who was out every day exploring business opportunities they might pursue together. When Weston mentioned his internet idea, his friend suggested they talk to the young people who had installed the high-speed internet in his building. "That was really the trigger," said Weston.

Weston and his partner sat down with three young techies—original founders Richard Yoo, Dirk Elmendorf and Patrick Condon—at Chester's Hamburgers on Nacogdoches Road for a six-hour conversation that resulted in the formal creation of Rackspace, with Weston in the role of 'angel investor' and business

counsel for the nascent company.

"Our whole idea was that we would make having a web server simple. In my very simplistic real estate brain, I thought about it like how you get an apartment when you're a student. When you don't want the apartment anymore, you can give it back," Weston explained. "We thought renting servers to people would be just like renting an apartment. We knew the bigger the internet got, the more people would need servers to run websites."

Rackspace officially launched in January 1999, at the same time as Google. The prescient idea took off immediately. Within eight weeks, Rackspace had installed 100 servers and revenue was \$200,000 per month. Within six months, Weston and his partner—who had only been devoting a small percentage of their time to the company—became full-time, with Weston as CEO.

Rackspace came to life at the right place at the right time, which is certainly essential to entrepreneurial success. But there Weston discovered a corollary to this maxim. "Whenever you're at the right place at the right time, other people are too," he said. "There were at least 150 other companies there at the same time, and we could see that it was going to be a very competitive business." It took a visit with the preeminent marketing strategy guru of the '80s and '90s, the late Jack Trout, for Weston to make the decision that propelled Rackspace to success. Trout, who became a mentor for Weston, told him, "If you're not different, you better have a lower price."

That advice set Rackspace on a journey to determine how the company

Making Aggie Entrepreneurs

Weston is supporting entrepreneurship at Texas A&M through two major gifts. The first established the Weston AgriFood Sales Program in the Department of Agricultural Economics, which offers the only sales minor at Texas A&M. Its mission is to develop emotionally intelligent sales professionals with high appeal to reputable firms upon graduation. The program has quickly grown from one sales class to four different courses, ranging from elementary approaches to advanced sales methods and techniques. Although there is an emphasis on the AgriFood sector, students have been successful entering a wide variety of industries, including the tech and pharmaceutical realms.

In April 2018, Weston's generosity also extended to Mays Business School in the form of a \$1.5 million gift to the McFerrin Center for Entrepreneurship to support its development and operations. As the hub of entrepreneurship at Texas A&M, the center provides training, networking and assistance to enterprising students, faculty and alumni. It offers more than 27 programs that are designed to help individuals explore and launch new businesses.



was going to stand out. "After going through multiple options, the idea of dedicated support came to us, and that's what Rackspace became famous for," he said. "At the time, the support most technical companies offered was terrible. Our goal was to be the most trusted company on the internet. We actually answered the phone. For 20 years, a live person answered every single phone call."

Because of his focus on working with good people on every level, Weston wanted to ensure that both customers and employees felt appreciated. "We created a management culture that tried to bring out the best in people," he said. Weston and his team envisioned an overarching goal: They wanted their employees to feel like "valued members of a winning team with an inspiring mission."

Their approach paid off. While Weston was CEO from 1999 through 2006, the company increased from 12 people to 1,200. It grew by 50 percent per year, on average. YouTube and WordPress, among many other tech companies, got their start on Rackspace-hosted servers. In 2006, Weston stepped down as CEO (but remained chairman) and in August 2008, Rackspace went public. "The last IPO before the financial crisis," Weston noted. By 2015, Rackspace was the largest managed hosting company in the country, with offices all over the world. In 2016, when Rackspace had 6,000 employees and \$2 billion in annual revenue, the company was sold to a private equity firm for \$4.3 billion.

Operation San Antonio

The next phase of Weston's career began in 2011 with an email. Rackspace had bought a smaller company and part of the deal was that the seller would relocate to San Antonio. "He refused," Weston reported. In an email, he told Weston that San Antonio

didn't have the software developer community, the startup network or the urban amenities he was looking for; he wanted a place where he could step out of his front door, walk his dog and go to a coffee shop. "It is not a city well suited for young people," the email stated. Weston was bothered by the

"What we're trying to do is transform downtown San Antonio from being just a place for lawyers and accountants into a place for the tech startup community."

email, and sent it to Julian Castro, then mayor of San Antonio. "I said, 'This is the city we must build.'"

At the time, Weston had no desire to get involved again with San Antonio real estate. "I had just sold some stock. I was feeling flush. I was really enjoying having money and not spending it," he said. But over the next year, as he worked with Castro on city planning, a realization set in: Someone needed to do for San Antonio what Michael Dell had done for Austin, which was spearhead the city's transformation into a tech center. "Over time," he said, "I became persuaded that if anyone understood this problem and had the ability to address it, it was me."

It wasn't the first time Weston had risen to the occasion to help San Antonio. Former mayor Phil Hardberger recalled that when thousands of refugees arrived in the city after the twin disasters of Hurricanes Katrina and Rita, Weston offered the use of an empty shopping mall he had recently bought (which would eventually become Rackspace's home). "It was a multimillion-dollar gift," Hardberger said. "He has great vision; he can look into the future and then position himself so that the future fits his dream."

Since devoting himself to this new mission, Weston (through his company Weston Urban) has bought 15 acres downtown, now designated as a tech district. It will be the future home of a new headquarters for Frost Bank, among other tenants. "What we're trying to do is transform downtown from being just a place for lawyers and accountants into a place for the tech startup community," he said. To that end, Weston has launched a 50,000-square-foot co-working space called Geekdom.

"It's really an incubator, a catalyst at the center of the startup ecosystem," he explained. "It's where if you have an idea, you can meet your team or share ideas with other people who are looking to be entrepreneurs or join startups." Geekdom hosts hundreds of programs each year, from helping budding entrepreneurs find mentors to conducting workshops on how to get publicity. It also has a fund that invests in worthy startups. Close to 1,000 jobs have been created via Geekdom since its inception in 2011. "It's about community building," Weston said.

In addition, Weston has a philanthropic arm called the 80/20 Foundation, which gives to nonprofits that are aligned with his goal of improving the economic and technological prospects for the city. A focus of the foundation is tech education. "A strong talent pipeline between

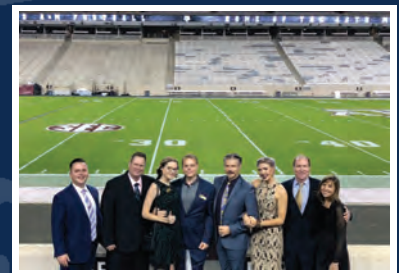
educational institutions and high-skilled jobs encourages entrepreneurship and attracts top companies," he said.

Castro is extremely grateful that Weston stepped up to the challenge of revitalizing the city's downtown. "Of everyone in the business community, nobody has a better understanding than Graham about the investments San Antonio has needed to make in terms of livability, economic development and brain power," Castro said. "His private sector leadership has been indispensable. He's really put his money where his mouth is and helped the city move forward much faster than it could have otherwise."

Weston said he'll know his efforts have succeeded when his own children decide to make their homes in San Antonio. And it seems the possibilities are good, based on a recent outing with his teenage son, Grant. Two former Rackspace employees opened Bakery Lorraine, a coffee shop in the vibrant Pearl District—an airy space with a hip, industrial vibe, complete with smooth concrete walls and exposed rafters. "My son looked around and said, 'I never thought I could move back to San Antonio, but this is kind of cool.'" For Weston, this would be success on a completely different level.



EcoZapp is building our Team to address issues which anyone with an Older A/C system will be having over the next few years. If you're interested in what our Team is building, Let Us Know!



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one



LJA Infrastructure, Inc.

Mike Baker '80, President

Calvin Ladner '80, CEO

Growth Rate: 188.37%

Location: Houston, Texas

Year Founded: 2004

Industry: Rail Design and
Construction Services

Aggie Employees: 5

As railroaders, LJA understands that active railroad environments require extensive coordination to execute design and maintain safety. Their team is adept and knowledgeable about staging civil, structural, track, and signal elements throughout the construction phase. Their attention to detail ensures the safety, efficiency, and timeliness of every project.

two



Hancock Homes

Jeffrey Scott Hancock '00, President

Growth Rate: 142.96%

Location: College Station, Texas

Year Founded: 2011

Industry: Construction

Aggie Employees: 2

What started off as a hobby quickly turned into a company known for quality, detail, and customer service. Hancock Custom Homes is a full service design, build, and construction management firm. They specialize in commercial and residential construction and have a diverse portfolio of projects including custom homes, starter homes, multi-family housing, commercial properties, remodels, and additions.

Mays Business School's McFerrin Center for Entrepreneurship celebrated the 14th class of the Aggie 100 in November, recognizing the success of the fastest-growing Aggie-owned or Aggie-led businesses.

three



Cox Commercial Construction, LLC

Bo Cox '74, President

Doug Cox '01, Senior Vice President-Owner

Blake Cox '04, Senior Vice President-Owner

Darren Okruhlik '00, Senior Vice President-Owner

Growth Rate: 114.66%

Location: Baytown, Texas

Year Founded: 2008

Industry: Commercial Construction

Aggie Employees: 6

Cox Commercial Construction is committed to excellence in every aspect of their business. The Houston based company provides a range of construction services to a variety of clients and industries. Their company consists of two divisions, one focused on commercial and retail development and the other centered around roadway and infrastructure development for cities and public and private entities.

four



Hydro-Con, LLC

Colton Snapp '06, President

Dylan Snapp '03, Vice President

Growth Rate: 112.51%

Location: Lorena, Texas

Year Founded: 2011

Industry: Hydro-Excavation and Concrete Services

Aggie Employees: 2

Safety first: the Hydro-Con way. Hydro-Con provides a wide array of services such as daylighting and concrete construction, all while prioritizing quality and safety above all. Their focus on lifelong relationships rather than customers allows them to "lay foundations for the future" and sets them apart from other contractors.

**"Do not become too focused on one area of your business.
Be sure to examine all possibilities as a whole."**

Colton Snapp '06, Hydro-Con, LLC



Stand2Learn

Mark Benden '89, CEO

Michele Hasten Klumb '92, COO

Mack Westbrook '02, President

Growth Rate: 107.24%
Location: College Station, Texas
Year Founded: 2012
Industry: Educational Furniture
Aggie Employees: 3

Stand2Learn (S2L) began in 2011 when Michele Hasten Klumb '92 partnered with Dr. Mark Benden '89 and later Mack Westbrook '02. After receiving an SBIR Grant from the CDC, S2L began to develop and test standing desks for children that would increase physical activity and decrease obesity. Their research showed major health, cognitive, and academic benefits for students using standing desks compared to seated desks. There are now Stand2Learn products in over 15 countries with more 100,000 students impacted by the company's award-winning designs.



McCaw Property Management, LLC

Kyle McCaw '00, Owner/Broker

Growth Rate: 97.73%
Location: Keller, Texas
Year Founded: 2003
Industry: Real Estate
Aggie Employees: 1

When you work with McCaw Property Management you get a full team of skilled professionals with the expertise to provide the highest level of service for maximum return on your investment. They offer superior investment and property management services throughout North Texas and pride themselves on excellent communication with their owners, investors, and tenants.



South Texas Building Partners

Matthew Ezell '04, President

Growth Rate: 81.69%
Location: Corpus Christi, Texas
Year Founded: 2011
Industry: Construction
Aggie Employees: 1

South Texas Building Partners develops buildings, people, and communities through service, passion, and leadership. As a facility solutions provider they partner with commercial and industrial clients to achieve their facility goals. They perform general contractor, design-builder, and facility maintenance services from San Antonio to Brownsville, and from Eagle Pass to Victoria. They are passionate about the people and businesses of south Texas.



JP Services

Justin Peter '04, CEO

Chad Peter '08, COO

Growth Rate: 91.65%
Location: Houston, Texas
Year Founded: 2011
Industry: Oil and Gas Services
Aggie Employees: 3

JP Services is an oilfield pipeline servicing company that believes managing a successful company starts and ends with establishing a set of core values and adhering to them every day. Their core values start with recruiting, training, and retaining talented, motivated employees and empowering them to make a difference. They strive to provide an environment where employees actually enjoy coming to work, and encourage employees to have an entrepreneurial spirit where each one feels a personal obligation to ensure that every job ends with a satisfied customer.



Batts Audio, Video & Lighting, Inc.

Mark Batts '95, CEO

Growth Rate: 85.01%
Location: Denison, Texas
Year Founded: 1998
Industry: Commercial AV Integrator
Aggie Employees: 1

Batts Audio, Video & Lighting is a commercial consulting and installation firm specializing in audio, video, lighting, stage rigging, and acoustical systems. Their focus is designing and executing installations that result in cost-effective performance spaces. The company has worked with school districts, houses of worship, and commercial and government entities throughout Texas and Southern Oklahoma and provides audio/video equipment sales nation wide. They view every client interaction as an opportunity to teach, train, inform, and improve.



Big Data Energy Services

Cade Burks '83, Chief Digital Officer

Growth Rate: 81.13%
Location: Houston, Texas
Year Founded: 2012
Industry: Energy & Utilities
Aggie Employees: 4

Big Data Energy Services, Inc. is a leading digital asset management company specializing in capturing, securing, and transporting data for retail energy providers, utilities, and end-use customers. Their Unified Platform uses advanced, streamlined, and dependable exchange methods to provide clients with easy-to-interpret data formats and expert market insight that deliver bottom-line results. They process a whopping 115 million energy usage reads daily and 28 million energy transactions a month!

RANK	% GROWTH RATE	COMPANY NAME	INDUSTRY	FOUNDED	LEADERSHIP	TITLE	LOCATION
1	188.37%	LJA Infrastructure, Inc.	Rail Design and Construction Services	2004	Mike Baker '80 Calvin Ladner '80	President CEO	Houston, Texas
2	142.96%	Hancock Homes	Construction	2011	Jeffrey Scott Hancock '00	President, Owner	College Station, Texas
3	114.67%	Cox Commercial Construction, LLC	Commercial Construction	2008	Bo Cox '74 Doug Cox '01 Blake Cox '04 Darren Okruhlik '00	President, Founder Senior Vice President, Founder Senior Vice President, Founder, Owner Senior Vice President, Owner	Baytown, Texas
4	112.51%	Hydro-Con, LLC	Hydro-Excavation and Concrete Services	2011	Colton Snapp '06 Dylan Snapp '03	President, Founder, Owner Vice President, Founder, Owner	Lorena, Texas
5	107.24%	Stand2Learn	Educational Furniture	2012	Dr. Mark Benden '89 Michele Hasten Klumb '92 Mack Westbrook '02	CEO, Founder, Owner COO, Owner President, Owner	College Station, Texas
6	97.73%	McCaw Property Management, LLC	Real Estate	2003	Kyle McCaw '00	Broker, Owner	Keller, Texas
7	91.65%	JP Services	Oil and Gas Services	2011	Justin Peter '04 Chad Peter '08	CEO, Founder, Owner COO, Owner	Houston, Texas
8	85.01%	Batts Audio, Video & Lighting, Inc.	Commercial AV Integrator	1998	Mark Batts '95	CEO, Founder, Owner	Denison, Texas
9	81.69%	South Texas Building Partners	Construction	2011	Matthew Ezell '04	President, Founder	Corpus Christi, Texas
10	81.13%	Big Data Energy Services	Energy & Utilities	2012	Cade Burks '83	Chief Digital Officer, Founder	Houston, Texas
11	79.60%	Eventellect	Sports and Entertainment	2007	Ignacio Cubero III '06	President, Founder, Owner	Houston, Texas
12	77.45%	Innovation Event Management	Business Products and Services	2001	Rachel Pepper '00 John-Morris Edwards '03	CEO, Founder, Owner President, Owner	Austin, Texas
13	73.67%	Modern Message Inc	Technology	2012	Michael Ivey '04	President, Co-Founder	Dallas, Texas
14	66.15%	Sterling Structures, Inc.	Construction - Commercial General Contractor	1997	Jay Carlton '81	CEO, Founder, Owner	Houston, Texas
15	64.82%	The Wood Group of Fairway Independent Mortgage Corporation	Mortgage	2010	Matt Wood '99 Marc Wood '08	Managing Partner, Founder Managing Partner	Belton, Texas
16	62.93%	Price Wagener Services, LLC	Landscape Maintenance/Construction	2011	Mariner Price '01	CEO, Owner	Houston, Texas
17	60.87%	The PROS Company	Machining	2009	Lee Levisay '78	Vice President, Founder, Owner	Lubbock, Texas
18	59.29%	Zentra, LLC	Online Retail	2012	Gary Rose '85	CEO, Owner	Indian Trail, North Carolina
19	58.97%	SagisDx	Healthcare	2011	Dr. John Cangelosi '00	CEO, Founder, Owner	Houston, Texas
20	58.47%	Steele & Freeman, Inc.	Construction	1979	Michael Freeman '91 Scott Depauw '98	President, Owner Vice President of Operations, Owner	Fort Worth, Texas
21	58.33%	American Bath Group	Manufacturing	1993	Lowell "Rick" Stonecipher '90	CEO	Savannah, Tennessee
22	57.28%	LASAL, LLC	Energy	2012	Thomas Sexton '06	Managing Member, Founder, Owner	Water Valley, Texas
23	56.75%	OutboundEngine	Software	2012	Brannndon Stewart '98	CEO, Founder	Austin, Texas
24	56.38%	Becker Wright Consultants	Human Resources	2003	Jennifer Wright '98	Founder, Owner	Austin, Texas
25	56.14%	Lew's Custom Cutting Boards and Closing Gifts	Promotional Products	2012	Kyle Lewallen '12	Lead Designer, Founder, Owner	Lula, Georgia
26	55.63%	CR Systems/Aggieland Roofing	Roofing	1996	Rayne Knight-Zingelmann '90	President, Founder, Owner	Bryan, Texas
27	55.60%	Evolve Technologies	Automation, AV, Shades and Lighting	2011	Joshua Allred '08 Bryce Richardson '11 Joshua Little '06	Owner Owner Founder, Owner	Dallas, Texas
28	54.61%	Brazos WiFi	Internet Service Provider	2011	Jim Bouse '04	President, Founder, Owner	College Station, Texas
29	54.18%	FrogSlayer LLC	Software	2005	Ross Morel '10	CEO & Managing Partner, Founder, Owner	College Station, Texas
30	51.48%	Kirby Plastic Surgery	Medical	2011	Randol Kirby '97 Emily Kirby '03	General Manager, Founder Owner	Fort Worth, Texas
31	50.26%	Westmoreland Builders LLC	Construction	2007	Greg Westmoreland '91	CEO, Founder, Owner	Southlake, Texas
32	48.55%	Strategic Construction, Ltd.	Construction	2001	Matt Beshara '99	President, Owner	Houston, Texas
33	48.18%	Trustantial	IT Services	2003	Jake Horn '98	Partner, Founder, Owner	Dallas, Texas
34	47.12%	MYCON General Contractors	Construction	1987	Charles Myers '85	CEO, Founder, Owner	Dallas, Texas
35	46.65%	Vivid Data Group, LLC	Equipment Distribution	2011	Glen Fullerton '92	Partner, Founder, Owner	Dallas, Texas
36	46.28%	ALPHA Facilities Solutions, LLC	Facility Asset Management (A/E/FM)	2007	John A. Garcia '80	Managing Director, Founder, Owner	San Antonio, Texas
37	46.19%	Flocknote	SaaS for Churches	2009	Matthew Warner '02	CEO, Founder, Owner	The Woodlands, Texas
38	45.70%	Summit On Site Solutions			Taseer Badar '95	Leader, Owner	Houston, Texas
39	44.96%	PC Drilling & Service, LLC	Oil & Gas	2010	Rae Powell '94	President, Founder	Midland, Texas
40	44.93%	Triple A Air Conditioning, Inc.	HVAC	1969	Dustin Neff '12	CEO, General Manager	Irving, Texas
41	44.45%	CIMA ENERGY, LP	Energy	1996	Thomas Edwards '87 Michael Rupe '93	President & COO, Founder EVP & CFO, Founder	Houston, Texas
42	43.70%	Z Constructors Nationwide, LLC	Construction	2011	Seth Williams '06	CEO, Founder, Owner	Dallas, Texas
43	42.95%	J-TECH DIGITAL, INC	ECommerce	2013	Dr. Jeff Wang '04	CEO, Founder, Owner	Sugar Land, Texas
44	42.48%	CREDICAPIN	Financial Services	2007	Alvaro Stein '82	President, CEO, Founder, Owner	Guatemala
45	42.43%	Patriot Pool and Spa	Swimming Pool Service	2006	Hal Denbar '05 Laura Denbar '06	President, Founder Vice President, Founder	Austin, Texas
46	41.87%	Elite Fulfillment Solutions	Warehousing & Distribution	2011	Jeff Sampson '93	Vice President, Founder, Owner	Dallas, Texas
47	41.61%	Jim Boles Custom Homes, LLC	Residential Construction	2004	Jim Boles '97	Owner	San Antonio, Texas
48	40.97%	ATX Glazing, LLC	Commercial Construction	2011	Douglas Frey '77	Owner, Founder	Round Rock, Texas
49	39.85%	L Squared Engineering	Civil Engineering and Project Management	2011	Levi Love '01	President, Owner	Montgomery, Texas
50	39.75%	VLK Architects	Architecture	1984	Leesa Vardeman '81	Partner, Owner	Fort Worth, Texas

RANK	% GROWTH RATE	COMPANY NAME	INDUSTRY	FOUNDED	LEADERSHIP	TITLE	LOCATION
51	39.19%	Critical Start	Cyber Security	2012	Robert Davis '90	CEO, Founder, Owner	Plano, Texas
52	38.60%	5	Energy Consulting	2011	Jeff Schiefelbein '00	Chief Culture Officer, Co-Founder, Owner	Irving, Texas
53	38.58%	Steel Frame Solutions & Drywall, LLC	Steel Manufacturing	2011	Josh Coleman '82 Kevin Bernhard '00	COO, Co-Founder, Owner President, Founder, Owner	Kerrville, Texas
54	38.16%	Service Nation Inc.	HVAC/Plumbing/Electrical	2002	Matt Michel '83 Kyle Scott '01	President, Founder, Owner Controller, Founder	Flower Mound, Texas
55	38.05%	Creekstone Outdoor Living	Construction & Retail	2009	Sam Hickey '02 Tara Hickey '02	President, Founder Vice President, Owner	Spring, Texas
56	37.98%	Apex Protection	Insurance	2012	Ben Keating '94	President, Founder, Owner	Victoria, Texas
57	37.88%	Environmentex, Inc	Engineering/Consulting	2008	Brian McCallister '91	President, Founder, Owner	Dallas, Texas
58	37.70%	Guardian Services	Commercial Services	1945	Brett Muller '02	CEO, Founder, Owner	Dallas, Texas
59	37.57%	Einstein Moving Company	Transportation (Household Goods Moving)	2012	Paul Morin '10 Cameron Brown '10	Owner Owner	Austin, Texas
60	37.44%	EcoZapp	Home Services	2011	Joshua Zapalac '12 Allison Zapalac '12	CEO, Founder, Owner Co-Owner	College Station, Texas
61	36.97%	Brandon H. Cutrer, LLC	Agriculture	2010	Rachel Cutrer '01	Partner, Founder, Owner	Wharton, Texas
62	36.81%	Lanphier LLP	Financial Services	2009	Brittany Lanphier '07	Managing Director, Founder, Owner	Denver, Colorado
63	36.54%	St. Peter Metal Works, LLC	Manufacturing/Oil & Gas/Contracting	2012	Thomas St. Peter '09	President, Founder, Owner	Whitney, Texas
64	36.48%	Accent-Western	Waste & Recycling	2006	Bill Sims '89	President & CEO, Founder	Tomball, Texas
65	35.79%	TM5 Properties	Real Estate	2010	Terrence Murphy '05	CEO, Founder, Owner	Bryan, Texas
66	35.16%	Capitol Home Health	Healthcare	2010	Jerry Shults '81	CEO, Founder, Owner	Austin, Texas
67	34.73%	Builders West, Inc.	Residential Construction	1982	Kurt Lobpries '77 Lizette Lobpries '77	President, Founder, Owner Vice President, Founder, Owner	Houston, Texas
68	34.71%	CRU, Ltd.	Construction	2003	Robert Martinez '88	President, Founder, Owner	Cedar Park, Texas
69	34.55%	Moody Engineering, Inc.	Civil Engineering	1995	Keith Moody '95 Dr. Eric Moody '97	Principal, Owner Principal, Founder, Owner	Austin, Texas
70	34.02%	Spicewood Funding Group	Specialty Financing	2011	Kyle Bebee '02 Justin Trail '93	Partner, Founder, Owner Partner, Founder, Owner	Dallas, Texas
71	33.84%	KWA Construction	Construction	2004	Keller Webster '69 Brian Webster '03	Chairman, Founder President	Addison, Texas
72	33.66%	Valcor Commercial Real Estate	Commercial Real Estate	2010	Jonathan Collins '06	Partner, Co-Founder, Owner	San Antonio, Texas
73	33.38%	Wilder Belshaw Architects Inc.	Architecture	2004	Don Wilder '85	Founding Principal, Owner	Addison, Texas
74	33.36%	Asurint	Background Screening	2004	Gregg Gay '92 Connie Clore '90	CEO, Co-Founder, Owner CSO, Co-Founder, Owner	Cleveland, Ohio
75	33.02%	Sabre Commercial, Inc.	Commercial Construction	2008	John Cyrier '95	Managing Director, Founder, Owner	Austin, Texas
76	32.94%	FDA Quality and Regulatory Consultants	Consulting	2009	Christopher Rush '01	President, Founder, Owner	Cedar Park, Texas
77	32.12%	Caddis	Real Estate	2008	Jason L. Signor '99	CEO & Partner	Dallas, Texas
78	31.88%	Animal Wellness Hospital, PLLC	Health	2007	Dana Boehm '04	Doctor, Owner, Founder	Taylor, Texas
79	30.94%	Electric Power Engineers, Inc	Engineering Design & Consulting	1968	Hala Ballouz '89 Hugo Mena '05 Billy Yancey '10	President, Owner Vice President, Managing Partner Vice President, Managing Partner	Austin, Texas
80	30.47%	Aluminum Techniques, Inc.	Construction	1985	Daniel van Deursen '07	Vice President & COO, Founder	Stafford, Texas
81	29.17%	parmadesign	Architecture	2004	Kevin Parma '91	President, Founder, Owner	Dallas, Texas
82	29.03%	Tru Trading LLC	Agriculture Commodities and Real Estate	2011	Brock Thompson '96 Will Snead Jr. '06	Partner, Founder Partner, Founder	Amarillo, Texas
83	28.94%	Peinado Construction	General Construction	2004	Frank "Teddy" Peinado '88	President & CEO, Founder, Owner	Frisco, Texas
84	28.91%	Dunham Engineering, Inc.	Structural & Corrosion Engineering	1992	Travis Tatum, P.E. '01	President & CEO, Owner	College Station, Texas
85	28.57%	Country Creek Animal Hospital	Veterinary Care	2011	Dr. Daryl Mensik '05 Dr. Lollie Mensik '06	Partner, Founder, Owner Partner, Founder, Owner	Allen, Texas
86	28.01%	TruEnergy	Energy	2009	Danny Jester '93	CEO & President, Founder, Owner	Dallas, Texas
87	27.90%	Avondale Wealth Management	Financial Services	2010	Samuel McGee '98	Principal, Co-Founder, Owner	Austin, Texas
88	27.63%	Nova Engineering, Inc.	Construction	2006	Joel Garcia '98	Principal, Founder, Owner	The Colony, Texas
89	27.31%	CEO Technologies	Technology	2009	John Stanfield '03	Owner	College Station, Texas
90	27.16%	LCM INDUSTRIES INC.		2006	Tommy Crume '96	President, Founder, Owner	Odessa, Texas
91	26.94%	Escondido Resources II, LLC	Oil & Gas	2007	William Deupree '83 Andrew Ellis '94	President & CEO, Founder, Owner EVP & COO, Founder, Owner	Katy, Texas
92	26.92%	Vincent Landscapes, Inc.	Landscape, Construction	1982	Kellan Vincent '07	Vice President, Owner	Austin, Texas
93	26.89%	AEI Engineering LLC	Civil Engineering	1983	Nancy Blackwell '95 Michael Kurzy '88 Tom Matkin '86	Principal & Regional Director, Owner President, Owner Vice President, Owner	Houston, Texas
94	26.35%	Premier Event Source	Event Planning	2006	Brittany Jones '06	President, Founder, Owner	Manor, Texas
95	26.33%	Broadleaf Commerce	Computer Software	2012	Brian Polster '92	CEO	Plano, Texas
96	26.21%	Top-Notch Renovations	Construction	2007	Lana Petty '93	General Manager, Founder, Owner	Austin, Texas
97	25.83%	LiquidAgents Healthcare, LLC	Healthcare Staffing	2003	Jenny Hanlon '89	CFO, Founder, Owner	Plano, Texas
98	25.44%	eCatholic	Software	2005	Josh Simmons '00	CEO, Founder, Owner	College Station, Texas
99	24.93%	Outlaw Powder Coating	Industrial	2008	Ethan Spradlin '16	CEO, Owner	Burleson, Texas
100	24.88%	Arch-Con Construction	Construction	2000	Michael G. Scheurich '92	CEO, Founder, Owner	Houston, Texas

Revealing the New Startup Aggieland

If you entered the **Grand Stafford Theater** on the evening of August 13th, 2018 you would have been surrounded by some of the biggest proponents of entrepreneurship in Bryan/College Station. Business owners, Texas A&M faculty, and members of local agencies such as the Brazos Valley Economic Development Corporation came together around one common interest: Startup Aggieland.

That night the McFerrin Center for Entrepreneurship hosted the Startup Aggieland Reveal Party after secretly hinting that those in attendance would have a chance to “meet the new Startup Aggieland.” Attendees were treated to canapés provided by the acclaimed Chef Tai Lee and enjoyed the industrial-chic atmosphere of the historic downtown Bryan concert venue. Conversation drifted between clusters of attendees, each of them buzzing about what exciting new plans the McFerrin Center had in store for Startup Aggieland.

Director Blake Petty kicked off the night with a booming “Howdy!” and introduced Assistant Director LauraLee Hughes. Hughes joined the

McFerrin Center in early 2018 and has brought with her a background in technology commercialization and an undeniable passion for early stage ventures. “It is an exciting time for entrepreneurs at Texas A&M” said Hughes, “there is more awareness than ever among students, faculty, staff, and the community about entrepreneurship, and they are all looking for resources that can help navigate the path to becoming an entrepreneur.”

As the night unfolded Hughes shared her new vision for Startup Aggieland which is centered on a multi-phase “entrepreneurial journey.” Students will now have access to a roadmap that can connect with them programs and opportunities across three different phases of entrepreneurship: Explore, Pursue or Launch. Students who engage with programs in any phase will have access to a wide array of workshops, meetups, and mentor nights that will allow them to grow and develop their knowledge of entrepreneurship. In addition, Hughes debuted Startup Runway, a first of its kind pre-accelerator program that will focus on helping students determine whether or not their business will have a viable place in the market. Hughes also announced the development of the Startup Aggieland Business Incubator that will provide validated early stage ventures with

“Through our new programs at Startup Aggieland, we are providing an environment in which aspiring entrepreneurs can learn, test their ideas, network, and hopefully achieve their dreams of owning their own business.”

the resources necessary to formally launch and grow a business. The Business Incubator and many of the Startup Aggieland resources and programs will now also be available to Texas A&M faculty and staff along with members of the local community. "Through our new programs at Startup Aggieland, we are providing an environment in which aspiring entrepreneurs can learn, test their ideas, network, and hopefully achieve their dreams of owning their own business. I am excited about the impact these programs will have in growing the community at Startup Aggieland and helping more people realize that entrepreneurship can be for them too" said Hughes. The packed audience also enjoyed presentations from 3 student teams who have been a part of the Startup Aggieland Summer Program.

At the end of the evening Hughes spoke to attendees directly, calling upon "the friends and supporters of the McFerrin Center" to help ensure Startup Aggieland continues

its success. "The involvement and support of mentors is critical to the success of the McFerrin Center and Startup Aggieland. The real-world experience, expertise, and guidance mentors offer to our entrepreneurs is more valuable than anything they will learn in the classroom." During her closing remarks, Hughes announced one of Startup Aggieland's newest programs, Mentor Network. The program is specifically designed to engage with mentors and professionals in meaningful and mutually beneficial ways. "As our programs grow, we hope to expand our mentor network and be able to provide more opportunities for our mentors to engage with the Startup Aggieland community. Whether you are interested in being a speaker, holding office hours, or working with individuals or teams on their business venture, I'd like you to join us at Startup Aggieland and help us in developing the next generation of Aggie entrepreneurs."



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From the October 2017 meeting, hosted at Disaster City.

One of the most popular programs on television is ABC's Emmy Award-winning Shark Tank. While the show's theatrics are probably more important to ratings than the content itself, there is no denying the allure of watching entrepreneurs pitch their early-stage ventures to investors seeking quality returns. Regardless of whether you are a fan of the show, it might interest you to know there is a local opportunity for you to gain real-life exposure to the angel investment world.

The Aggie Angel Network (AAN) is a private, non-profit corporation that serves to match early-stage ventures seeking investment with accredited private investors seeking exciting new opportunities in which to invest. The AAN is not an investment fund and makes no investment decisions or recommendations as to private investor decisions. Instead, AAN connects investors with opportunities prescreened for a strong and defined Return on Investment potential.

While the organization is operated by McFerrin Center for Entrepreneurship and supported by a number of Texas A&M System members and industry sponsors, AAN aligns investors and companies from both throughout and outside the Aggie Network, seeking opportunities to leverage our connections in the research and commercialization space in and around the university. Moreover, AAN engages faculty and current and former students in all its activities to help stimulate and support the Aggie

Since its launch in 2010,
AAN has invested
over \$10 million across
36 early-stage companies

entrepreneurial ecosystem.

AAN hosts 6 investor meetings each year, typically held in unique and interesting campus venues that offer AAN Members opportunities to explore Texas A&M's research enterprise and impact. These meetings each feature 4-6 companies invited by AAN to pitch their concepts and define an investment opportunity in which AAN Members may participate. Immediately following these meetings, Members are invited to meet privately with the candidate companies to discuss potential investments. Since its launch in

From the November
2017 meeting, hosted
at the Presidential
Lounge of Kyle Field.



attendance at all AAN meetings and invitations to privately participate in all potential investment opportunities available through AAN.

Candidate companies are typically early-stage ventures in any industry that have already developed a basic concept and business strategy, but are seeking funding (typically < \$1 million) with which to execute. An emphasis is placed on technology-based businesses with potential for rapid growth and a defined exit strategy for AAN investors. Candidates are invited to apply for screening by AAN members for consideration to pitch for the full membership. Applicant companies provide fees to support AAN operations, and will receive individual feedback and coaching prior to the group presentation.

If you are an entrepreneur seeking angel-stage investment, or an investor seeking angel-stage opportunities, we invite you to learn more about the Aggie Angel Network and its unique connections to Aggie (and other) investors and companies. Visit our website for additional information, or contact Blake Petty, AAN's Executive Director, for an invitation to our next meeting: www.aggieangelnetwork.com.



2010, AAN has invested over \$10 million across 36 early-stage companies.

AAN Members must qualify as an accredited investor under SEC Rule 501, and acknowledge an understanding of the high risks involved in early-stage private investment transactions. Members provide an annual membership fee entitling



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Opening Doors

FOR ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITIES FOR OUR VETERANS AND THEIR FAMILIES

The ventures at the 11th annual Reynolds and Reynolds Entrepreneurship Bootcamp for Veterans (EBV), hosted by Mays Business School's McFerrin Center for Entrepreneurship, ranged from network solutions for small businesses to novel applications of artificial intelligence. The 21 veterans in the class of 2018 came from across the United States and represented nearly every branch of the military.

EBV at Texas A&M University is an exceptional initiative that leverages the resources and infrastructure of higher education to provide entrepreneurial skills and small business management training to post-9/11 veterans with service-connected disabilities. Part of a nationwide consortia of nine universities, the overall goal of Texas A&M's program is to open the door to economic opportunity for our veterans and their families by developing their competencies in creating and sustaining a commercial venture.

'Boot Camp' a Fitting Name

The term "boot camp" is not used lightly when it comes to EBV. In order to graduate from the program, each participant must complete a 30-day online training program and a nine-day residency hosted at Texas A&M University. During the in-residence portion, participants are in class from 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. every day and work on their business plans and final presentations every night during mentoring hours. McFerrin Center Executive Director, Richard Lester referred to the program experience as akin to "drinking from a firehose."

The lectures and presentations throughout the week covered topics such as finance and accounting, government contracting, human resources and marketing. The deluge of

information caused a visible shift in the veteran's energy levels throughout the week. Participants bounded into class on Sunday morning full of excitement and by Thursday they shuffled into the classroom, coffee cup in hand.

An Aggie Integration

While EBV does consist of a significant amount of hard work, McFerrin Center goes to great lengths to ensure that none of the veterans burn out from information overload. Throughout the week the McFerrin Center coordinates evenings with local organizations and mentors to allow participants to enjoy and experience Aggieland outside of the classroom. This past year, participants enjoyed a relaxed evening of networking at the Benjamin Knox Wine Gallery. The Southwood 4-H club hosted their annual evening of fellowship with home-cooked Tex-Mex food and a table filled with hand-made desserts. Finally, the Texas A&M Corps of Cadets hosted a dinner at the Sanders Corps Museum during which participants met current members of the Corps of Cadets and learned about the history of Texas A&M. Thanks to the generosity of the program's individual and private-sector sponsors, EBV is offered at no cost to the participants.

TEXAS A&M'S EBV PROGRAM

The week-long residency culminated with final presentations and closing ceremonies on July 21. Mentors from the Bryan/College Station community attended final presentations at the Center for Executive Development and provided feedback and final words of encouragement to the veterans. The program officially concluded on Saturday evening with closing ceremonies. There was a distinct celebratory feeling to the event as each veteran was awarded their program diploma. Honored guests such as Nancy Williams of the Cockrell Foundation and Eli Jones, the dean of Mays Business School, were in attendance. The evening was made even more special when Brigadier General Joe E. Ramirez, Jr. '79, Commandant of the Corps of Cadets, delivered a poignant speech on the meaning of leadership that resonated with the entire room.

"Being an EBV graduate from Texas A&M means becoming a member of the Aggie family."

After spending the week with the participants and watching them grow as entrepreneurs, it can be hard to say goodbye. However, the journey isn't over. Being an EBV graduate from Texas A&M means becoming a member of the Aggie family. As each veteran returns home with renewed fervor for their venture they will receive continued support from the McFerrin Center through mentorship and guidance.

The McFerrin Center for Entrepreneurship will be hosting the 2019 EBV during the week of July 21, 2019. If you'd like to mentor, support or get involved with EBV please contact McFerrin@mays.tamu.edu.

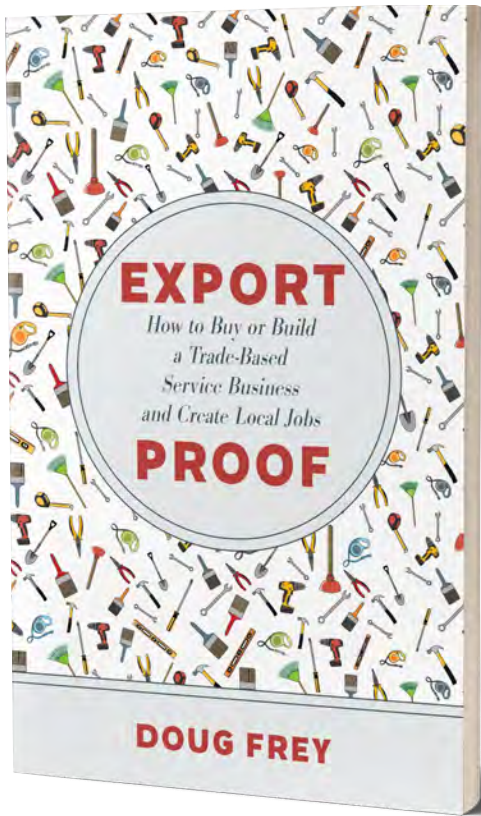


South Texas Building Partners is a facility solutions company serving the commercial and light industrial markets across South Texas. We partner with our clients to reach their facility goals including new construction, additions, remodel/renovation, and ongoing facility maintenance services. Let's talk about your goals and how we can help achieve them.

- Matt Ezell '04

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Export Proof

Authored by Doug Frey,
a 5-time recipient of the Aggie 100

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SQS provides non-destructive testing and inspection services to the oil and gas industry in Texas.

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Innovation. Skill. Grit.

Competition is no stranger in the SEC. Whether it's athletic or academic prowess students at each University are driven by the desire to be recognized as "#1." The 2018 SEC Student Pitch Competition boasted an unrivaled level of innovation, skill, and grit that could only be found in the Southeastern Conference.

This year's competition was hosted at Texas A&M University by the McFerrin Center for Entrepreneurship. On Sunday, October 7th, all competitors and their respective directors were invited to a private welcome reception. To kick-off the evening the group was led to a private room where they were given a short lesson on how to "make your own guacamole" by Chef Mikeal Frey of the Texas A&M Hotel and Conference Center and the students were then let loose for the first ever "SEC Guac-Off." Cross-conference teams were assigned to different tables and they each had 12 minutes to make their own avocado masterpiece. Afterwards, the multiple judges and center directors attending the reception voted on their favorite recipe. This cleverly executed ice breaker helped to set the tone for the rest of the evening. "We wanted to give the students a fun and uniquely-Texan opportunity to get to know each another as colleagues versus competitors. Being a student entrepreneur can be difficult and lonely, and many can become isolated from their peers. We wanted them to understand they are not alone, there are students

all over the SEC pursuing similar passions," commented Blake Petty, Director of the McFerrin Center for Entrepreneurship. Students carried their culinary creations back to the dining room, chatting with one another like they were friends rather than rivals.

The SEC Student Pitch Competition was a day-long affair during which each SEC University Champion Team (1 per university) presented

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in front of two preliminary round panels of 3-5 judges in parallel sessions. This ensures that all teams are seen by the same judges. The judges were all former alumni of an SEC school to help keep the scoring as unbiased as possible. Teams were evaluated on the quality of their pitch and

the viability of the business. 13 teams competed on Monday, October 8th, but only 3 would be selected as finalists.

Final pitches were held at the All American North Club in Kyle field and open to the public. Local entrepreneurs, SEC Alumni and family and friends braved a stormy evening to see if their team would be announced as a finalist. McFerrin Center Director, Blake Petty, emceed the evening

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and held the crowd in suspense as he recapped the day. Finally, Petty announced that the finalist teams were *Roo Storage* from University of Missouri, *Lapovations* from University of Arkansas, and *Navibãs* of University South Carolina. Teams were allowed 10 minutes for their pitch with 5 minutes of Q&A. Each pitch was remarkably well structured and involved the innovative use of existing technologies in a novel manner. After a long deliberation *Lapovations* was announced as the 2018 SEC Student Pitch Champion, the second year in a row for an Arkansas team to take the title, and with it a \$5,000 cash prize. Second place and \$3,500 was awarded to *Roo Storage* and third place and \$1,500 was awarded to *Navibãs*.

When asked what makes the SEC Student Pitch Competition unique, Petty said "There are hundreds of business plan competitions at universities around the globe, just as there are hundreds of athletic events each week.

What sets the SEC Student Pitch Competition apart is it's convergence of athletic and academic competition, against the backdrop of entrepreneurship and innovative, real-world problem solving. Just as exciting as it is to see our favorite student athlete make it into the pros, how exciting is it to see our fellow SEC student entrepreneurs competing to make a real difference in tomorrow's marketplace?"



Many people believe an entrepreneur is someone who starts a business, but at their core entrepreneurs are simply



Problem Solvers.

While studying to receive a degree in International Studies, Bryce Watson '16, was invited to travel to China to aid a local non-profit. During his time there, Watson heard countless stories of the harsh working conditions that factory employees faced every day. Employees worked 80-hour weeks in dangerous environments for little pay, and many had been seriously injured on the job. By the end of his trip Watson had heard enough. He returned to Texas A&M University determined to find a way to improve workers' rights in developing nations. "I wanted to do something about this," Watson said. "I didn't just want to learn about it, I wanted to solve the problem."

Watson quickly realized he was attacking a complex issue. "We started to discover that these multi-national corporations have hundreds of sub-contractor manufacturing facilities that are only audited once or twice a year," he said. "They have very little incentive to make sure their operating procedures are safe for their employees."

Watson decided it would be much more effective to empower the local workforce rather than wrestle with giant

corporations. "I wanted to attack this problem from the bottom-up rather than the top-down."

Vize provides a two-fold solution. First, they connect top-rated factories with qualified individuals looking for jobs. In addition, Vize provides a platform for workers to anonymously rate and review factories without fear of repercussion. "Factories are in desperate

"Being an entrepreneur is hard. Build a team of people who make up for your weaknesses."

need of employees due to the global labor crisis," Watson said. "There's an abundance of jobs but not enough workers to fill them all. Now workers have power over their lives."

Watson explained that workers will leave jobs that treat them poorly, but often move from factory to factory until they find a fair employer. Vize helps to educate the local workforce on which factories to avoid with the hope that

poorly-rated facilities will be forced to improve working conditions in order to recruit employees.

"Glassdoor has the most similar business model to Vize, but we're in a completely different market," Watson said. "No one is focusing on emerging markets." When asked why this is Watson simply responded "because Startups come from Silicon Valley and these issues aren't in Silicon Valley. If you aren't aware that these problems exist you're not trying to solve them. If you have an idea, go do it."

Vize isn't Watson's first adventure in entrepreneurship. During his time at Texas A&M he co-founded both a non-profit and a student organization, and was always interested in solving big problems. Eventually these ventures fizzled-out but he learned from every failure. "If you have an idea, go do it. Like, right now! You're almost certainly going to fail, but that's OK. It's worth at least trying, especially if you believe in it."

Watson knew Vize could make a real impact and was determined to make his startup a success. He leveraged student resources such as Startup Aggeland

"Use the resources you have while you're in school," said Watson. "Take classes to help your idea grow. Tailor your courses to work with professors whose expertise aligns with your project. There will never be another time in your life like this."

and Blackstone Launchpad to connect with fellow student entrepreneurs and mentors. "Being an entrepreneur is hard. Build a team of people who make up for your weaknesses."

Watson also began taking classes focused on entrepreneurship. That's how he met Richard Lester, Executive Director of the McFerrin Center for Entrepreneurship. During his time as a graduate student, Watson enrolled in Lester's "Foundations of Entrepreneurship" course and developed Vize's business model as a part of the course's final project.

"Bryce was always really creative," Lester recalled. "He found a student organization on campus, a type of coding club, who would help develop his prototype." When asked about Watson's progress throughout the course Lester said that "he pivoted a lot." But that he was always focused on the workers he was helping. "He's trying to do the right thing. [Vize] maintains the anonymity of workers so they can freely discuss issues that can be taken to the factories and hopefully be addressed. He wants to improve working conditions for people who are powerless." Dr. Lester currently serves on the Vize Advisory Board.

Being an entrepreneur is hard work, especially when you're a student, but Watson insists this shouldn't deter one from going after an idea. "Use the resources you have while you're in school," said Watson. "Take classes to help your idea grow. Tailor your courses to work with professors whose expertise aligns with your project. There will never be another time in your life like this." Many entrepreneurs hesitate to launch their venture because they don't believe it's the right time, but not Watson. "I realized I don't have to wait until XYZ happens, I should start right now."

Watson graduated with a Master's of International Affairs in May of 2018 and serves as the CEO of Vize. Several of the other founding members of the company are current students. Vize just completed a successful crowd-sourcing campaign on IndieGoGo. They officially launched their mobile app in October; available for download in the Google Play store. They've already received positive feedback from communities in Mexico and have several factories who are major advocates for Vize.



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The staff of the McFerrin Center for Entrepreneurship is honored to have the privilege to recognize successful Aggie entrepreneurs.

The Aggie 100 would not be the success that it is today without the many people and organizations that have helped to make it a reality.

We would like to thank two long-term supporters in particular: PKF Texas and Hollinden. PKF is the official accounting firm of the Aggie 100, which reviews and verifies all information submitted by the applicants each year. Hollinden is the marketing firm for the Aggie 100 that designs and produces all graphical design, marketing materials, and programs connected with the event.

Our heartfelt thanks also goes to several more long-term contributors to the Aggie 100. The Texas A&M Foundation, AgniTEK, and the Brazos Valley Economic Development Corporation have provided ongoing support to help this program become what it is today. Many other companies and individuals purchased tables and tickets for the event and helped underwrite the cost of student attendance at Aggie 100. We'd like to thank our many student volunteers who ensured that everyone was warmly welcomed back to Aggieland.

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Center Volunteers

Finally, the Center must recognize its core team of volunteers. We could not accomplish our mission without the unending support of the individuals serving on its Advisory Council. The ideas, time, and financial support provided by these volunteers truly enables us to continue making a difference for Texas A&M University.



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Chris Bybee '17 always favors a challenge. The young entrepreneur has been involved in three startups, including a tech venture, a mobile snow cone stand and a custom apparel t-shirt company. He looks up to people like you—the Aggie 100. To him, you represent what it means to be an entrepreneur: someone who loves learning new things; who has ideas to improve the status quo; who believes in themselves; and who wants to create something valuable.

The Texas A&M Foundation congratulates all 2018 and past Aggie 100 honorees on your business achievements. Thanks for inspiring a new generation of students like Chris who will get their entrepreneurial start at Texas A&M University.



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