

PLUGANDPLAY

# The Texas Innovation Blueprint

Insights, Trends,  
& Success Stories

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# About Us



**PLUGANDPLAY**





Texas has become a thriving hub for innovation and entrepreneurship, fueled by a dynamic mix of industries, resources, and vibrant business ecosystems. Cities like Cedar Park, Frisco, McKinney, Sugar Land, and Bryan-College Station are at the forefront of shaping the future of global industries, driving progress and transformation.

At Plug and Play, we are proud to be a catalyst in this evolution by connecting ideas, fostering innovation, and empowering startups and corporations to reach new heights.

This info book highlights the notable advancements happening across diverse industries, including Sportstech, Enterprise & AI, Fintech, Smart Cities, Advanced Manufacturing, and Aerospace & Defense. It showcases how Plug and Play's programs are accelerating growth, turning these Texas cities into global innovation powerhouses.

Explore the remarkable work transforming Texas and discover how Plug and Play is helping shape the future of innovation in the Lone Star State.

## VISION

To build the world's leading innovation platform and make innovation open to anyone, anywhere.

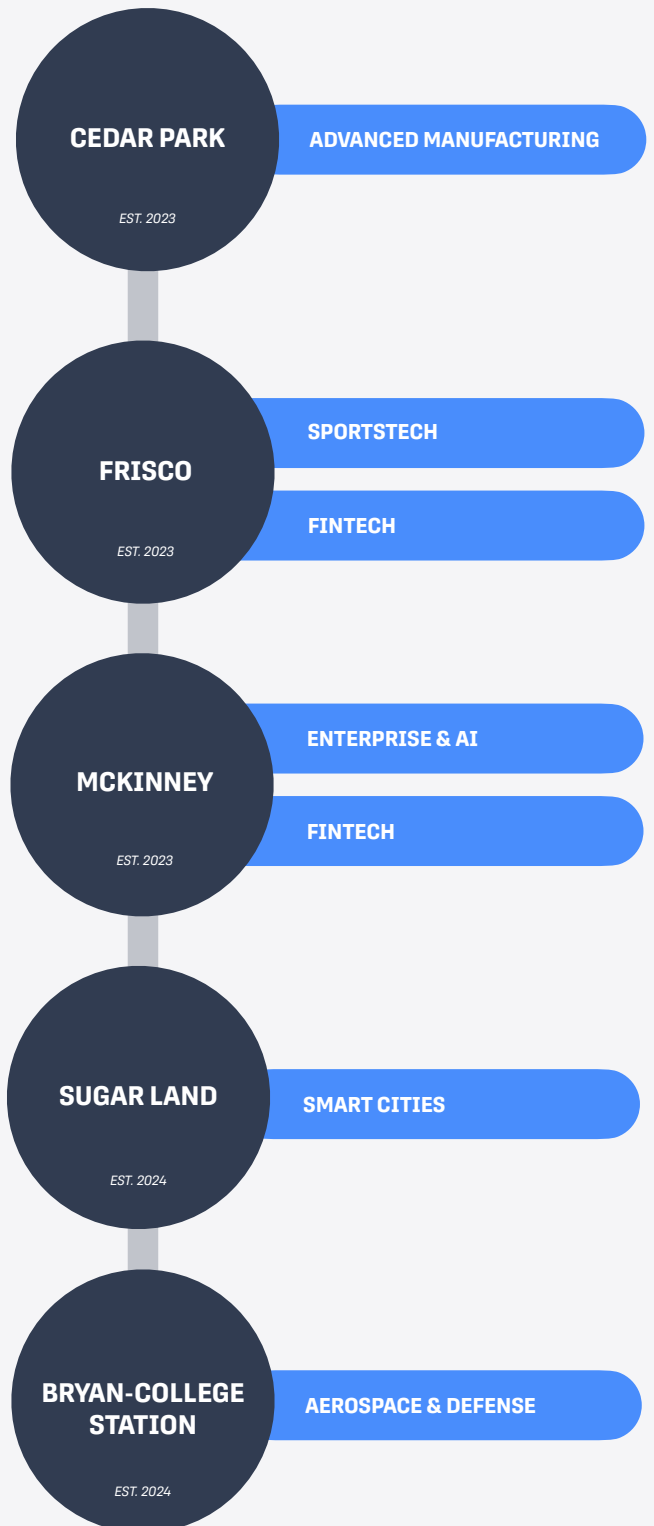
## MISSION

To drive innovation by connecting entrepreneurs, corporations, and investors worldwide.

# Our Locations & Verticals

Plug and Play Texas runs a variety of programs across different cities, with each location focusing on an industry that fits the strengths and needs of the local community. By tailoring their efforts, they help drive innovation and provide targeted support for businesses in areas like AI, fintech, smart cities, and more.

By aligning their initiatives with the specific economic drivers of each city, Plug and Play empowers local entrepreneurs and startups, ultimately uplifting and strengthening the communities they serve. This strategic focus allows for deeper connections among local stakeholders, bolstering collaboration and creating a vibrant network that enhances the overall economic landscape across Texas.



Cedar Park, Texas Partners



Frisco, Texas Partners



McKinney, Texas Partners



Sugar Land, Texas Partners



Bryan-College Station, Texas Partners





Governor of Texas (2015–Present)

## Greg Abbott

*"In just the past 10 months, Plug and Play has opened three offices in Texas to serve our booming economy, working with key Texas companies like HEB, Dell, L'Oréal, and many others. They are a critical part of our successful economy, creating jobs and helping new ideas flourish."*



Mayor Pro Tem & District 1 of Sugar Land, Texas (2024–Present)

## Suzanne Whatley

*"Sugar Land's identity is forward-thinking, expanding our existing community of visionary leaders who are tackling today's challenges with innovative solutions and enhancing the quality of life for the future. [Plug and Play] is here, and we're happy to have you — let's get moving."*



Former Chancellor, Texas A&M University

## John Sharp

*"I see Plug and Play as the missing piece that will push us over the top, to attract companies from across the USA, and from around the world, to our region to collaborate to innovate."*



CFO, Dallas Cowboys

## Tom Walker

*"It's a team that represents growth, it's a team that represents innovation, it's a team that represents Frisco, so the Dallas Cowboys are happy to be just a small part of that and look forward to growing together."*







PLUGANDPLAY

ation

Texas A&M,  
Partnership

## Plug and Play Texas Investment Portfolio



Participating startups leveraged artificial intelligence, machine learning, deeptech, and other combinations of technologies. Many of our startups will go on to execute pilots, raise investment funding, or participate in other accelerator programs. Above are various Texas-based companies that we're proud to have invested in, and we're excited to continue to support these startups as they rise to new heights.



In addition to our incredible Texas-based startups that we've invested in, Texas is also home to a wide array of notable large corporations.

## Dallas–Fort Worth–Arlington Metroplex



## Houston Metropolitan Area



## Austin / Central Texas



## San Antonio, Texas





# Our Impact

**PLUGANDPLAY**





## Our Impact in Texas

Our work in Texas has been instrumental in driving startup success. Through pilot programs, curated dealflows, pitch events, strategic introductions, and more, we've provided meaningful support to emerging businesses.

The following pages present data gathered over the past two years, highlighting our impact. We remain deeply committed to accelerating the growth and success of startups within the vibrant Texas ecosystem.

**113**

**Startups  
Accelerated**

**1800+**

**Direct  
Introductions**

**308**

**Program  
Events**

**13**

**Expos**

**\$450.3M**

**Capital Raised**

**158**

**Dealflows /  
NDAs**

**54**

**Pilots & PoCs**

**7**

**Program  
Batches**

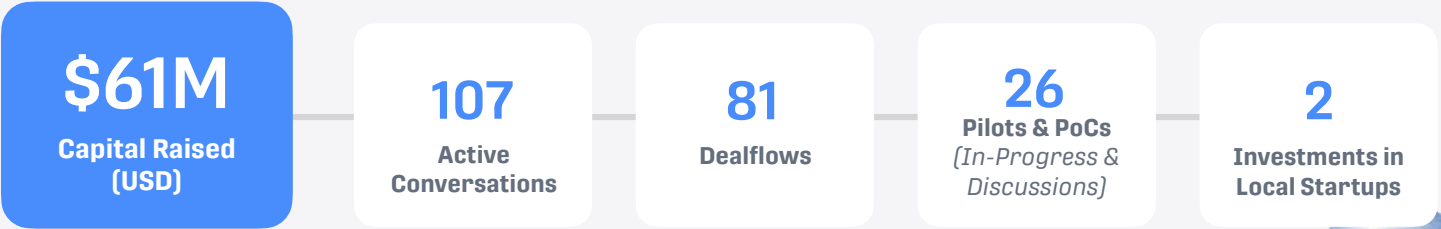
There’s been some incredible successes for Plug and Play in Cedar Park. We’ve witnessed remarkable engagement from the startup community and forged meaningful relationships with our corporate partners and ecosystem allies.

We’ve already seen promising partnerships between our partners and startups and are excited to accelerate our efforts to nurture open innovation across the state.

## Startup Engagement & Exposure



## Business Development & Opportunities







Cedar Park Launch  
Cedar Park, Texas

**PLUGANDPLAY**

## Jim Penniman-Morin *Mayor of Cedar Park, Texas*

### **Q: How do you participate in the Plug and Play ecosystem?**

**Jim Penniman-Morin:** We're very excited to see Cedar Park hosting Plug and Play's Central Texas location. Obviously, it's a region known for exciting innovation for a long time, building on very high levels of intellectual capital. Cedar Park is a city with a really high quality of living and is home to many of our region's entrepreneurs and most brilliant technological minds, so we feel like our partnership with Plug and Play will help continue to foster that ecosystem throughout the region, specifically in Cedar Park and is in a way that, you know, the city government isn't trying to play outside its role, our job is just to make it a great community with great jobs and great parks, but with Plug and Play's expertise, its incredible network and it's culture of really genuinely fostering new companies and helping them grow to really address real needs, we think that's just going to be a really great combination for everyone involved.



**Jim Penniman-Morin**

Mayor of Cedar Park, Texas (2020–Present)



### **Q: How did the relationship between the City of Cedar Park and Plug and Play come to be?**

**Penniman-Morin:** Like so many things with Plug and Play, you meet people who have benefited from it, and for us, we actually started talking with the team in Alberta and hearing how well it had gone for them. We'd been looking for ways to start to help further foster our entrepreneurial ecosystem in Cedar Park, and by meeting the team in Alberta and hearing more about Plug and Play, as we continued to learn more and really do our due diligence about Plug and Play, we really realized exactly what the team in Alberta had told us about — how it had really helped them really scale their fostering of their ecosystem, which was already doing well and just kind of need a little boost, and that's exactly what we expect.

### **Q: At Plug and Play, what have you seen so far? Was there anything eye-opening for you?**

**Penniman-Morin:** It's exactly what we expected in terms of how you just have this wide network of very connected people who are eager to keep connecting solutions with problems, startups with investors, new companies with customers, so that's exactly what we're hoping to have happen in Cedar Park and to turbocharge the growth that we've already been seeing and benefitting from.



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## **Q: Why is right now the right time to innovate in Cedar Park?**

**Penniman-Morin:** Right now is the right time because as Austin is continuing to grow, you have that innovation, and so much of the innovation ecosystem is naturally going to spill outside of its borders. We believe, at Cedar Park, Texas, that we are the marquee suburb of Austin, Texas. That is something we don't take for granted, and so this is part of our efforts to make sure we continue to hold that position relative to our friendly competition with our peer suburbs and, again, taking nothing for granted. In trying to stay in the lead of the race, we feel like now is the right time to bring in a partner like Plug and Play.

## **Q: How do you see AI evolving or playing into Cedar Park's partnership with Plug and Play?**

**Penniman-Morin:** For machine learning and artificial intelligence, more broadly, it is an incredibly powerful tool, but like any other tool, it's only as good as having the right people applying it in the right way to the most important solutions. I think, like so many other iterations that we've seen before, machine learning allows us to accelerate our ability to solve problems, although sometimes it can do that for causing problems, too, and so it's important that we just continue working together and working

thoughtfully in building companies. A lot of companies, actually, some of the more interesting ones I've seen [at Plug and Play's Silicon Valley Summit], are actually focusing exactly on that problem.

The thing I've always loved about the startup ecosystem is that you have brilliant people who are not afraid to take big risks and attack problems, and walking around a place like [Plug and Play], you just see the future coming together. Some days, it's easy to get a little scared about the future of our country with all the events that are going on around the world, and even in our own country, so a place like [Plug and Play], for me at least, always gives me hope. You have brilliant people attacking tough problems with brilliant new technologies, and that gives me confidence that for my community and many others, the future is gonna be brighter than the past.

## **Q: What changes have you noticed by working with Plug and Play so far? What do you find that's unique to us compared to other competitors?**

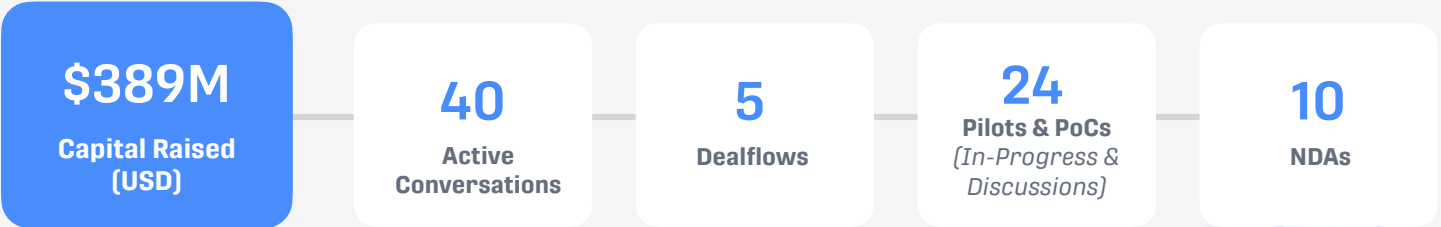
**Penniman-Morin:** One of the things that's really impressed me, and a lot of the other leaders in the city, is just how much Saeed and Plug and Play focus on hiring the right people. You can tell that there's just a strong emphasis on getting people with the right attitude, the right approach, and you know that I found it throughout the course of my life in various things that I've done that if you get the right people in place, everything else gets sorted out, and so I take great confidence in seeing how Plug and Play has led in that fashion and built a corporate culture of collegiality and collaboration and I think that very much compliments its mission and I think that is part of what gives us confidence that this is gonna be a great team.

At Plug and Play in Frisco, we've been connecting startups with partners in a variety of ways, such as hosting startup pitch events and setting up dealflows. We look forward to building on this momentum moving forward. By collaborating with advisory teams from the Dallas Cowboys and Mavericks, we can also help startups test their technologies in real-world settings, driving growth and innovation.

## Startup Engagement & Exposure



## Business Development & Opportunities







FRISCO CHAMBER of commerce

May 19, 2025

Congratulations!  
Rasco (affiliated)  
Fingerprint Solutions Plus

connect. grow. lead. give back  
FRISCO CHAMBER of commerce

Boo Kerry

## Jeff Cheney *Mayor of Frisco, Texas*

### **Q: What are your thoughts about what happens at the Plug and Play Silicon Valley Summit?**

**Jeff Cheney:** We are one of Plug and Play's newest [government] partners, and our economic development team was checking [Plug and Play's Silicon Valley Summit] out and seeing what it's all about. We were excited about the partnership with Plug and Play before, but now, going back to Frisco after seeing just how much credibility the organization has and how much networking happens, there's idea generation, and we're just really excited to have this partnership and bring it back to Frisco.

### **Q: How did your relationship with Plug and Play come to be?**

**Cheney:** In Frisco, we like to do business with the best, we like to do business with great brands, and we want to be the best in everything that we do, so we knew we needed a strategic partner. So we searched the globe to find the best of the best, and, of course, Plug and Play speaks for itself and is really gonna help us accelerate some verticals that are already happening in our community, Sportstech and Fintech and some others, and we have some great partners, but we knew we needed that relationship to really light it on fire and so that's why we are excited to have this partnership and can't wait to see where it goes.

### **Q: Do you have any specific innovation challenges for next year?**

**Cheney:** Well, the biggest [challenge] that we have as a government entity is that the government is not good at doing a lot of things, and one of those is really driving business in those ecosystems. We tried decades ago to actually do it on our own as an economic development team in the city. We knew that we weren't the right people to do that, so one of the challenges, quite frankly, we had was finding a partner that could help us do that — that lives and breathe this each and every day, that has the relationships across the globe that has had success stories and built models to actually lead to success, and so Plug and Play is actually helping us solve that challenge that we have. [The problem] is that we knew we wanted to build this ecosystem in our community. We knew we had all the pieces and parts surrounding us to have success in it; we just needed someone who was gonna drive the car, and that was what we were looking forward to.



**Jeff Cheney**

Mayor of Frisco, Texas (2017–Present)





## Q: What have you noticed that's unique about Plug and Play?

**Cheney:** Just the relationships that are built across the globe, I mean, that speaks volumes. And you see it from the very first day. Everyone kind of leans in, and you can already tell that they're invested in each and every one of their successes. You look at the map of the globe, and you know you're in a lot of different places, but clearly have a track record, and it's driven, I think, through that personal touch and those personal relationships, and so you know even though our relationship has been short it feels like you already know a great deal about our community, what our goals are, what our partners' goals are, and how you're gonna help us solve those.

## Q: Why is right now the right time to be in Frisco?

**Cheney:** Right now is the perfect time for a partnership like this just because of the brands that we have in our community that are trying to solve a lot of different challenges. I mean, we already have five corporate innovation hubs happening in our community, so there is a lot of bubbling up innovation happening, but it needed someone to really drive the ship, and so that's kind of where we wanted to lean into the kind of help expand and pour gas on that fire and we know through this partnership that Frisco as our goal is to be the venture capital of the central part of the United States by the year 2040 and we're well on our way.

## Q: Why is it important to focus on innovation in your region right now?

**Cheney:** In Frisco, we're just north of the Dallas-Fort Worth area, and we're known across the globe already as the fastest-growing city. We've been named number one at a lot of different things: best place to live, best place to do business, best place to raise an athlete, lots of number ones, but we have a lot of entrepreneurs and highly educated people in our community. We have a university, the University of North Texas, doing tier-one research, and we have Fortune 500 companies in our community, so we know we have to build the entire ecosystem, which is to have that startup environment to take advantage of the talent that we have in our community, the IP that's being built in our universities and create a thriving ecosystem for the Fortune 500 companies that want to be in our community.



# Our Impact in Texas

# PLUGANDPLAY MCKINNEY

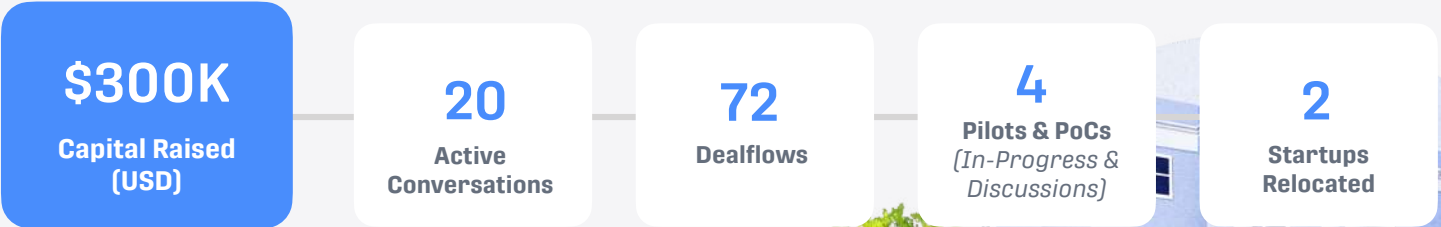
Blending historic charm with modern growth, McKinney’s thriving tech scene, spanning software, telecommunications, and IT, creates the perfect environment for startups and established companies alike.

Collaborating with local businesses and startups has reinforced our belief in McKinney’s potential, and after one incredible year here, we’re ready to build on this momentum in year two and beyond.

## Startup Engagement & Exposure



## Business Development & Opportunities



## George Fuller *Mayor of McKinney, Texas*

**Q: What is the current state of innovation in McKinney, and why did you see the need for further innovation?**

**George Fuller:** We are aggressive in trying to lure innovation companies to McKinney, Texas. We started the innovation fund with our economic development corporation four years ago. We've invested in dozens and dozens of companies that have created hundreds and hundreds of jobs and will be millions of dollars in economic impact. It's the industry that we want in McKinney.

**Q: Why do you think Plug and Play is the right partner?**

**Fuller:** Plug and Play is the industry leader, and they are the industry standard. They have the ability to connect ideas and technologies with consumers and customers, and they do that all over the world and have been doing that more successfully than anybody.



**George Fuller**

Mayor of McKinney, Texas (2017–Present)



**Q: What was the decision behind your focus on Enterprise & AI**

**Fuller:** AI, for us, is certainly the future; we all see it. It is rapidly taking hold in our business community and in our social community, so AI is just the leading industry that we feel McKinney is poised to capitalize on.





# Our Impact in Texas

While it's still early for **Sugar Land** and **Bryan-College Station**, we are excited about the opportunities ahead. In Sugar Land, our efforts will center on Smart Cities, while in Bryan-College Station, we aim to focus on Aerospace & Defense through our custom program called the **Innovation Triangle**, which we are powering alongside Texas A&M and the Greater Brazos Partnership.

These areas hold significant potential, and we are eager to leverage our global innovation platform to support local startups, foster regional growth, and drive meaningful economic impact.

The Innovation Triangle, in particular, leverages the extensive resources of the **Bush Combat Development Complex (BCDC)** and **Texas A&M** to create a powerful ecosystem for innovation. Texas is already home to leading aerospace and defense organizations like Lockheed Martin, Raytheon, and Army Futures Command, but the sector currently lacks cohesion.

**Our mission is to serve as the connective tissue**, uniting these key players and providing active testing grounds to fast-track advancements in defense technology. Together, we aim to transform innovation into impact.



## PLUGANDPLAY SUGAR LAND



## PLUGANDPLAY BRYAN-COLLEGE STATION





## Brian Butscher

***Assistant City Manager & COO, City of Sugar Land, Texas***

**Q: What are your thoughts about what happens at the Plug and Play Silicon Valley Summit?**

As a whole, this has been very eye-opening, very life-giving, and very exciting, as these are exactly the kind of things we want to bring to Sugar Land. Our vision in Sugar Land is to be trailblazers, and being trailblazers includes creating an environment for innovation and for technology, but also creating an environment where entrepreneurs feel they can thrive and they can really grow, and that's a big part of our mission at the city of Sugar Land. I would say, without a doubt, to date, our partnership with Plug and Play has been the biggest step we've taken towards being a trailblazing community.



**Brian Butscher**

Assistant City Manager & COO,  
*Sugar Land, Texas*



**Q: What are some of the main focus areas of the partnership?**

One of the main focuses for our partnership really is being a smart city and being a place for that vertical to really thrive. So one of our focuses for the city of Sugar Land through this partnership is to create an environment where the smart cities vertical can thrive, where people know Sugar Land as a smart cities hub and want to come and help build out that pillar directly.

**Q: What does it mean to have a Plug and Play location in your city?**

We are 100% committed to our vision as a community to be the trailblazers for our whole state. That trailblazer commitment is tied to fostering an environment for entrepreneurs to be successful, and without a doubt, this partnership with Plug and Play has opened the door for us to make that a reality.

**Q: What are some innovation goals that you have for the next year with Plug and Play?**

This partnership is so new, but our goal in the next year is to get Plug and Play there and to really make them a part of our community, really make them a part of the entire Houston area in a number of different ways throughout all different types of entrepreneurial ventures.

We're working hand-in-hand with the team here to find [the Plug and Play folks in our community] a place to help, to make sure that people know that they're there, and to make sure people know the services that they provide — really trying to market this relationship and really trying to build on what Plug and Play is, what the city of Sugar Land is, and collectively how we can trailblaze for the future.



Mayor of Bryan, Texas (2022–Present)

## Bobby Gutierrez

*"Innovation — that's not only important for Bryan, for College Station, and for Texas A&M. Innovation's important for the world. If you look at where we are geographically in the state of Texas, we're in the middle of everything. A lot of the innovation starts right here."*



Mayor of College Station, Texas (2022–Present)

## John Nichols

*"I'm really excited about the advancement for the community, to have an organization like Plug and Play here, to know that those resources are here and that they're working actively with their own offices and their own people to bring ideas and talent."*



Former Chancellor, Texas A&M University

## John Sharp

*"The A&M system is a \$2.4 billion research system. What's the purpose of research? Produce something that people use. Plug and Play has a Rolodex of 50,000 plus companies that can take a look at your invention, take a look at your research, and develop it for use by the people of this country and this world. Plug and Play, literally, is a lifesaver for us because it connects us to the people in the rest of the world who may be interested."*



President & CEO, Greater Brazos Partnership

## Susan Davenport

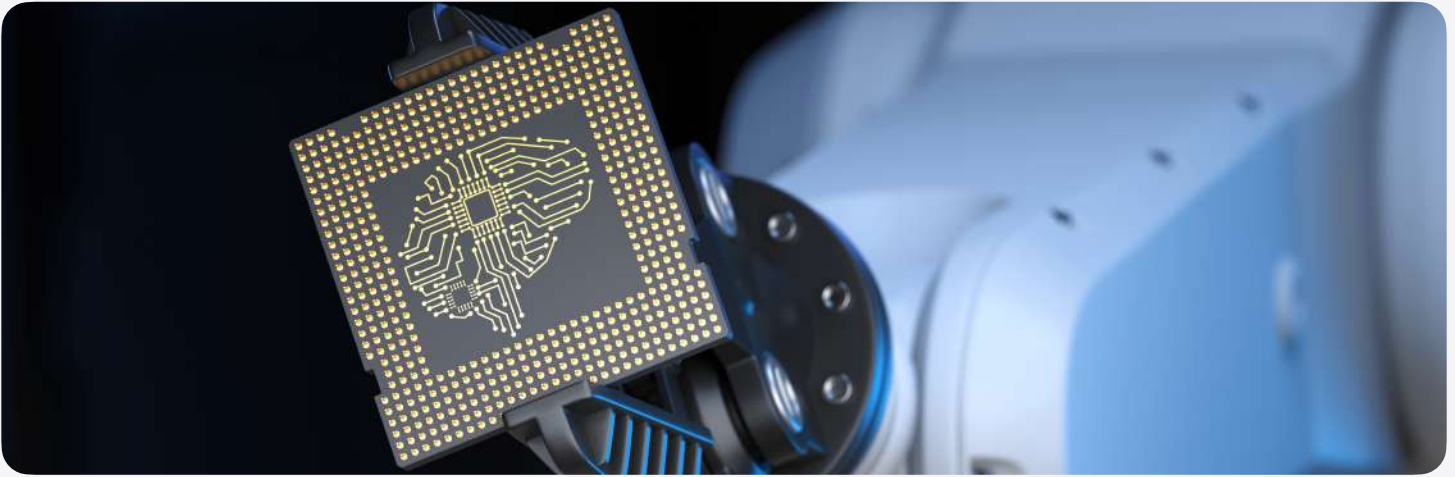
*"The beauty of this is there are corporate entities, some of the best in the world, and they will actually pick the startups that Plug and Play brings in its batch, and they'll also hopefully be coming in and out of our region. It provides a type of outreach that you really can't match. It's a marriage of two perfect groups for us today. You put all of that together in this great university and in this community and region. I think that's an unstoppable formula."*



# Trends in Texas

PLUGANDPLAY





## How AI is Transforming Texas into a Global Tech Powerhouse

Texas is becoming an epicenter of the AI revolution, transforming industries and redefining its economic future. Once known primarily for its energy sector, the state is now a powerhouse in artificial intelligence and data science, attracting billions in investments and creating thousands of high-demand jobs.

In 2023 alone, Texas saw AI-related investments skyrocket to \$22.4 billion — nearly nine times the previous year's total. AI and data science jobs in the state are projected to grow by 26.5% over the next decade, positioning Texas as a leader in this rapidly evolving field. The state's competitive advantages, including affordable energy, a central U.S. location, and its 434 data centers, are fueling this transformation.



Here are a few examples of how key industries in Texas are already leveraging this technology:

- **Advanced Manufacturing:** AI is optimizing production lines, cutting waste, and improving efficiency across advanced manufacturing facilities.
- **Fintech:** Companies are using AI to enhance fraud detection and predictive analytics, boosting financial security and innovation.
- **Sportstech:** AI tools monitor athlete performance in real time and elevate fan engagement strategies.
- **Smart Cities:** Urban areas are deploying AI for smarter traffic management and energy optimization.
- **Aerospace & Defense:** AI powers these critical sectors' simulations, autonomous systems, and cybersecurity.

These industries are no longer just testing AI but fully integrating it into their operations, driving efficiency and innovation.

## How AI is Transforming Texas into a Global Tech Powerhouse



Texas's unique mix of infrastructure, skilled workforce, and forward-thinking policies is driving its success in AI adoption. Public services like the [Texas Department of Transportation](#) are already leveraging AI to enhance [operations](#), from incident response to bridge inspections. Meanwhile, academic research and private-sector innovation are pushing the state further into the AI spotlight.

With billions in investment, surging job growth, and cutting-edge applications across industries, Texas is not only embracing the AI wave but also actively shaping its future. As AI becomes more deeply embedded in both public and private sectors, the state is setting itself apart as a leader in the AI-driven economy.

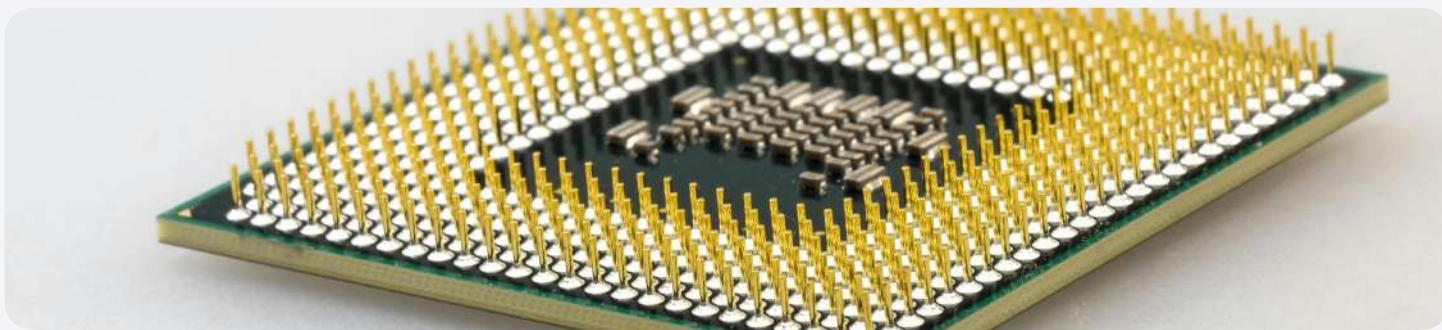
### Tackling AI's Growing Pains

Rapid AI growth comes with challenges, particularly regarding energy consumption and ethical concerns. [Data centers, essential for AI's computational demands, require massive amounts of energy.](#) In response, Texas facilities are implementing sustainable solutions, such as shifting workloads to cooler nighttime hours and using rainwater harvesting for cooling systems.

Regulation is another priority. In 2023, Texas introduced the [Texas Responsible AI Governance Act \(TRAIGA\)](#) to address risks associated with AI. Modeled after policies in the EU and Colorado, TRAIGA bans manipulative AI practices, restricts the misuse of biometric data, and aims to establish an AI Regulatory Sandbox Program to encourage innovation under ethical guidelines.







## Texas CHIPS Act: The Billion-Dollar Bet on America's Tech Future

The semiconductor industry, which powers everything from smartphones to advanced AI systems, owes its origins to a moment in Texas history. On September 12, 1958, Jack S. Kilby demonstrated the first working integrated circuit to managers at Texas Instruments — the first time electronic components were integrated onto a single substrate. This invention, born in Texas, laid the foundation for the modern semiconductor chip.

Today, as global supply chain disruptions and surging chip demand dominate headlines, the passage of the Texas CHIPS Act marks another pivotal moment. It's a call to action for startups, corporations, governments, and universities to harness new funding, research incentives, and collaborative initiatives, shaping the next era of semiconductor innovation in the very place it all began.

### A Bold Step for the Future of Chips

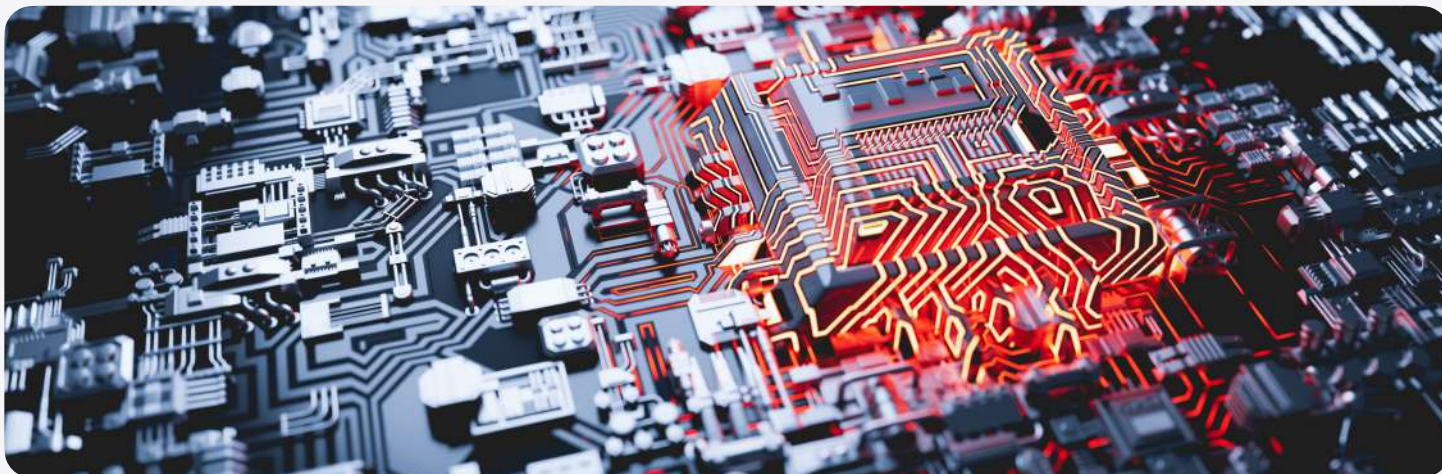
Signed into law in June 2023, the Texas CHIPS Act sets the stage for Texas to solidify its leadership in semiconductor manufacturing and technology. At its core, the Act establishes the Texas Semiconductor Innovation Consortium (TSIC) and the Texas Semiconductor Innovation Fund (TSIF), both of which are designed to amplify investment in the sector. These initiatives create unparalleled opportunities for stakeholders to expand capacity, advance research, and cultivate a highly skilled workforce.

Startups can tap into funding sources and incentive programs, using these resources to scale innovation in chip design and manufacturing. Established corporations now have a stronger foundation for expanding their operational footprint in Texas, fueled by advanced AI capabilities and state-of-the-art infrastructure. Universities, on the other hand, are positioned to lead transformative research that bridges academia and industry, creating a pipeline of talent and key discoveries. Here's how:

#### 1. Funding & Investment Incentives

The Texas CHIPS Act sets aside significant resources to attract semiconductor companies, fund research efforts, and grow local manufacturing capacity. The creation of the TSIF offers financial support to startups and established players, while the Act's alignment with federal programs like the U.S. CHIPS and Science Act amplifies the impact. For example, Texas Instruments recently secured \$1.6 billion in federal funding for new 300mm wafer fabs, demonstrating the scale of investment opportunities available.





## 2. Research and Workforce Development

By strengthening partnerships between academia and industry, the Act supports Texas universities in developing programs that enhance semiconductor design, manufacturing techniques, and R&D capabilities. These efforts are important for addressing the talent shortage in the sector, ensuring a steady flow of skilled engineers and researchers.

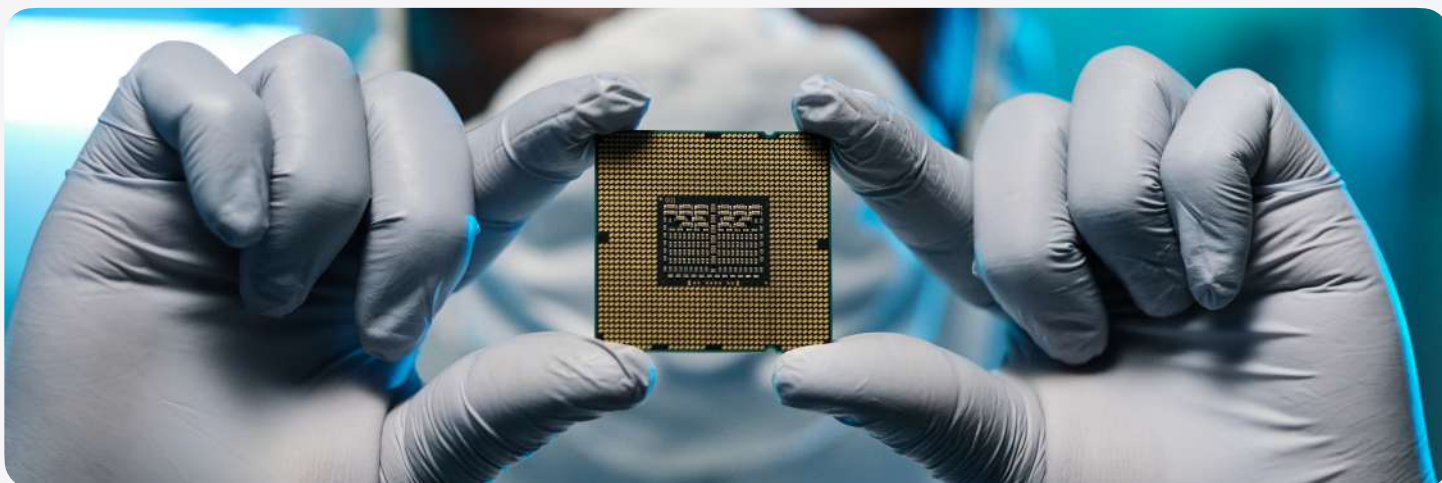
## 3. Collaborative Innovation

The TSIC will serve as a central hub for collaboration, driving a statewide strategic plan to advance semiconductor innovation. Its role as an advisory body allows stakeholders to align efforts, share resources, and collectively address challenges. This collaborative ecosystem will be key to sustaining Texas' competitive edge in a geopolitically complex semiconductor market.

## Opportunities vs. Challenges

The Texas CHIPS Act offers tremendous growth potential, but stakeholders must navigate challenges to fully capitalize on this transformative wave. Supply chain resiliency, the rising cost of materials, and global competition remain critical concerns. However, the combination of state and federal initiatives, such as tax credits and direct funding, provides a strong safety net for companies to innovate and expand.

Startups have a unique chance to disrupt the industry by leveraging funding and support to usher in the next-generation chip technologies. At the same time, corporations can build scalable, geopolitically stable production facilities while universities evolve into research powerhouses. Together, these efforts will not only bolster domestic chip production but also redefine the global semiconductor landscape.





## Why Everyone's Watching the Texas Space Commission in the Race for Space Innovation

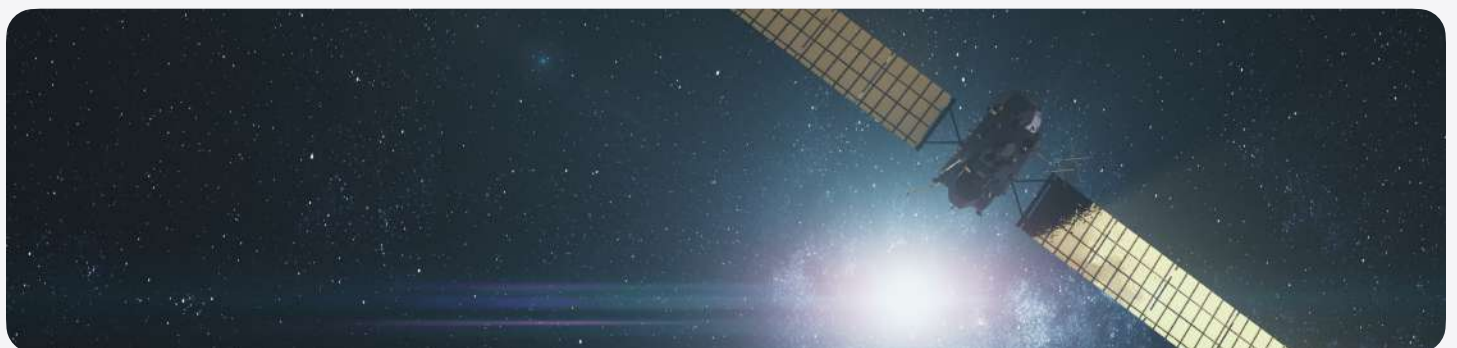
With the [launch of the Texas Space Commission on March 26, 2024](#), the Lone Star State is staking its claim as a powerhouse in the rapidly evolving space and defense industries. Governor Greg Abbott's initiative, headquartered at Houston's iconic Johnson Space Center, is not only a nod to Texas' historic role in space exploration but a bold leap toward creating a thriving commercial space ecosystem. The [latest wave of \\$26 million in grants](#) to forward-looking companies emphasizes the state's commitment to leading this charge.

The Texas Space Commission's strategic investments align perfectly with emerging trends: the commercialization of space operations, advancements in lunar exploration, and the development of breakthrough technologies like hypersonic travel and next-generation batteries. These aren't just futuristic ideas. They are being built and tested now, and the companies leading these innovations are setting the stage for a new era of global competition. For organizations looking to stay ahead, these developments are too significant to ignore.

### A New Era of Aerospace With Trends & Technologies From Grant-Winning Companies

Take the five companies that were just awarded grants. [Aegis Aerospace](#) is developing advanced materials manufacturing for in-space applications, while [ICON Technology](#) is creating lunar regolith simulants for construction testing: two technologies critical for a future where humans live and work on the Moon.

Meanwhile, [Interlune's](#) establishment of a "center of excellence" for lunar regolith simulants at Texas A&M's new Space Institute could transform how universities and researchers collaborate on space exploration. This kind of innovation isn't just about space. It's about fueling breakthroughs in materials science, engineering, advanced manufacturing, and education that will ripple across industries.







Corporations and governments, in particular, should take note of [KULR Technology Group](#)'s work on batteries with improved low-temperature performance and [Venus Aerospace Corporation](#)'s rocket engine test facility at Houston's booming Spaceport. These projects address two of the most pressing challenges in aerospace: energy efficiency and the development of hypersonic vehicles. From defense applications to commercial space travel, the technologies being developed in Texas are poised to disrupt global markets, and those who engage with the ecosystem now are placing themselves at the forefront.

### **From Research to Reality at Texas A&M in the Future of Aerospace**

The Texas Space Commission's focus on integrating research institutions with industry is a game-changer for universities. The Texas A&M Space Institute, situated at the Johnson Space Center, provides a blueprint for how academia can bridge the gap between research and commercialization. Universities looking to attract top talent, secure research funding, and establish partnerships with innovative startups and corporations should be watching closely. This model could redefine how research institutions contribute to economic and technological development on a global scale.

The Texas Space Commission is investing more than money — it's investing in a vision. By strategically aligning resources, fostering collaboration, and supporting innovation, Texas is creating an ecosystem that could shape the future of aerospace and defense for decades to come. For any organization that wants to play a role in this transformation, whether by investing in startups, leveraging new technologies, or forming strategic partnerships, now is the time to engage. The space race is no longer just about exploration; it's about building the infrastructure, economies, and opportunities of the future. And Texas is leading the charge.





# Closing Message & What's Next

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Texas has always been built for the long haul. This state was shaped by people who believed real progress comes from showing up, doing the work, and building things meant to last. What we set out to do was never about launching programs or chasing momentum. It was about creating something enduring by connecting the people and institutions that already made Texas strong.

This work has focused on building bridges across the ecosystem, between founders and capital, corporations and solutions, universities and industry, and communities and opportunity. When those connections are made with intention and trust, the impact extends well beyond individual deals or companies. It creates a system where innovation can take root, grow, and sustain itself over time.

Investing in Texas founders early has been central to that effort. Great ideas shouldn't have to leave home to be taken seriously. By backing entrepreneurs from day one and supporting them through every stage of growth, we ensure that innovation, employment, and economic prosperity remain rooted in the state. This commitment strengthens local communities and reinforces Texas as a place where belief is matched with action.

Texas is also home to some of the world's most influential companies. Our responsibility has been to listen closely, understand real challenges, and align innovation in ways that create lasting value. When corporations, startups, and public partners move together, the result is not short-term success, but long-term resilience that benefits entire regions.

If this work leaves behind a legacy, it's this: Texas did not need to copy anyone else's model to lead. By staying grounded in its culture of ownership, trust, and long-term commitment, while building globally connected pathways, Texas is shaping an innovation ecosystem defined not only by what it produces, but by the impact it creates and the foundation it leaves for generations to build upon.



**David Steele**  
*Director of Texas*

## Closing Message From David Steele, Director of Texas

### Our Goals & What's Next

## We help you in every step of your innovation journey

### We connect the best technology startups to the world’s largest corporations

Partnering with the largest organizations worldwide gives us a line of sight to identify the main pain points affecting each industry. We then focus on sourcing the best startups that can provide the best solutions to these challenges.

By collaborating with startups, corporations increase operational efficiencies, lower costs, find new product lines, and become more innovative from the core.

View our **2025 Company Performance Report** for more information: <https://pnptc.in/2025-report>

100K+

Carefully-curated international startups in our network


































550+

Partners

### Our Unicorns

30+

Portfolio Unicorns

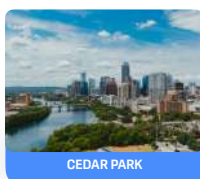
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\*Order by Date

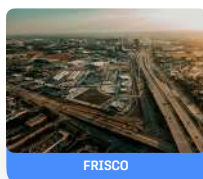


## How to Engage

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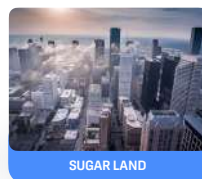
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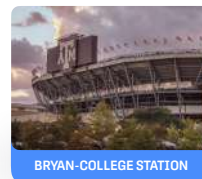
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## Get in touch

Want additional information?



### David Steele

Director of Texas  
Plug and Play

Contact: [texas@pnptc.com](mailto:texas@pnptc.com)



# NOTES

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