



AMERICAS COMPETITIVENESS EXCHANGE

on Innovation & Entrepreneurship

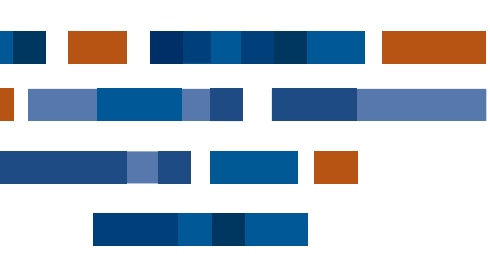
CENTRAL TEXAS | APRIL 2-7, 2017

Application Guide

Deadline to apply:

Friday, February 10, 2017

#ACXchange



INDEX

1. The Americas Competitiveness Exchanges (ACE)
2. The 7th Americas Competitiveness Exchange on Innovation and Entrepreneurship
3. Profile of Participants & Requirements
4. Logistics & Estimated Budget: Hotels, Transportation and Meals
5. Financial Support
6. Language
7. Visa
8. Selection Process and Criteria
9. General Information on Central Texas Cities and Sites
10. Website & Application Form
11. Contact Information

Appendix: General Information on Central Texas Cities and Sites



The 7th Americas Competitiveness Exchange on Innovation and Entrepreneurship (ACE)

A High-level Visit of Ministers, Business Leaders, and Economic Experts to Innovation Hubs in the State of Texas, United States

1. The Americas Competitiveness Exchanges (ACE)



The Americas Competitiveness Exchange (ACE) is a regional initiative of the Organization of American States (OAS) and the Inter-American Competitiveness Network (RIAC). Ministers and High-Level Authorities of the countries of the Americas approved ACE as one of the main activities of the [2016-2018 RIAC's Work Plan](#).

The ACE was originally created by the U.S. Department of Commerce, the U.S. Department of State and the Organization of American States (OAS) as RIAC Technical Secretariat.

The objective of the Exchange is to showcase successful examples of entrepreneurship, innovation, strategic investments and public-private partnerships from a specific region/country that contribute to the economic development at the local, national and regional levels. The event brings 50 economic and political decision makers from across the Americas and beyond for a five-day tour of innovative hubs, leading firms and educational and research institutions, to explore local and regional economic development models, share experiences and knowledge, and build networks among the local and visiting stakeholders to enhance innovation and competitiveness of the Americas.

The host regions/countries have been:

ACE I: Georgia, North and South Carolina, USA, April 2014

ACE II: Mexico City, Aguascalientes and Guadalajara, Mexico, August 2014

ACE III: Minnesota, Wisconsin and Illinois, USA, April 2015

ACE IV: Province of Cordoba, Argentina, October 2015

ACE V: Arizona and California, USA, April 2016

ACE VI: Province of Ontario, Canada, September 2016

ACE VII: Central Texas, USA, April 2017

ACE has produced **important results**, such as expanded talent pools, networks, and shared lessons on community-driven economic development among OAS member states. ACE has proven to be a successful instrument to facilitate cooperation and foster win-win development collaboration across the Western Hemisphere.

Some examples of the mutually beneficial partnerships developed, include: the collaboration between stakeholders in Conover, North Carolina and the State of Hidalgo, Mexico, supporting entrepreneurs in the textile industries of both countries; research centers and co-ops such as Organic Valley in Wisconsin and Escuela Superior Integral Lecheria (ESIL) of Villa María in Cordoba, Argentina, working on business and export development in the dairy industry; inspiring the enhancement of the New Belize Enterprise and Innovation Institute to include incubation programs; facilitating the cross-landing process of young entrepreneurs from UNITEC Honduras to interact and collaborate with the entrepreneurship ecosystems led by UC San Diego; giving momentum to the launch of a bilateral industrial internship program between Canada and Mexico through Mitacs, a Canadian not-for-profit research and training organization, and Mexico's National Council of Science and Technology (CONACYT).

Such has been the success of ACE that it was recognized as part of the 2016 North American Competitiveness Work Plan, agreed to by Presidents Obama and Peña Nieto and Prime Minister Justin Trudeau, in June 2016 at the North American Leaders Summit (NALS) held in Ottawa, Canada's capital.

<http://pm.gc.ca/eng/news/2016/06/29/economic-prosperity-trade-and-competitiveness>

Also, due to the ACE success, the Government of Argentina adopted the ACE model internally to share best practices within its country regions and sectors.

<http://prensa.cba.gov.ar/economia/la-innovacion-en-tecnologia-medica-se-reune-en-cordoba/>

2. The 7th Americas Competitiveness Exchange



Invitation to Apply

The 7th Americas Competitiveness Exchange on Innovation and Entrepreneurship invites key leaders and decision makers from the public, private and academic sectors to apply for this program. ACE provides the opportunity to experience first-hand advanced technology centers, innovation hubs, public-private partnerships, and strategic investments in Central Texas, United States.

Convening Institutions

7th ACE is convened by the Organization of American States and the Inter-American Competitiveness Network (RIAC); the Government of the United States, through its U.S. Department of Commerce (the International Trade Administration (ITA) and the Economic Development Administration (EDA)); the U.S. Department of State-Permanent Mission of the United States to the OAS; and the Government of Mexico, as Chair Pro Tempore of RIAC 2016-2018.

When & Where

The six-day tour will take place from Sunday, April 2 to Friday, April 7, 2017 through the cities of San Antonio, New Braunfels, Fredericksburg, San Marcos, College Station, and Austin in Central Texas, United States.

Target Clusters

Featured sites on the tour will target the following clusters: advanced manufacturing, bioscience, cybersecurity, life sciences, rural healthcare, disaster recovery and resiliency, IT, and agriculture.

Objectives

By the end of the 7th ACE, participants will see how Central Texas is:

- Establishing global commercial relationships and FDI partnerships among hosts and participants.
- Sharing and promoting best practices in economic development to strengthen local innovation and entrepreneurship ecosystems.
- Showcasing the importance and benefits of:
 - ✓ Public-private partnerships to advance a coordinated regional economic development strategy that leverages local assets;
 - ✓ A coordinated regional business plan to stimulate capital investment and job creation;
 - ✓ Research to understand problems and develop tools to achieve environmentally sound economic development;
 - ✓ Providing appropriate infrastructure for innovative businesses to startup and expand;
 - ✓ Connecting Universities, Industry, and Government to solve complex challenges no one sector or player could address on their own.

3. Profile of Participants & Requirements



Who is invited to apply?

This high-level program invites key decision makers who drive inclusive economic development in their countries, institutions, and communities: Ministers/Vice Ministers (of Economy, Industry, Trade, Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises, Science and Technology); Members of Congress/Legislature/Parliament; Private Sector and Local Government Leaders from cities/regions; Chancellors/Presidents/Vice Presidents of Universities; Presidents of Competitiveness Councils, Senior Leaders of Regional Economic Development, Small Business Development Center Leaders; Senior Public/Private/Academia Sector Individuals, and Top Entrepreneurs and societal influencers, among others. ACE strives to obtain strong representation from the public, private, and academic sectors on the program as well as having a gender balance.

What are the requirements?

- a. Have a professional and/or academic background that facilitate inter- and intra-country based development, such as foreign direct investment, trade, exports, supply chain linkages, shared technology, etc.
- b. Be able to allocate resources, propose and adopt key policies, and/or possess the necessary connections to make identified priorities and actions possible within their country and in collaboration with other countries.
- c. Be fluent in English. **All activities of the 7th ACE will be carried out in English.**
- d. Have a valid visa (if necessary) to enter the United States.
- e. Be able to provide visa, passport, photo, and other necessary information to complete travel procedures.
- f. Be able to participate during the entire program. Partial participation is not allowed.

4. Logistics & Estimated Budget



Registration

There is no registration fee for this program, but it is only open to selected applicants. If selected, candidates will have 10 business days to confirm their participation by sending proof of air fare purchase to abonilla@oas.org and leslie.wilson@trade.gov. Those who do not submit the requested documentation in a timely manner could lose their spot in the program.

Hotels

The total estimated hotel costs for the entire 7th ACE trip from April 1 to 7, 2017 is around USD 1,000. Participants will be responsible for arranging and paying for their own hotel reservations in all the cities we will be visiting. The selected participants will be provided with detailed information on the ACE hotels after selection.

Transportation

Participants will cover their airfare and the transportation to and from the airport. The program organizers will provide local transportation from site to site and between different cities free of charge.

Meals

Most meals are provided by the host cities and sites, but participants are responsible for other meals and miscellaneous/incidental items.

5. Financial Support



Competitive and limited partial economic assistance will be available for eight to ten qualifying selected candidates from the Americas who request support when filling out the application form. Particular consideration will be given to those from small economies in senior positions and/or those who work in Small Business Development Centers (SBDCs). Top female entrepreneurs will also be considered. Kindly note that full sponsorship is not available.

Based on the number of requests received and the needs of the candidates, beneficiaries of partial economic assistance will be granted the following:

1. Round-trip air fare + per diem to cover hotel accommodation for a maximum of five nights;
2. Round-trip air fare; or
3. Per diem to cover hotel accommodation for a maximum of five nights.

6. Language



The activities of the week-tour will take place in English.

7. Visa



Information about Visa requirements can be found at the following link:

<http://travel.state.gov/content/visas/en/visit.html>

8. Selection Process & Criteria

The selection process will take place as follows:

Open Call for Applications	Tuesday, December 6, 2017
Deadline to Apply	Friday, February 3, 2017
Acceptance letters will be sent to the First Pool of Accepted Candidates (candidates will have 10 business days to accept their spot)	February 13 – 17, 2017
Acceptance letters will be sent to the Second Pool of Accepted Candidates	February 20 – March 10, 2017
Declination letters will be sent to remaining candidates	February 27 – March 10, 2017
List of participants will be published	March 13, 2017

A maximum of 50 participants will be selected by an evaluation committee based on the following **CRITERIA:**

1. Key decision-makers and influencers
2. Ability to create long term economic connections
3. Gender, ethnic, and cultural diversity
4. Geographic and sectoral balance
5. Former ACE hosts and participants
6. Special categories: SBDC Directors, top entrepreneurs, and startups

7. Early application
8. Capacity to cover the cost of their participation

Kindly note that if a candidate is accepted into the program and he/she is unable to attend, the selected candidate cannot independently select an alternative candidate. The nomination is NOT transferable.

9. Website & Application Form



Website: www.riacevents.org/ace/texas

Application Form: [Link >>](#)

The deadline to apply is **Friday, February 3, 2017**

10. Contact Information



Adriana Bonilla

ACE Program Coordinator

Department of Economic Development

Executive Secretariat for Integral Development

Organization of American States

abonilla@oas.org

Leslie Wilson

ACE Application Coordinator

Mexico Desk Officer

International Trade Administration

U.S. Department of Commerce

leslie.wilson@trade.gov

Appendix: General Information on Central Texas Cities and Sites



Selected participants will get to know the economic ecosystem of Central Texas during a week of visits through the cities of San Antonio, New Braunfels, Fredericksburg, San Marcos, College Station, and Austin.

SAN ANTONIO (April 2 and 3)

The 7th ACE will kick off in Forbes' #1 "Hottest City for Millennials" - San Antonio, the largest city in Central Texas and the 7th largest in the United States. With a population, close to 1.5 million, San Antonio is one of the most diverse, internationally connected and inclusive cities.

With a vibrant culture and economy, it is consistently ranked among the fastest-growing cities in the United States and in 2018 will be celebrating its 300th anniversary.

The leaders and decision makers that attend ACE Central Texas will get a firsthand look at the depth of opportunities that exist within the region and in San Antonio, in industries such as bioscience and, healthcare, aerospace, cybersecurity, energy and transportation manufacturing.

Innovation and Entrepreneurship

San Antonio will showcase its key industries and set the scene for global relations and collaboration. Participants will network with industry leaders from established and start-up companies in these areas. They will also explore *linkages with* **University of Texas at San Antonio's Small Business Development Center (SBDC)**.

Participants will visit and experience our foremost research institutes including: Southwest Research Institute and Brooke Army Medical Center (BAMC).

[Southwest Research Institute](#) is headquartered in San Antonio, Texas and is one of the oldest and largest independent, nonprofit, applied research and development organizations in the United States. Notably, for more than three decades, they have been a recognized leader in space science research, as well as in the development of spacecraft instrumentation, avionics and electronics for both government and industry.

San Antonio is a regional hub for medical care in South Texas. For example, [BAMC](#), the United States Army's premier medical institution and research center, is located near the heart of the city and is a key reason why San Antonio is rapidly becoming the "Home of Military Medicine". San Antonio is increasingly recognized as a national center for bioscience research and innovation. With the largest military healthcare and biomedical research operations in the United States, it is providing unique collaborative opportunities not available elsewhere. The city's vibrant research community is discovering and developing new treatments, vaccines and prevention techniques for some of mankind's most challenging and complex diseases, such as cancer, cardiovascular disease and diabetes, as well as bio-threat agents like smallpox, Ebola and tularemia. Research is the fuel that drives bioscience industry growth, and in San Antonio it springs from three distinct, but collaborative, sources: academia/non-profits, the military, and the private sector.

Urban Revitalization and Development

No visit to San Antonio would be complete without experiencing the [Riverwalk](#), and the award-winning mixed-use redevelopment center of the [Pearl](#). The Pearl is a culinary and cultural destination in San Antonio. This former brewery has been transformed into a gathering place where everyone is welcome to live, eat, play and learn along the banks of the San Antonio River. An evening at the Pearl will showcase first-hand the revitalization and its impact and, weather permitting, participants will have a chance to ferry back to the hotel on the world-famous San Antonio [river barges](#).

Culture and Entertainment

Participants will have the opportunity to either visit the UNESCO World Heritage Designated Missions or cheer for the five-time NBA champion San Antonio Spurs.

San Antonio is proud of its [UNESCO World Heritage Missions](#), the first and only World Heritage site in Texas. It encompasses a group of five frontier mission complexes situated along a stretch of the San Antonio River basin, as well as a ranch located 37 kilometers to the south of the city. The complexes were built by Franciscan missionaries in the 18th century and illustrate the Spanish Crown's efforts to colonize, evangelize and defend the northern frontier of New Spain. The San Antonio Missions are also an example of the interweaving of Spanish and Coahuiltecan cultures, illustrated by a variety of features, including the decorative elements of churches, which combine Catholic symbols with indigenous designs inspired by nature.

NEW BRAUNFELS (April 4)

The 7th ACE will stop in New Braunfels, Texas - ranked in 2016 as the second fastest growing city in the United States with a population over 70,000 and expected to reach 85,000 by 2021.

Founded by skilled German and Hispanic craftsman, New Braunfels became a trade and tourism center early that have led to a great quality of life. Its geographical location between Austin and San Antonio on I35 has helped to foster a diverse, business economy. Led by a strong entrepreneurial spirit, the New Braunfels visit will showcase four themes covered by the program: bio-med and healthcare, creative economy and workforce development.

Life Sciences and MedTech

Healthcare is the second largest industry in New Braunfels with two hospitals and rehabilitation centers. Participants will visit [Resolute Health Hospital](#), owned by Tenet Health and home to the highest level Neonatal Intensive Care Unit between Austin and San Antonio. It also provides a full range of services and the only minimally-invasive robotic surgery in New Braunfels. The hospital is

a prototype for its approach to wellness and family and approached the idea of treatment as medical tourism by implementing way to provide activities for family members during hospital stays. Additionally, the location was sited not only for regional needs, but also for its easily accessible location from Mexico and Central America.

Creative Economy

Participants will visit the local [Central Texas Technology Center \(CTTC\)](#), an Alamo Colleges campus that received two EDA grants to fund and then later expand the facility through the use of innovative funding through partnerships. The CTTC expansion will increase the availability of Arts and Science courses, making it easier for students to earn an associate degree. The EDA grants also led to the expansion of biology and chemistry labs.

Participants will dine at Gruene Hall (Texas Oldest Dance Hall) and catered by [The Gristmill](#) (restaurant housed in a former cotton gin). Both are situated in historic Gruene, Texas. Founded in 1975, Pat Molak and Mary Jane Nalley bought and worked to preserve the authentic, turn-of-the-century look and feel of Gruene by purchasing and repairing several of the town's most notable structures and transforming them into thriving businesses.

Participants will hear from Terri Adams with [Schlitterbahn Waterparks](#), a family owned waterpark that began with four slides in 1979. Since then, Schlitterbahn Waterparks has expanded their innovative, patented and award-winning ideas to five different waterparks and has been continuously ranked as America's #1 Waterpark. Additionally, Schlitterbahn sells their products to the international market and collaborates ideas with other waterpark companies by hosting foreign student workers to learn Schlitterbahn best practices and concepts.

Workforce Development

Providing workforce training at the CTTC not only makes continuing education training readily available, but also support courses in areas such as manufacturing operations applied science, logistics management applied science, and welding technology applied science. The reutilization of workforce development space provides opportunity to support training needs of newly recruited businesses, as well as business prospects exploring the area for development or reshoring of jobs. Participants will learn about the success that Alamo Colleges has had with the CTTC has led to two other post-secondary providers to locate in New Braunfels. Howard Payne University offers classes here now with plans to build a 100-acre campus in the near future. Wayland Baptist University has opened a large presence in New Braunfels and is in the process of moving their nursing school here.

FREDERICKSBURG (April 4)

Located in the heart of the Texas Hill Country, [Fredericksburg](#) is a city of approximately 11,000 residents with a vibrant economy based on agriculture, tourism, education, specialty food and beverage production, precision component fabrication and medicine. Founded in 1846 by 120 German pioneers on the frontier of Texas, the city today offers a high quality lifestyle in an area of scenic beauty, while also providing easy access to two of the fastest growing metropolitan areas of Texas and their international airports.

Agriculture and Wine Tourism

Historically, cattle, sheep and goat production have been mainstays of the ranches of the Texas Hill Country and that continues today. Since the 1940s, the Fredericksburg area has been known for peach production – with about 40% of the Texas peach crop harvested in Gillespie County today. Fredericksburg is also home to the largest [wildflower farm](#) in the world. Over the last 20 years, Fredericksburg region has emerged as a wine tourism destination with nearly 40 wineries

and tasting rooms. *Wine Enthusiast* named the Texas Hill Country as one of the top 10 wine regions in the world to visit in 2014. Dr. Ed Hellman with [Texas Tech University](#), whose research focus is viticulture (primarily investigating grapevine adaption to climate and vineyard management practices) will introduce the group to the rapidly expanding Texas wine industry. He will also discuss a new undergraduate degree specialization in *Sustainable Local Food and Wine Production Systems* that will be offered in the fall in Lubbock and Fredericksburg – the first of its kind at a university in the United States.

Medicine in a Rural Environment

[Hill Country Memorial Hospital](#) in Fredericksburg has been named one of the Top 100 Hospitals in the United States for five years in a row and winner of the [Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award](#) in 2014, which is managed by the U.S. Commerce Department’s Institute of Standards and Technology. The Restore Program for total knee, shoulder and hip replacement consistently ranks as #1 in Texas and is among the best in the nation. Jayne Pope, CEO of Hill Country Memorial Hospital, will provide insight into the metrics of success for her organization in a rural setting.

Precision Machine Components

Fredericksburg is home to numerous computerized fabrication companies who create intermediate and finished products for clients around the United States. These companies create precision machine components (metal and plastic) for the oil and gas, aerospace, medical, military and communications industries. Dave Campbell, president of [Heartland Enterprises](#), will discuss the capabilities of the fabrication industry in Fredericksburg.

SAN MARCOS (April 5)

Located midway between Austin and San Antonio, the Greater San Marcos region boasts a talented and diverse population of 3.5 million within a 60-mile radius with the infrastructure, affordability and quality of life that make it an attractive location to live, work, and play. The city of San Marcos, with a population of 60,000, sits at the center of the innovation and economic growth of the Austin-San Antonio Corridor, the area *Forbes* recently hailed as “[America’s Next Great Metropolis](#)” which is growing (in terms of population, jobs and economy), at a pace faster than that of Austin, San Francisco, New York and Chicago. San Marcos is on the southern end of the Austin Metropolitan Area and is the county seat of Hays County, ranked as the fastest growing county in the U.S. by the Census Bureau, which also ranked San Marcos as America’s fastest growing city for three consecutive years (2013-2015). Participants will hear first-hand about initiatives to accommodate this fast pace of growth with community, business and academic leaders who are driving the regional economy in the heart of this “Innovation Corridor”.

Innovation: Research with Relevance

The strength of the San Marcos economy can be directly linked to the presence of [Texas State University](#), a fast-growing Emerging Research University and the 4th largest university in the state with 39,000 students. Due to its diverse student population, the U.S. Department of Education recognized Texas State University as a Hispanic Serving Institution, the largest in the State of Texas. Texas State is committed to applied research and is a source for innovation, industry collaboration, entrepreneurship and cutting-edge research in advanced materials, water research, and biotechnology, including the country’s only PhD program in [Material Science, Engineering and Commercialization](#).

Participants will hear from Texas State President Dr. Denise Trauth, Chief Research Officer Dr. Walter Horton and other academic leaders. The visit to Texas State will include a tour of the Science, Technology and Advanced Research Park (“[STAR Park](#)”), the University’s research park which hosts STAR One, the first building in the park which serves as a technology accelerator for

start-up and early stage companies. Participants will meet with and tour STAR Park's companies including [MicroPower Global](#) (a thermo power generation company), [Quantum Materials](#) (a manufacturer of tetrapod quantum dots), and [Blueshift Materials](#) (the manufacturer of the first commercially available polyimide aerogel).

Regional Industry Collaboration

Participants will hear from some of our local companies in advanced manufacturing and logistics industries including [CFAN](#) (Joint Venture between GE and SNECMA and a leader in Composites used in the aerospace industry), [Thermon](#) (global leader in heat tracing cable industry), [RSI, Inc.](#) (manufacturer of ruggedized equipment used in global defense industries and oil and gas), and [Mensor](#) (a division of WIKA Group, global leader in pressure calibration). We'll also hear about the region's largest economic development success story, nationally ranked as the "Deal of the Year": the recruitment of the [Amazon Fulfillment Center](#) to San Marcos – an 855,000 square foot facility which will hire 1,000 employees at full capacity.

Unique Cultural & Environmental Assets

San Marcos is known for recreational activities including world-class shopping (the San Marcos Outlet Mall complex is the largest outlet mall complex in the U.S. featuring both [Premium](#) and [Tanger](#) with 14 million visitors annually) and the crystal-clear spring-fed waters of Spring Lake and the [San Marcos River](#). Participants will tour [The Meadows Center for Water and the Environment](#), a leading research center bringing multi-disciplinary expertise to real-world, water-related challenges. The Center is located on Spring Lake at the headwaters of the San Marcos River, an environmentally, culturally and archeologically significant site making San Marcos one of the oldest continuously inhabited sites in North America. Originally the site of one of Texas' oldest amusement parks (Aquarena Springs), participants will tour the crystalline waters of this unique environmental asset on the Meadow's historic Glass Bottom Boats.

COLLEGE STATION (April 6)

College Station is located in the heart of the Texas Triangle – a megaregion with five of the 20 most populated cities in the U.S. and home to more than 13.8 million Texans. With 109,000 in population and counting, College Station has experienced double-digit growth in median household income and population since 2009. Known as the home of [Texas A&M University](#), the largest university in Texas and flagship campus of the [Texas A&M University System](#), College Station is also home to the [George Bush Presidential Library and Museum](#) and [Disaster City](#), a 52-acre training facility for emergency response professionals from around the world. College Station’s well-educated workforce and numerous research- and innovation-based organizations have bolstered a strong and vibrant economy centered on government-university relationships and technology innovation.

Economic Resiliency

Participants will take part in a tour of Disaster City, a mock community featuring full-scale, collapsible structures designed to simulate various levels of disaster and wreckage. Managed by the [Texas A&M Engineering Extension Service \(TEEX\)](#), the site attracts thousands of emergency responders from around the world. TEEX also offers a variety of training courses on topics such as cybersecurity, rescue, law enforcement, and oil spill response. More than 160,000 people from 80 countries train with TEEX each year.

University Culture

Participants will visit [Kyle Field](#), the Texas A&M University football stadium and fifth-largest sporting venue in the country, and learn about the Texas A&M University System – one of the nation’s largest systems of higher education with a budget of \$4.2 billion. With more than 66,000 students enrolled at its flagship campus in College Station and 436,000 former students

worldwide, Texas A&M also maintains many collaborative partnerships in international locations such as Qatar, Mexico and Costa Rica.

Technology Innovation

Recognized as a top research university nationwide, participants will learn about many of the Texas A&M facilities and programs that employ innovative technologies.

Participants will visit the [National Center for Therapeutics Manufacturing \(NCTM\)](#), which provides technical training and programs for the biopharmaceutical and vaccine manufacturing workforce, as well as bioprocess development services. NCTM was established in 2009 with the support of the State of Texas Emerging Technology Fund and offers 152,000 square feet of workforce development and biomanufacturing space.

In conjunction with NCTM, participants will hear about innovations in vaccine development from representatives of the [Pandemic Influenza and Live Virus](#) vaccine facilities. Beyond the manufacture of seasonal vaccines, these facilities will work to actively develop vaccines towards pandemic influenza strains that can be manufactured in large quantities, producing up to 50 million vaccine doses within four months of notification from the federal government.

Participants will also hear from representatives of [Texas A&M AgriLife Research](#), the state's premier research agency in agriculture, natural resources, and life sciences. While maintaining a traditional connection to farming and ranching through the study of pressing agricultural issues such as plant diseases and animal parasites, AgriLife Research is also developing crops with enhanced nutrition, studying renewable energy sources, and implementing new methods to improve air and water quality. The agency's work is global in scale and supported by international partners such as the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations and Pan American Health Organization.

Participants will also learn about the [Texas A&M Institute for Preclinical Studies \(TIPS\)](#), which facilitates the inclusion of animals with naturally occurring disease as viable research models.

TIPS provides unique opportunities to develop new therapeutics in the fields of oncology, cardiology, immunology, endocrinology, and an array of genetic disorders common to humans and animals.

AUSTIN (April 7)

Since 2011, Austin has received more than 50 local and national rankings. The Austin metropolitan area is consistently recognized among the most inventive, creative, wired, educated, fit, and loved cities in which to live and work. The Milken Institute ranked the Austin metropolitan area number 4 in its “2015 Best-Performing Cities report”, which ranks U.S. metropolitan areas by how well they are creating and sustaining jobs and economic growth. While in Austin, the visit will highlight the diverse economy of the city that has made it incredible place to live, work, and play.

Life Sciences and MedTech

Austin is home to 200 life science companies in the region, with a workforce of over 12,300. Anchored by University of Texas at Austin, a tier 1 research institution with \$600 million in annual research funding and 50 research units related to Life Science. Participants will visit the new [Dell Medical School](#), which opened in 2016, the first Tier 1 medical school in 50 years. Dell Medical School and connected Seton Teaching Hospital are positioned to be the leaders in medical education with a focus on population health where it services whole patient, not just a procedure at a time.

Mobility Innovations

Aerospace Tourism & Advancements: Experience the flight simulators of RedBird Flight and meet with University of Texas Gary Cadenhead, Director of [Masters Degree for Technology and Space Commercialization](#) and Chief Architect of Change Management at IBM, Paul Baffes (also the Chairman of the Greater Austin Space Economy Taskforce) *Automotive and Transportation*

Innovations: Take a virtual tour in the Google Self-Driving Car track in Austin and meet University of Texas President Gregory Fennes, RideScout (now [Moovel](#)) CEO Joseph Kopser and discuss Austin transportation opportunities and advancements with [Rocky Mountain Institute](#) leaders and City of Austin transportation authority – CapMetro

Creative Economy

Entrepreneurial Ecosystem: Austin has the most startups per capita than any other city in the United States and is home to the oldest incubator in the USA - IC² now celebrating its 40th year in business and born out of a partnership between the City of Austin and the University of Texas. We are known as an early-adopter city, with more than 23 accelerators in town and hundreds of new and innovative ideas in each of these places. Participants will meet the players in the entrepreneurial and small business sectors that have made Austin the #1 Tech City to Move to (by Huffington Post): [Capital Factory](#) CEO Josh Baer, Texas State SBDC Director Joe Harper, [International Accelerator](#) Director Phil Pompa, City of Austin Small Business Director Vicky Valdez, Austin Community College Continuing Education Director Hector Aguilar, and [Kendra Scott](#) CEO. *Creative Economy:* Austin's creative sector of music, film, visual artists, digital media, and gaming has risen by 25% over the past 5 years, a pace more rapid than the 10% growth for the local economy as a whole. Participants will learn about Austin's robust and collaborative creative economy including music, art, film, and gaming. Meet with Film Director [Robert Rodriguez](#), [Rooster Teeth](#) Burnie Burns, Music Producer, AJ Vallejo, Tim League with [Alamo Drafthouse](#), [New Era Portfolio](#) CEO Joe Garcia and executives from [Electronic Arts](#).