

Silicon Oasis

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**AZ PropTech Collective
Ignites Arizona's
Innovation Scene**
Page 12

**Binsr Inspect Raises
\$1.1 Million**
Page 21

**The Arizona Startup
Teaching AI How to
Work for Humans**
Page 23



TABLE OF CONTENTS

Message from the Editor	page 4
Vision and Impact	page 5
Silicon Oasis Community	page 6
University Moves	page 10
Economic Development	page 12
Funding Rounds	page 16
Investor Insights	page 22
Founder Advice	page 24
Startup Spotlight	page 26
Founder Spotlight	page 33
Meet Our Ambassadors	page 40

Silicon Oasis Magazine

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A MESSAGE FROM OUR EDITOR



Kyle Macdonald
Editor-in-Chief,
Silicon Oasis

Kyle Macdonald

This October, Arizona’s innovators aren’t just building startups they’re building systems of trust.

Across the Valley, a new kind of founder is emerging: pragmatic, data-driven, and quietly relentless. They’re turning bold ideas into infrastructure, not headlines.

From **MicroPay Technologies**, reimagining compliance and digital trust, to **Steer Co**, teaching AI how to think with people instead of for them, the desert’s next wave of builders is focused on what lasts.

At the same time, breakthroughs like **Gravitrex’s** walking-assist device and **Sky Island AI’s** Virtual Case Manager show how Arizona startups are humanizing technology blending empathy with engineering. Add in the **AZ PropTech Collective’s** surge of collaboration, and it’s clear: this ecosystem is no longer forming.

Arizona’s tech story isn’t about hype. It’s about persistence, reinvestment, and a community that builds, fails, and rises together.

Kyle MacDonald
Co-Founder, Silicon Oasis



VISION & IMPACT

Transforming Arizona into a global tech hub led by local founders, built for the future.

Silicon Oasis is a nonprofit dedicated to uniting Arizona's tech ecosystem. Our mission is to strengthen the local innovation economy by bringing together founders, investors, and entrepreneurs—and by creating spaces where collaboration can thrive.

We do this in three key ways:

- Centralizing the Ecosystem through startup-focused events and practical workshops led by experienced builders and funders.
- Cultivating Community by fostering authentic, expectation-free connections that go beyond traditional networking.
- Spotlighting Talent with dynamic video podcasts and media that highlight Arizona's most promising innovators.



AZ PROPTech COLLECTIVE IGNITES ARIZONA'S INNOVATION SCENE

Founders, investors, and visionaries gather to launch a new movement redefining how Arizona builds, connects, and innovates.

By Jennifer Conrad, Contributing Editor

The energy around Arizona's real estate innovation scene is shifting — and at the center of it is the new launched **AZ PropTech Collective**, the state's first organization dedicated to uniting real estate, technology, and construction professionals.

Launched three weeks ago in partnership with Silicon Oasis, the Collective has already become a focal point for collaboration among founders, investors, and industry leaders working to shape the future of how Arizona builds, manages, and experiences property.

The launch event buzzed with conversation as innovators filled the venue — trading ideas on everything from AI-driven property management to sustainable community



The AZ PropTech Collective unites developers, technologists, designers, and real estate professionals.

design. What began as a grassroots effort to connect Arizona's proptech builders quickly evolved into a full-scale movement.

Building Arizona's PropTech Ecosystem

As a new pillar partner of Silicon Oasis, the AZ PropTech Collective was created to foster relationships across industries that rarely share the same room — developers, technologists, designers, and real-estate professionals. Its mission is simple: to make Arizona a national leader in property technology and smart-building innovation.

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Silicon Oasis Community

“The goal is to create a space where innovators in property technology can connect, collaborate, and push new ideas forward,” said organizers. “Arizona has all the ingredients — talent, capital, and a thriving real-estate market — to lead nationally in this sector.”

Spotlight on Founders and Breakthroughs

One of the evening’s highlights came from **Leah Walczak, Founder and CEO of GemHaus®**, who announced the launch of her AI-powered platform for residential real-estate investors just hours before the event.

“We launched earlier that day, and the response has been incredible,” Walczak shared.

“GemHaus helps property owners optimize their portfolios through intelligent data and automation — it’s about turning insight into performance.” Her announcement captured the spirit of the evening — bold ideas meeting real-world execution.

Also among the attendees was **Caylee Shea Harrington, Founder and CEO of Hookhub**, who joined as one of the Collective’s founding members. She noted that the energy in the room reflected more than excitement — it reflected alignment.

“It was inspiring to see so many founders, investors, and technologists shaping the future of property technology,” Harrington said. “The collaboration and insight made it clear — Arizona is stepping into a leadership role in this space.”



The Collective is now a hub for founders, investors, and industry leaders shaping the future of real estate.

Exploring the Future of Real Estate

The panel discussion brought together Walczak, Ryan Johnson of Opendoor & Culdesac, and Mitch Karren of ElevateOS (formerly Elevated Living) & SmartRent. Their conversation ranged from AI integration and data interoperability to the rise of connected communities and the evolution of “land-as-a-service.”

Their shared takeaway: PropTech isn’t just a trend — it’s a structural shift in how the real-estate industry operates, where data and design work together to create smarter, more livable spaces.

Continuing the Momentum

In the weeks since the launch, the AZ PropTech Collective has continued to expand its network and outline plans for upcoming events, workshops, and collaborations across the state. With Silicon Oasis as a strategic partner, the organization is positioning Arizona at the forefront of national conversations around property innovation.

The excitement of launch night may have passed, but the ripple effect is growing. The AZ PropTech Collective isn’t just watching Arizona’s innovation story unfold — it’s writing the next chapter.

BUILDING WITH AI: ARIZONA'S COLLECTIVE LEAP INTO AGENTIC AUTOMATION

Arizona's innovators are turning automation into collaboration and shaping the future of intelligent work.

By Jennifer Conrad, Contributing Editor

On a November afternoon in Phoenix, innovators will gather not just to talk about artificial intelligence — but to *build* with it. Laptops open and sleeves rolled up, they'll step into a new kind of experiment: one where humans and machines learn to think together.

It's called **agentic automation**, a shift in how we approach work. Unlike traditional automation, which follows rigid rules, agentic systems adapt. They sense, respond, and make decisions — handling both the *thinking* and the *doing*, while humans focus on strategy, creativity, and insight.

That's the focus of the **Agentic Automation Hands-On Workshop**, hosted by the **AI Collective Arizona Chapter**, **UiPath**, **qBotica**, and **Silicon Oasis** on **November 12**. The in-person workshop invites founders, operators,



The in-person workshop invites founders, operators, and technologists to explore UiPath's latest tools.

and technologists to explore UiPath's newest tools — and to imagine what happens when automation evolves from a process into a partner.

For **Caia Taback**, a health tech innovator and ecosystem architect, the purpose is simple: to make AI approachable. “This isn’t just another tech event,” Taback says. “It’s a hands-on workshop where you’ll see how agentic automation can actually work in your day-to-day. UiPath’s Agent Builder bridges human insight and AI execution so your systems think with you, not just for you.”

Silicon Oasis Community

The workshop blends live instruction with experimentation. Attendees will explore **UiPath's Agent Builder**, apply what they learn to real-world workflows, and hear a **case study from Phoenix-based qBotica**, one of Arizona's automation pioneers. The goal: give participants a tactile understanding of AI as a collaborator rather than a tool.

For **Maresh Vinayagam**, CEO of qBotica and co-founder of the AI Collective Arizona Chapter, the workshop embodies the state's growing AI identity. "The innovation happening here is deeply human," he says. "It's about people coming together to explore what's possible when AI and intuition work hand in hand."

Arizona's rise as a hub for applied AI is evident. From healthcare startups to automation platforms, the state is becoming a proving ground for technologies that don't just increase efficiency but elevate the way we work.

That ethos drives **Silicon Oasis**, a nonprofit uniting founders, engineers, and investors through community and storytelling. Events like this workshop are at the heart of its mission: bringing people together to experiment, connect, and learn in real time.

The **AI Collective**, a global network of over 100,000 founders, researchers, and

technologists, amplifies this impact. Its Arizona chapter fosters hands-on, community-driven learning, making complex AI concepts accessible and actionable for local innovators.

In an era when automation can feel abstract, the workshop offers something different: experimentation, mentorship, and human connection. By the end of the session, participants won't just gain technical skills, they'll glimpse a future of work where AI and humans collaborate seamlessly.

Innovation isn't confined to labs or boardrooms. It's happening in coworking spaces, local meetups, and workshops like this grounded in community, curiosity, and human potential. Arizona isn't just adopting AI; it's shaping the future of intelligent work.

November 12 | 1:00–5:00 PM

Phoenix (Tempe area)

Scan Below To Register



GITHIRED: ASU STUDENTS REDEFINE STARTUP HIRING

Born at CalHacks, this ASU-built platform analyzes GitHub profiles instead of résumés — giving startups a faster, fairer way to find real engineering talent.

By Jennifer Conrad, Contributing Editor

Every founder knows the pain. You're staring at a stack of résumés that all look the same — pages of buzzwords, frameworks, and self-proclaimed "10x engineers." But when it's time to actually ship code, only a few can deliver.

At this year's **CalHacks**, the world's largest collegiate hackathon, a team of Arizona State University students decided to end that guessing game. Their project, **GitHired**, doesn't read résumés — it reads code.

A Platform Built Where Builders Belong

CalHacks has become a proving ground for some of the brightest emerging minds in tech — but more than that, it's a space built on belonging. Whether you've barely coded or have twenty hackathons under your belt, the event's message is simple: you belong here.



The ASU team behind GitHired built their award-winning platform in 48 hours — redefining how startups find and evaluate engineering talent.

As the organizers put it, "As long as you're passionate about technology and looking to change the world, you belong at CalHacks." It's an ethos that echoes through every project — and it's exactly the kind of inclusive, high-energy environment that sparked GitHired's creation.

Working side by side over 48 hours, **ASU students Raghav Bansal, Aarav Matalia, Asmi Kachare, and Krishna Govind Oza** built a platform designed to make hiring faster, fairer, and more accurate for startups everywhere.

University Moves

The Birth of a Better Signal

For early-stage founders, hiring the right engineer can make or break momentum. Yet traditional recruiting still relies on outdated résumés, keyword filters, and contrived technical tests that rarely reveal how someone actually builds.

GitHired flips the process. Instead of scanning résumés, it analyzes GitHub profiles directly — surfacing each developer’s strongest tech stacks, most complex projects, and top contributions (even from private repos). The result is a live, **one-page portfolio that lets code speak louder than credentials.**

“It’s impossible to tell the cracked coders from the posers just by looking at resumes,” the team explains. “So we built a way to make the real work visible.”

48 Hours, One Trophy, and a Vision

Forty-eight hours. Hundreds of teams. Thousands of lines of code. And one idea that caught fire.

By the end of **CalHacks**, **GitHired** took home the top prize — earning recognition from sponsors, judges, and investors alike.

Team lead **Raghav Bansal** shared his excitement:

“Hey CalHacks, we had some unfinished business... consider it settled. Huge thanks to our sponsor Composio, to Jitesh Luthra for the feedback and support, and to the best team I could’ve asked for.”



GitHired analyzes Github directly by surfacing each developer's strongest tech stack and complex projects.

From Code to Clarity

GitHired isn’t just a resume alternative — it’s a reality check. The platform ranks applicants based on how closely their skills align with the specific job description, saving founders hours of screening. It also includes a **built-in AI-integrated coding challenge, allowing candidates to use AI copilots during the assessment** — a forward-thinking move that mirrors how engineers actually work in today’s hybrid, AI-assisted environments.

The Future of Hiring Is Transparent

For startups chasing traction, hiring isn’t about pedigree — it’s about proof. GitHired’s ASU founders believe the next generation of recruiting should be transparent, merit-based, and grounded in what builders can actually create.

“Resumes belong to the old internet,” says Bansal. “The next generation of hiring is based on what you can actually build.”

Watch their CalHacks-winning demo:

<https://youtu.be/bajCGzs3QBk?si=G5FI96CHZbckTJtd>

FUELING THE NEXT WAVE:

VENTURE MADNESS REDEFINES ARIZONA'S STARTUP FUTURE

Two Decades of Leadership Come Full Circle as a New Era Begins

By Jennifer Conrad, Contributing Editor

After twenty years of helping shape Arizona's venture landscape, **Karen Katzorke** is stepping down as **Executive Director of Venture Madness by Invest Southwest**, marking the end of an extraordinary era for one of the state's most influential startup institutions.

In her place, the Venture Madness Board of Directors has appointed **Aaron Favreau—Director at Arizona Venture Capital (AVC)**—to guide the organization into its next phase of growth and innovation.

A Legacy of Community and Connection

Katzorke's relationship with **Venture Madness** began long before her leadership role. In the early 2000s, she worked behind the scenes when the program was still known as the **Arizona Venture Capital Conference**, helping it evolve into a statewide platform that connected early-stage founders with investors eager to back local innovation.



After 20 years, Karen Katzorke steps down as Executive Director of Venture Madness.

When she officially became **Executive Director in 2014**, Katzorke helped transform **Venture Madness** into a catalyst for the region's startup momentum—expanding its reach, strengthening investor engagement, and elevating Arizona's reputation as a destination for high-growth ventures.

“After 20 incredible years with this organization and community, I feel it's the right time to pass the torch,” Katzorke shared. “**Venture Madness** has been a defining part of my career and my heart. I've had the privilege of working alongside visionary founders, investors, and board members who share a passion for building Arizona's innovation ecosystem.”

Economic Development

Her two-decade tenure saw the program through market cycles, rebrands, and a massive shift in Arizona’s economic identity—from a Sun Belt growth story to a genuine innovation hub.

Venture Madness became a proving ground where entrepreneurs honed their pitch skills, forged investor relationships, and often landed the capital that moved their ideas from prototype to market.

Enter a New Generation of Leadership

Taking up that torch, **Aaron Favreau** brings deep venture-capital experience and a forward-looking vision to the role of Executive Director. As a **Director with Arizona Venture Capital**, Favreau has spent years building bridges between funds and founders—identifying high-potential startups, advancing investment initiatives, and helping strengthen the state’s financial infrastructure for innovation.

“I’m honored to carry forward the legacy that Karen and so many others have built,” said Favreau. “Venture Madness has long been a launchpad for startups and a symbol of collaboration in Arizona’s innovation ecosystem. I’m thrilled to guide its next evolution—especially as we prepare for the **2026 Venture Madness Conference**, which will anchor **Arizona’s inaugural Tech Week on April 9, 2026.**”

The Evolution of Arizona’s Startup Scene

For Arizona’s founders, Venture Madness has always been more than an event. It’s a signal that the state’s entrepreneurial network is alive and accelerating.



Aaron Favreau takes the helm as Executive Director of Venture Madness, guiding its next era of innovation.

Many have gone on to secure millions in follow-on funding, scale operations nationally, and contribute to a broader story: Arizona’s rise as one of the fastest-growing innovation economies in the U.S.

Tom Fulcher, Chair of the Venture Madness Board of Directors, summed up the transition: “Karen’s leadership and passion have been instrumental in shaping Venture Madness into the influential platform it is today. Her impact will be felt for years to come. As we welcome Aaron into the Executive Director role, we’re confident his expertise and enthusiasm will help propel Venture Madness into a bold and exciting future.”

Looking Ahead

As **Venture Madness** enters this new chapter, its mission remains steady—to connect capital, talent, and innovation. The organization continues to serve as a catalyst for collaboration between investors, entrepreneurs, and community builders.

ARIZONA'S NEXT FRONTIER:

WHEN THE DESERT SKY BECOMES A HIGHWAY

In Arizona, innovation never stays parked for long. After driverless cars conquered Phoenix streets, the next race has lifted off — and this time, it's happening above the skyline.

By Jennifer Conrad, Contributing Editor

Inside the latest state budget, lawmakers quietly placed a **\$2 million bet on the sky economy** — funding research and planning for advanced air mobility. The goal: prepare Arizona for a future where electric vertical-takeoff-and-landing vehicles, or eVTOLs, become as familiar as Teslas are today. The investment could put the state at the center of one of the decade's most transformative industries. **State Sen. David Farnsworth**, who championed the measure, says Arizona should be a “magnet for the eventual flying-car industry.” It's not fantasy. It's the early blueprint of an airborne ecosystem.

Where Drones Become Taxis

Forget the chrome hovercars of The Jetsons. The real prototypes look more like sleek electric drones, powered by multiple small rotors and designed to lift two passengers straight into the air — quietly, efficiently, and without a runway. “These machines are basically large drones



Arizona invests \$2 million to launch its sky economy, a first step toward the flying car future.

that can carry people,” says David King, an ASU associate professor who studies transportation systems. “They're built for vertical takeoff and landing — fast, compact, and fully electric.”

Some models can theoretically hit 300 mph and climb high above the city, though air-traffic rules will likely keep them closer to the rooftops. The challenge now is figuring out how to share the sky safely — with the FAA, city planners, and future commuters all part of the same conversation.

Economic Development

The Rise of the Vertiport

Every revolution needs its launchpad. For flying cars, that means vertiports — flat, open hubs where these aircraft can take off, land, and recharge. Think rooftop helipads reimaged as micro-airports woven into city grids.

The state's funding will support studies on where these vertiports belong and how to integrate them without turning neighborhoods into noise zones. It's the kind of infrastructure planning that could determine whether sky travel stays niche or becomes the next urban utility.

From Heat Rescues to Healthcare Flights

While consumer models like **Alef Aeronautics'** \$300,000 Model A or Klein Vision's AirCar capture headlines, experts believe the first real impact will come from public-service missions. Imagine the Phoenix Fire Department reaching stranded hikers on Camelback Mountain in minutes rather than hours. Or rural patients flying to regional hospitals when every minute matters.

These are not sci-fi dreams — they're the first viable applications for eVTOLs once safety, regulation, and cost align.

Innovation With Altitude

Arizona's wide-open spaces, relentless sun, and culture of experimentation make it the perfect sandbox for air mobility. Startups are already modeling test routes between **Sky Harbor** and **Scottsdale Airpark**, and ASU engineers are exploring how AI could manage

air-traffic flow across a vertical cityscape.

Yes, there are hurdles: noise, privacy, safety, and the ever-looming question of urban sprawl. But if the past is any guide, Arizona's knack for turning pilot programs into industries could make the desert the launch zone for America's first real flying-car economy.

BY THE NUMBERS: ARIZONA'S SKY ECONOMY

- **\$2 million** — State budget investment in advanced air-mobility research
- **300 mph** — Projected top speed of next-gen eVTOLs
- **2026** — Expected commercial launch window
- **1st in U.S.** — Phoenix's ranking for autonomous-vehicle testing zones

The desert has always been a place for pioneers — where big ideas get room to fly. Now, the horizon is vertical, and Arizona's innovators are already building the runway.



With vast skies and a culture of experimentation, Arizona is turning the desert into a launch zone for America's flying car future.

PAXAURIS CRACKS THE CODE ON EAR PROTECTION

HOW ONE NAVY ENGINEER'S SEARCH FOR SILENCE TURNED INTO ONE OF ARIZONA'S MOST SUCCESSFUL KICKSTARTER CAMPAIGNS.

By Jennifer Conrad, Contributing Editor

Paxauris Cracks the Code on Ear Protection

How one Navy engineer's search for silence turned into one of Arizona's most successful Kickstarter campaigns.

The roar of the F-18 engines was deafening. On the flight deck, Tony Dietz pressed his earplugs deeper, but the noise still broke through — a constant, physical pressure that left a ringing in his head long after the jets were gone.

He had worn every kind of hearing protection the Navy offered. None of them worked. Later, when years of surfing cold Pacific waves left him with a surfer's ear, traditional plugs became unbearable. So Dietz, an engineer by training and a problem-solver by nature, decided to build something that would. That was more than a decade ago.



Paxauris turned frustration into success, raising \$147K on Kickstarter—top 2% of campaigns.

Today, his Arizona startup, Paxauris, has turned that personal frustration into global traction — **raising \$147,815 from 2,545 backers on Kickstarter, landing in the top 2% of all campaigns, and earning a 2025 Red Dot Design Concept Award** for its breakthrough product, Fluid™ inflatable earplugs.

A Quiet Revolution

Fluid™ looks simple — a soft, medical-grade plug that inflates with a thumb press to form a perfect seal in any ear canal. But behind that simplicity are ten years of experimentation, five generations of prototypes, and countless nights of testing.

Funding Rounds

“It started because nothing else fit,” Dietz says. “I figured if I could make something that worked for me, it could work for everyone.”

The Fluid™ plugs are made from skin-safe silicone and filled with water and pharmaceutical-grade glycerin — the same gentle ingredient audiologists use to soften earwax. They are washable, reusable, recyclable, and strong enough to survive everything from Arizona car dashboards to washing machines. In tests at Arizona State University’s Speech and Hearing Clinic, Fluid™ performed more consistently across users than foam earplugs, proving that comfort and protection don’t have to compete.

The Campaign That Made Noise

When Paxauris launched its Kickstarter, the goal was modest: **\$10,000 to fund early manufacturing**. But word spread fast. Within days, backers from around the world were pledging support. By the end, the campaign had raised more than fourteen times its target — validation that the problem Dietz set out to solve wasn’t his alone.

“We’re thrilled and humbled,” the company wrote after closing the campaign. “This support allows us to keep improving lives by protecting our ears.” That global attention also shone a light on

Arizona’s fast-growing innovation network. Paxauris worked closely with the **WearTech Applied Research Center** and the **Partnership for Economic Innovation (PEI)** — two Valley organizations bridging the gap between research and commercialization. Their support helped amplify the campaign, connect Dietz with mentors, and position the startup within the state’s broader med-tech ecosystem.

Built in Arizona, Built to Last

Now, Paxauris is preparing to scale operations in the Valley, with first shipments scheduled for November 2025. The company is scouting new office space and exploring partnerships to expand distribution.

For Arizona’s startup scene, Paxauris represents a growing wave of health and clean-tech ventures — practical innovations grounded in science, empathy, and sustainability. But for Dietz, it’s still about something simple: helping people hear safely. “Noise-induced hearing damage is preventable,” he says. “We just needed a better tool.”

From One Man’s Problem to a Global Solution

What began as one engineer’s frustration on a noisy flight deck has evolved into a product with the potential to protect millions of ears around the world.

Paxauris’ story is more than a crowdfunding success — it’s a blueprint for how Arizona innovators turn lived experiences into world-changing solutions. It’s proof that breakthroughs don’t always start in Silicon Valley or a research lab. Sometimes, they start with a single moment of unbearable noise and the quiet determination to fix it.

UA-BACKED BIOTECH STARTUP RAISES \$4 MILLION TO DEVELOP CANCER TREATMENTS

By Kayla Johnson, Contributing Editor

A biotechnology startup emerging from the University of Arizona has raised **\$4 million in seed funding to accelerate the development** of next-generation cancer treatments. Based on pioneering research by **Drs. Christopher Hulme** and **Curtis Thorne**, the company is focused on creating small-molecule drugs that are not only effective against multiple cancer types but can also be administered orally.

This milestone represents a significant advancement in drug discovery and reinforces Tucson's growing reputation as a hub for innovative biomedical research and entrepreneurship.

The startup aims to develop cancer therapies that are both broadly applicable and better tolerated than traditional targeted treatments, which often have limited applicability and significant side effects.



Dr. Christopher Hulme is pioneering oral cancer therapies targeting multiple cancer types.

Drs. Hulme and Thorne's approach combines cutting-edge medicinal chemistry with cellular and molecular medicine to identify compounds capable of addressing diverse tumor profiles while minimizing patient toxicity.

The \$4 million in venture funding will support several key initiatives, including expanding the company's intellectual property portfolio, increasing preclinical studies, and preparing for potential collaborations with pharmaceutical companies and additional investors. This financial boost provides critical resources to bridge the gap between laboratory discoveries and clinically viable therapies—a process that is notoriously challenging in the field of oncology.

Funding Rounds

Beyond the immediate impact on drug development, this funding highlights the University of Arizona's broader role in fostering scientific entrepreneurship. By transforming academic research into viable business ventures, the university is contributing to the growth of Tucson's biomedical ecosystem.

The startup is expected to attract additional researchers, investors, and collaborators to Southern Arizona, further establishing the region as a center for biotech innovation.

As the company advances its drug candidates through preclinical development, the potential societal impact is significant. Effective, orally available cancer therapies could improve patient compliance, reduce hospital visits, and expand treatment options for a wider population.



Dr. Curtis Thorne, Co-Founder

This success demonstrates how academic research, when paired with strategic investment and entrepreneurial vision, can lead to groundbreaking solutions that benefit both the local economy and global healthcare.

With this seed funding, the UA-backed biotech startup is poised to become a leader in oncology innovation, offering hope to patients while solidifying Tucson's status as a growing hub for life sciences and medical technology.



The \$4M in funding will expand IP, boost preclinical studies, and pave the way for pharma collaborations and new investors.

BINSR INSPECT RAISES \$1.1 MILLION

STARTUP BRINGS AI TO ONE OF REAL ESTATE'S MOST OVERLOOKED INDUSTRIES.

By Jennifer Conrad, Contributing Editor

After years of quiet development, **Binsr Inspect** has emerged from stealth with a clear mission: simplify home ownership, starting with the inspection. The company just announced a **\$1.1 million pre-seed round**, led by **New Stack Ventures** with participation from **Silence, Lofty**, and **Joe Chen** — a strong vote of confidence in the future of property technology built in Arizona.

Fixing What's Broken in Home Inspections

Binsr Inspect, co-founded by **Mark Garcia** and **Aryash Dubey**, is reimagining that process through **AI-powered automation that makes inspections faster, clearer, and more accurate.**



Breaking free from rigid templates, Binsr Inspect adapts to the way inspectors work in real time.

“Our mission is simple,” said co-founder **Mark Garcia**. “We’re here to simplify home ownership, starting with the inspection. Everyone involved deserves a faster, smarter, and smoother experience.”

When AI Meets Fieldwork

Traditional inspection tools often box users into rigid templates and static forms. **Binsr Inspect** takes a different approach — **building adaptive intelligence** that responds to how inspectors actually work in the field.

Funding Rounds

Its AI can flag potential issues from uploaded images, auto-categorize findings, and generate digital reports ready to share with clients or agents in minutes. The result: less time on paperwork, more time on the craft of inspection.

For an industry that has seen little digital innovation in decades, it's a meaningful shift. By integrating workflow automation, predictive insights, and intuitive reporting, Binsr Inspect helps inspectors scale their business and bring transparency to one of the most human parts of home ownership.

Rising from the Desert

From its base in **Greater Phoenix**, Binsr Inspect joins a new generation of startups blurring the lines between **proptech** and **AI** — and showing that deep innovation isn't confined to coastal hubs.

“Phoenix has become a hub for founders who build quietly, test deeply, and then launch decisively,” said co-founder **Aryash Dubey**. “We’ve spent the last few years listening to inspectors, iterating with early customers, and making sure we’re solving real problems. This funding gives us the runway to scale that impact.”



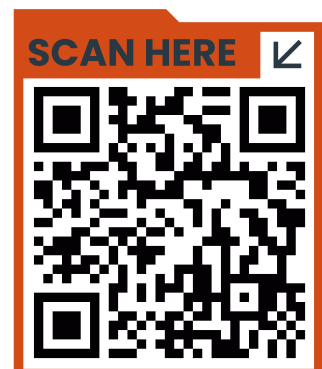
Backed by \$1.1M in pre-seed funding, the company is helping shape the future of property technology in Arizona.

The company plans to use the new capital to expand its engineering and support teams, accelerate feature development, and strengthen relationships with inspection firms and real-estate brokerages across the country.

The Next Chapter

Binsr Inspect is currently hiring across **engineering, operations, and customer support**, seeking what Garcia and Dubey call “builders with curiosity and velocity.” The founders see this as the start of a broader movement toward intelligent infrastructure in home services — where data, automation, and human expertise work in harmony.

Scan Here
and Try Out
Binsr Inspect
Now!



THE PHOENIX PLAYBOOK: HOW REINVESTMENT WILL IGNITE ARIZONA'S TECH FUTURE

By **Mat Sherman**, Guest Contributor
Founder of **Mat Capital** and Host of
Forward Thinking Founders

Every few months, someone in Phoenix says, “We’re five years behind Austin.” Or Salt Lake. Or San Francisco. I’ve been in tech for a decade, and I can tell you that’s never been true.

Tech ecosystems don’t grow on a timeline. They don’t mature simply because years pass or optimism peaks. They grow when startups win — and when those wins are recycled back into the ecosystem.

Salt Lake City didn’t become a tech hub by waiting. It happened through compounding success. **Ryan Smith** built **Qualtrics** into a multibillion-dollar company. That single exit created hundreds of new investors who funded the next generation: Pluralsight, Ancestry, and others. Each success layered on the last until momentum became culture.

That’s how ecosystems compound.



Mat Sherman, founder of Mat Capital, empowers early-stage founders to build and scale category-defining companies.

Wealth, talent, and experience circulate instead of disappearing. Smith himself now owns the former Arizona Coyotes and is investing heavily in downtown Salt Lake and its founders. Utah didn’t grow because of time; it grew because its winners reinvested.

Now, look at Arizona. **GoDaddy** was a massive win. Carvana was a massive win. But how many angels emerged from those stories? How much of that wealth stayed here to seed the next wave of founders?

Investor Insights

We have another shot. Paradox just sold to Workday, a landmark deal that minted a new class of local millionaires. The question is whether that capital stays in motion — building startups, funds, and communities — or gets parked in trusts and real estate.

If we want Phoenix to rise, we can't rely on time. We need a culture of reinvestment. Local investors must back local founders. Employees should push for equity. Advisors should take a stake. When a company wins here, the ripple effects should touch the whole Valley.

Silicon Valley has done this for decades. From HP to Fairchild Semiconductor to Apple, each wave created the next. Wealth didn't leave; it circulated. Founders mentored founders. Angels seeded new ones. That's how real ecosystems endure. Phoenix doesn't need five more years. It needs five more wins — and the will to reinvest them.

About the Author

Mat Sherman is the founder of Mat Capital, where he supports, advises, and invests in early-stage founders building category-defining companies. His portfolio includes **SuperMemory**, **Legix**, **Sail**, **Notary Everyday**, **ISA**, **Rosotics**, and **Insured Nomads**.

A longtime champion of Phoenix's startup ecosystem, Mat also hosts Forward

Thinking Founders, a podcast with more than 950 interviews featuring founders and investors from around the world.

Previously, he founded Seedscout and PubLoft, led ad sales at Product Hunt, and helped growth efforts at Prenda, one of Arizona's fastest-growing education startups. He lives in Phoenix and believes the Valley's next great tech story will be written by the people who choose to reinvest here.



BUILDING ARIZONA'S AI FUTURE: A NEW CHAPTER WITH BRIAN MCCARTHY

By Brian McCarthy, Guest Contributor
President, AI Venture Network

Every career has moments when you step into something new and feel the energy of possibility. This is one of those moments for me. I'm Brian McCarthy, and I'm thrilled to introduce myself as the new President of AI Venture Network (AIVN). My wife and I just relocated to Arizona earlier this year, and I have to say—we're absolutely loving it.

Coming from the Pacific Northwest, I wasn't quite prepared for how diverse and stunning this state truly is. From the red rocks to the desert sunsets, Arizona has been full of wonderful surprises, and we're excited to explore more of what makes this place special.

I recently wrapped up an 18-year journey with Intel Corporation, where I had the privilege of working across nearly every corner of the software landscape—from



Brian McCarthy steps into his new role as President of AI Venture Network, bringing nearly two decades of leadership in technology and innovation.

product strategy and engineering to go-to-market and strategic partnerships. Most recently, I led teams focused on edge computing, generative AI, and helping customers across industries like retail, manufacturing, and education solve real problems with cutting-edge technology.

One of the highlights was launching Intel's global Edge & Amp; AI Partner Program, which grew to over 100 partners. I also helped scale our AI developer ecosystem from zero to over 100,000 developers worldwide, which taught me firsthand the power of community and collaboration.

Founder Advice

Before Intel, I spent time in the startup world, contributing to several successful exits and helping medium-sized software companies build products that are still making an impact today. Over my 30-year career, I've learned that the best outcomes happen when you bring together great people, clear vision, and a willingness to adapt and learn. Whether I'm leading an engineering transformation or mentoring product teams, I'm always focused on delivering real impact.

So why AIVN? Why now? Because Arizona is at an inflection point. We have world-class universities, a thriving startup ecosystem, major tech companies establishing roots here, and a community that's ready to embrace what's next. The AI economy isn't just coming—it's already here—and I believe Arizona has everything it needs to be a leader in this space. My goal is to lead AIVN in collaboration with our incredible partners across the ecosystem to make that vision a reality.

I'm someone who loves building bridges—between technologists and business leaders, between startups and enterprises, between big ideas and practical execution. I believe that the best innovation happens when we break down silos and bring diverse perspectives together. That's exactly what I hope to do at AIVN: create connections, foster collaboration, and help Arizona's AI community thrive.

I'm genuinely excited to get to know this community better. Whether you're a founder building the next breakthrough AI application, an investor looking for opportunities, a researcher pushing the boundaries of what's possible, or someone just curious about where AI is headed—I want to hear from you. Let's grab coffee or maybe a hike, share ideas, and figure out how we can work together to drive Arizona's AI economy forward.

Here's to new beginnings, exciting possibilities, and building something remarkable together.

Brian@AIVentureNetwork.com

Brian McCarthy

President, AI Venture Network

Founder & Managing Partner, Stride Group

Scan Below To Learn More and Get In Touch with AIVN



SKY ISLAND AI: TUCSON STARTUP TACKLES HEALTHCARE BUREAUCRACY WITH AI

By Kayla Johnson, Contributing Editor

A Tucson-based startup is leveraging artificial intelligence to tackle one of the most frustrating aspects of the U.S. healthcare system: navigating eligibility and benefits. **Sky Island AI** has developed the **Virtual Case Manager (VCM)**, an AI-powered platform designed to help consumers efficiently manage the complex administrative processes that often prevent people from obtaining or maintaining health insurance.

Unlike purely automated solutions, the platform is designed to complement human caseworkers, allowing AI to handle routine tasks while professionals focus on more nuanced, human-centered support.

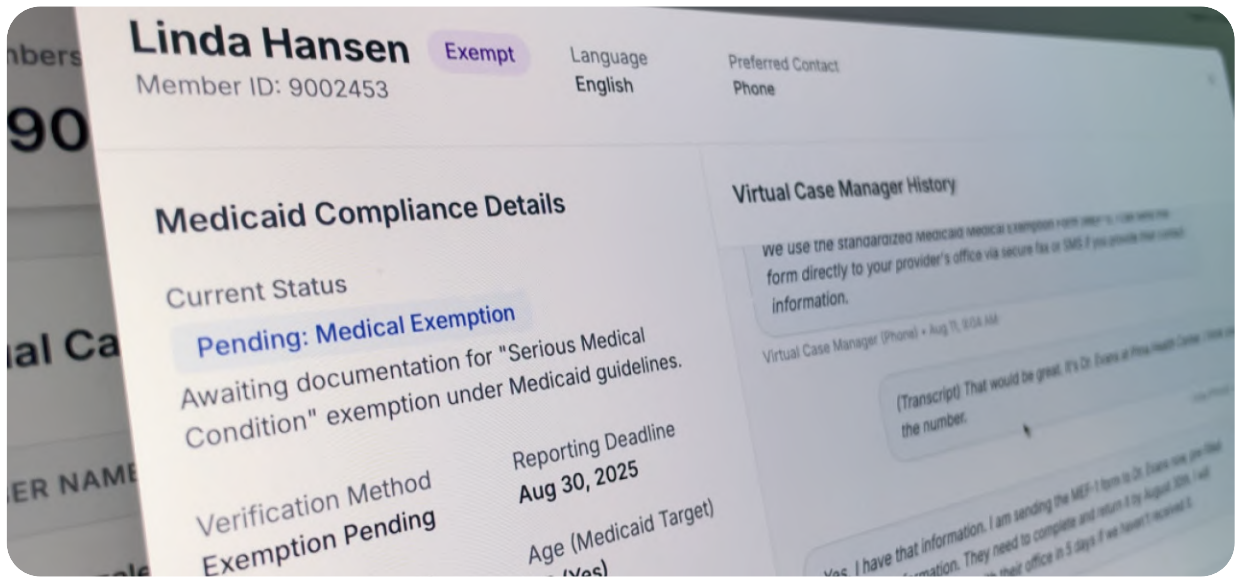
The initiative comes in response to recent healthcare legislation that has added additional checkpoints, employment requirements, and administrative hurdles for Americans seeking to maintain coverage.



Sky Island AI Co-Founder Ed Hendel

According to Sky Island AI co-founder **Ed Hendel**, these requirements create significant paperwork and verification tasks that overwhelm both individuals and caseworkers. The VCM is designed to address this challenge, allowing the system to interact with multiple users simultaneously, vastly increasing coverage while maintaining oversight from human professionals.

Startup Spotlight



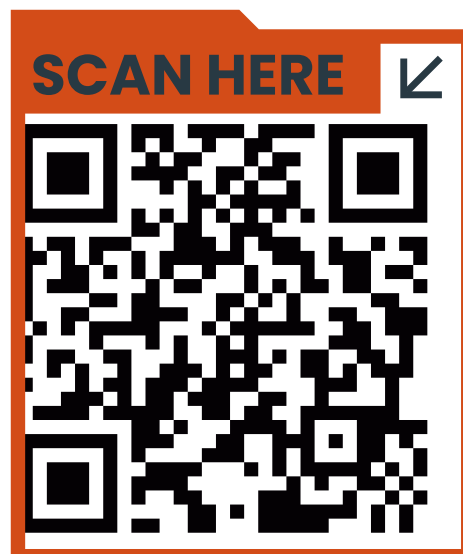
Designed for efficiency: the VCM connects with multiple users simultaneously under expert oversight.

Sky Island AI estimates that the VCM could help up to **50,000 people in Pima County** alone, highlighting its potential local impact. The startup is currently seeking a partner organization for a pilot program, ideally a hospital or managed care organization, to integrate the VCM into existing systems and branding. The goal is to demonstrate that AI can free caseworkers from repetitive administrative duties, enabling them to dedicate more time to direct client support and complex problem-solving.

Beyond healthcare, Sky Island AI envisions expanding the VCM to assist Americans in navigating other bureaucratic systems at the local and federal levels. This approach aligns with Tucson's emerging reputation as a hub for socially conscious tech innovation, demonstrating how startups can leverage cutting-edge technology to address critical societal needs.

By combining AI efficiency with human empathy, Sky Island AI exemplifies a new wave of innovation where technology enhances, rather than replaces, essential human services.

Scan Below & Learn More About Sky Island AI



GRAVITREX: THE INVENTION THAT WALKS BESIDE YOU

A FATHER AND DAUGHTER FROM PHOENIX ARE REDEFINING RECOVERY—ONE STEP AT A TIME

By Jennifer Conrad, Contributing Editor

In 2022, **Dr. Richard Burns** went from healer to patient. After an accident left him unable to walk, the physician who'd spent decades helping others recover suddenly found himself trapped by the limits of his own rehabilitation. The equipment was clunky. The process exhausting. Progress felt out of reach.

Watching from the sidelines was his daughter, **Kira Burns**, an engineer with a born problem-solver's mind. She'd seen her grandmother struggle with the same pain years earlier knee osteoarthritis that made every step a negotiation. Between those two experiences, she saw something bigger: a system that had forgotten how to move forward. So the two decided to fix it.

The Birth of Gravitrex

Late-night sketches on the kitchen table became **Gravitrex**.



After an accident left him unable to walk, Dr. Richard Burns and his daughter Kira are reimagining rehabilitation for patients.

A walking-assist device that supports up to **about 100 pounds of a person's body weight, giving them a safer**, easier way to regain mobility. Its patented, battery-free mechanical system offloads weight through a cable-driven assembly, maintaining steady support with every step.

Startup Spotlight

“It makes walking easier and safer,” Richard told **PBS Arizona Horizon**. “For people with joint pain, it reduces that pain and maintains support through every step.”

The pair worked **hand-in-hand with physical therapists**, refining the device to close what Kira calls the “technology gap” the wide space between expensive inpatient rehab equipment and the manual support most therapists still rely on. Their goal wasn’t to build another machine. It was to make recovery accessible, dignified, and human.

Turning Frustration into Momentum

The idea struck a chord. Gravitrex secured early backing from the **WearTech Applied Research Center** and the **Arizona Commerce Authority**, two state initiatives that help turn prototypes into practical innovations.

Then came national validation. In February 2024, Gravitrex Inc. won the **National Institute on Aging (NIA) Startup Challenge**, part of the **National Institutes of Health (NIH)**. Out of more than **200 submissions**, Gravitrex was one of six winners nationwide — earning a **\$60,000 award and expert mentorship from federal judges across seven NIA divisions**.

“The prize will accelerate our mission to expand access to walking rehabilitation for older adults,” said Kira Burns, Co-Founder & CEO, after the announcement.

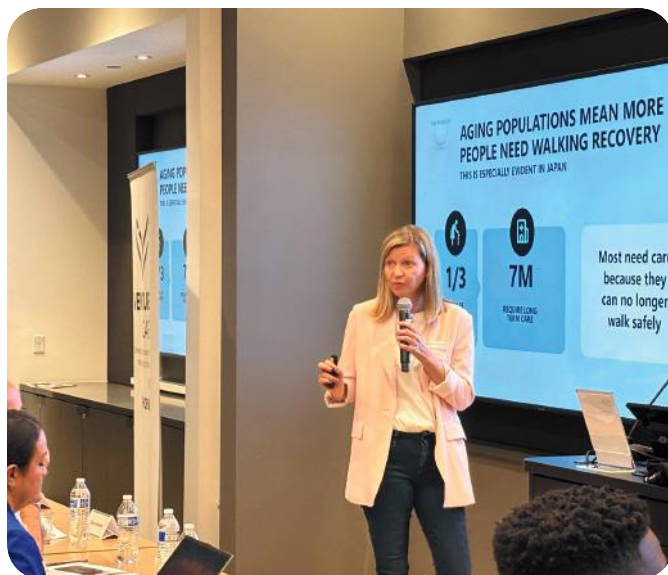
Restoring Motion, Restoring Dignity

Every year, **13 million** older adults are hospitalized in the U.S., and two-thirds leave with a new limitation often the inability to walk unassisted. Evidence shows that body-weight-supported gait training improves outcomes, but existing systems are costly, stationary, and out of reach for most communities.

Gravitrex changes that. Lightweight, low-cost, and portable, the device lets clinicians bring evidence-based therapy directly to patients. It also protects therapists a profession where **91 percent** report work-related injuries by redistributing weight and reducing strain. It’s the rare invention that serves everyone in the room.

From Phoenix to Tokyo

In October 2025, Gravitrex **won Venture Café Phoenix’s Pitch2Tokyo Finals**, earning the chance to represent the city at **Venture Café’s Global Gathering in Tokyo in 2026**.



Kira Burns pitches Gravitrex, securing the win at Pitch2Tokyo & the opportunity to represent Phoenix in Tokyo 2026.

Startup Spotlight



Gravitrex's walking-assist device supports up to 100 pounds of body weight, using a patented, battery-free system to help patients regain mobility safely and confidently.

After the win, the team shared:

“We’re honored to represent Arizona innovation on the global stage — especially in Japan, a market that deeply values mobility, longevity, and technological excellence. This recognition reinforces our mission to make mobility recovery scalable and accessible for people everywhere.”

For the Burnses, Tokyo feels like the natural next step — a country where technology and empathy often meet, and where the pursuit of longevity is woven into culture itself.

The Next Step

As Gravitrex moves toward **commercialization**, the team is launching its clinical version while developing a smaller model for home use. The goal remains simple: bring recovery to the patient, not the other way around.

From a father’s accident to a daughter’s design, from kitchen-table sketches to national acclaim, Gravitrex embodies what Arizona innovation does best solving real problems with equal parts heart and precision. It began as a way to help one man walk again. Now, it might help the world do the same.

FROM ACQUISITION TO INNOVATION: MICROPAY TECHNOLOGIES IS REDEFINING PAYROLL AND COMPLIANCE IN ARIZONA

By Kayla Johnson, Contributing Editor

When the client pipeline of LV8R Labs was acquired by a portfolio company, founder **Jonathon Chambless** didn't pause. He pivoted. The deal brought in new senior partner and CTO **Binoy Jose**, and together they launched **MicroPay Technologies**, an Arizona-based fintech startup building what they call the "infrastructure layer for digital trust."

A Platform Built for the Core

MicroPay focuses on four high-stakes pillars of business finance: **Payroll, Proof (transaction evidence), Know Your Customer (KYC), and Anti-Money Laundering (AML)**.

These processes normally live in separate systems; MicroPay's platform connects them through one secure architecture designed to streamline compliance and transparency for enterprise-level clients. According to Chambless, the company's current phase is about execution, not experimentation.



Jonathon Chambless presented MicroPay at the AIVN Fintech Summit on October 8th.

"We're already processing live compliance and payroll data for early clients," he said. "This is where theory meets operation."

A **14-person engineering team** is finalizing minimum-viable products for all four modules and preparing to transition early users into a full live environment. Each product integrates with high-throughput APIs, bank-grade encryption, and an auditable framework capable of handling enterprise workloads at scale.

Startup Spotlight

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Public Debut at AIVN

Chambless previewed the company's strategy at the **AIVN Fintech Summit on October 8, hosted by Bill Swartz and the Kiln Team**, one of Arizona's most visible technology events. The presentation introduced MicroPay to the state's expanding fintech network and underscored how the silicon desert continues to attract serious builders.

Redefining Digital Trust

While Chambless leads execution, **CTO Binoy Jose** brings the philosophy. In his October essay "**Beyond KYC: Building Real Trust in a Borderless World**", Jose described how verification frameworks like KYC, KYB (Know Your Business), and KYAgent are evolving from regulatory hurdles into a trust engine for the global economy.

"Verification isn't just about checking an ID anymore," Jose wrote. "It's about understanding who's really behind the screen, who they represent, and whether you can safely work with them."

That mindset defines MicroPay's roadmap, turning abstract trust systems into deployable enterprise tools. Together, Chambless and Jose are designing a digital trust network intended to keep global transactions safe, transparent, and human.

Built in the Desert

Headquartered in Phoenix, MicroPay joins a new generation of fintech companies choosing Arizona for its pragmatic regulation, deep engineering talent, and cost-efficient operations. Chambless's background in enterprise SaaS and compliance technology, paired with Jose's distributed-architecture expertise, positions the company to scale globally while rooted locally. "The desert has always been a place where builders come to focus," Chambless said. "That's exactly what we're doing here."

The Road Ahead

With early clients in live testing and public launch on the horizon, MicroPay's challenge is proving that compliance, speed, and usability can coexist on one platform. If successful, the company will offer more than a suite of fintech tools—it will provide the framework for verified trust across borders.

For Arizona's fintech ecosystem, MicroPay represents a clear signal of maturity. In a borderless economy, trust may be the ultimate product, and MicroPay wants to be the platform that builds it.

STEER CO: THE ARIZONA STARTUP TEACHING AI HOW TO WORK FOR HUMANS

By Jennifer Conrad, Contributing Editor

On a quiet afternoon in Tempe, two ASU grads sat down for coffee after a decade of separate careers. One had spent years running nine-figure enterprise portfolios for global SaaS companies, buried under decks, data, and deadlines.

The other had become the kind of operator who sees patterns in spreadsheets the way a musician hears notes.

By the time the mugs were empty, **Steer Co** had its spark: what if AI could delete the tedious part of customer success without touching the human part?

The Problem Everyone Quietly Hates

Across tech, customer-success teams are supposed to drive renewals and expansions. In reality, they spend half their week preparing proof that they're doing it—assembling quarterly business reviews, executive summaries, and success plans in endless slide decks.



Zach Hawley, Co-Founder

“It’s death by PowerPoint,” says co-founder **Zach Hawley**, who ran customer-success teams for a public SaaS company before launching Steer Co. “You hire charismatic, strategic people to build relationships—and then drown them in formatting.”

He and co-founder **Will Aja** started sketching a tool that would do the opposite: surface insights, summarize data, and draft the narrative automatically so CSMs could focus on the conversations that actually move revenue.

What The Product Does

Steer Co plugs into the systems where customer knowledge already lives—CRM notes, call transcripts, emails, product-usage dashboards, even public filings.

Founder Spotlight

From that mix, it generates ready-to-use **QBR decks, success plans, and one-page executive summaries that match a company's brand template**. There's no prompt writing or model-tuning.

The user opens the app, selects an account, and hits Generate. Within seconds, they have a clean narrative, accurate metrics, and slides that are meeting-ready.

For individual users, it's free—an intentional choice to give relief to the people usually left out of AI's benefits. Teams and enterprises can layer in collaboration, compliance, and brand control.

A Different Kind Of AI Story

Most enterprise-AI startups aim up the chain—dashboards for executives, analytics for investors. Steer Co's bet is horizontal: empower the end user first. "We don't believe AI replaces jobs," Aja says. "It just removes the parts everyone quietly resents."

Their early adopters agree. CSMs report saving hours per account review. Managers are testing what happens when reps spend that time deepening relationships instead of resizing fonts. It's not about replacing effort—it's about redirecting it.

From ASU to Automation

Both founders are lifelong Arizonans. Aja grew up around farming and horse-breaking before discovering systems engineering at Arizona State University.



Will Aja, Co-Founder

Hawley studied physics and business there, worked his way through DeWalt's sales trenches, then moved east to Boston's tech scene.

They each learned how to build under constraint: small teams, no pedigree shortcuts, a bias toward figuring it out on the fly. That scrappiness became their edge.

"ASU teaches you to work for your visibility," Hawley says. "You don't get status handed to you—you earn it." That mentality shaped how they've built Steer Co: **minimum hype, maximum utility, and fast iteration**.

Early traction

Steer Co launched quietly this fall and immediately found an audience among overworked go-to-market teams. Within weeks, inbound demos stacked up and the company booked over **\$1.5 million in qualified pipeline**—a rare early-stage signal in a cautious market.

Founder Spotlight

One enterprise prospect reportedly spends millions each year outsourcing QBR decks to offshore teams. After watching a demo, their director asked, “So I can do five revisions before my coffee gets cold?” Yes. That’s the point.

Building From the Valley Out

The founders are open about their mixed feelings toward Arizona’s ecosystem.

They love the talent, the cost base, and the culture of grit—but they’ve also seen the funding gap firsthand. “From the outside, Arizona looks like it’s overflowing with venture support,” Aja says. “Inside, it can feel like a lot of LinkedIn sound bites.”

Rather than relocate, they chose to plant deeper roots. Their logic: keep building undeniable traction until capital has no choice but to follow results. That stance echoes across the local startup scene. Founders who grew up here aren’t trying to mimic San Francisco—they’re trying to out-execute it.

The Human Layer

Part of Steer Co’s voice comes from the fact that both founders are parents. They talk about time differently: every hour building the company has to be worth an hour away from their kids.

That focus shows in how they speak about their users. The goal isn’t abstract productivity; it’s giving people evenings back. “If our software lets someone finish early and pick their kid up from school—that’s a win,” Aja adds.

Why It Matters

Customer success may sound niche, but the principle runs through every modern organization: people are hired to build relationships, yet spend their time proving they did. Automating that proof frees entire departments to think again.

Steer Co sits at the intersection of two macro shifts—the rise of generative AI in enterprise, and a nationwide reevaluation of how much repetitive work we actually need to do.

If it succeeds, the company could redefine what “AI productivity” means: not dashboards for executives, but better lives for the people who keep customers happy.

The Arizona Moment

Steer Co’s story is more than a startup launch. It’s a case study in what Arizona’s ecosystem is becoming—scrappy, practical, quietly ambitious.

The Valley may not yet have the capital density of coastal hubs, but it has something rarer: founders who want to build here, stay here, and prove that innovation doesn’t require a change of address.

As Aja puts it: “There’s no shortage of grit in Arizona. It’s in the dirt.” And now, apparently, in the code.

Scan Here
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Steerco AI Now!



MAKING PEACE PROFITABLE:

HOW SHANE MARTIN IS TURNING VENTURE CAPITAL INTO A FORCE FOR GOOD

By Sylvie Stephens, Contributing Editor

Shane Martin never planned on becoming a venture capitalist. Growing up in Mesa, Arizona, he studied aviation at Arizona State University, with business courses on the side. “I didn’t even know what venture capital was five or six years ago,” he says. But his journey from ASU classrooms to San Francisco startups and eventually Washington, D.C. led him to a surprising calling: using technology and investment to make peace profitable.

Now an investor at **B Ventures**, Martin backs early-stage dual-use startups that can thrive commercially while preventing or reducing conflict. The fund’s tagline captures the ambition: make peace profitable.

From Career to Calling

Martin doesn’t view his work as a title or identity, it’s a mission. “I wasn’t chasing a



Mesa native Shane Martin, now an investor at B Ventures, is backing startups that make peace profitable.

The Case for Peace Tech

B Ventures invests from pre-seed to **Series A**, focusing on dual-use technology solutions that solve commercial problems but can also prevent or mitigate conflict. “We’re trying to prove that you can invest in peace and still get great returns,” Martin says. He believes “peace is always possible” and predicts that peace tech will be a **\$100 billion-plus industry** within the next decade. The timing, he argues, is right: with 55 active conflicts worldwide, the world needs new tools for communication, prediction, and prevention.

Founder Spotlight

Promising areas include:

- **Decision & negotiation intelligence:** AI-driven systems that improve communication and reduce miscalculation.
- **Supply-chain resilience:** Tech that keeps goods and people safe during crises.
- **Trust infrastructure:** Platforms that prevent small disputes from becoming major conflicts.
- **Civic dialogue tools:** Technology that fosters empathy and connection amid polarization.

“Defense tech and climate tech grew into major industries,” Martin says. “Why not peace tech?”

Arizona’s Role in the Future of Peace

Martin still sees Arizona as an ideal launchpad for dual-use innovation. “The East Valley is booming. There’s real potential for founders here,” he says. His advice to local entrepreneurs:

- Start B2B first before tackling government contracts.
- Go “to the trenches” and solve real, painful problems you understand.
- Research deeply, but act fast. “The future belongs to action-takers.”

Arizona’s community-driven energy, he adds, gives it an edge. “Invite people into the journey. People want to be part of something growing and good.”

Winning with Honor

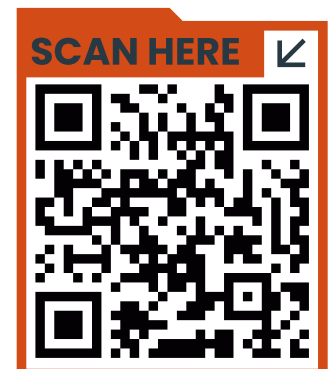
Martin’s mindset is equal parts faith, resilience, and sportsmanship. He often compares startups to soccer: play hard, stay humble, and never play scared. “Sometimes winning means blitz-scaling. Other times it means just staying alive long enough to fight another day.”

He’s convinced that founders who lead with integrity will ultimately win. “If you can fight, claw, and outwork others, without lying or cutting corners, things will work out. Winning is contagious when it’s done with honor.”

The Last Word

“Peace is always possible,” Martin says. “If we do this right, peace tech will exceed expectations and help end violent conflict. That means more people get a fair shot at life, purpose, and opportunity. That’s the point.” Arizona, he insists, can lead the way.

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TURNING HEAT INTO OPPORTUNITY: HOW CRYO-X IS REDEFINING RADIATIVE COOLING

By Jennifer Conrad, Contributing Editor

When you live in Arizona, heat isn't just a season — it's a force of nature that shapes how we live, build, and innovate. **For Jordan Fourcher, founder and CEO of CRYO-X**, that relentless desert heat sparked an idea that could reshape how the world thinks about cooling technology.

"I kept asking myself," Fourcher says, "Why can't this be simple? Why can't the same technology scientists use in labs be available to anyone, in a form as easy as paint?"

From Curiosity to Creation

Fourcher's story begins at Arizona State University, where he earned a **degree in Technological Entrepreneurship and Management**. After graduation, he found himself drawn to the messy intersection of innovation and practicality. "I've always loved consumer electronics," he explains. "The magic of good tech is that anyone can use it. You don't have to understand how it works — it just works."



For Jordan Fourcher, founder and CEO of CryoEx, Arizona's relentless heat sparked a breakthrough that could change how the world stays cool.

That principle guided him when he discovered radiative cooling — a scientific process that allows surfaces to passively release heat into space by reflecting sunlight and emitting infrared radiation. The problem? It wasn't accessible. "You could find academic papers, maybe a few pilot projects, but no one was selling it in a way consumers could actually buy or use," he says. "So, I built it."

The Paint That Beats the Heat

CRYO-X's flagship product looks deceptively simple: a single-layer white paint that can cool surfaces up to 15°F below ambient air temperature.

Founder Spotlight

With 96 percent solar reflectivity, it functions like a mirror to the sun — bouncing nearly all incoming radiation away while emitting stored heat outward to the cold vacuum of space.

In simple terms, it's "double reflection": reflect the sunlight, then radiate the remaining heat out of the atmosphere entirely. The result? Cooler surfaces, reduced energy consumption, and a gentler load on the planet's thermal systems.

What makes **CRYO-X**, different isn't just the science — it's the accessibility. "Other companies make radiative cooling materials, but they're complicated to buy, hard to apply, and expensive to install," says Fourcher. "Our paint goes on like any other coating. One ounce per square foot, single coat, and you're done."

By eliminating multilayer systems and specialized installation, **CRYO-X**, has slashed labor costs by more than half. What once required a two-day team can now be finished in three hours. For homeowners, that means lower bills. For contractors, faster turnaround. For everyone, less heat.

Cool Innovation for Real Life

While radiative cooling might sound like something out of a NASA lab, **CRYO-X**, approach is remarkably down to earth. The company's use cases range from residential roofs and warehouses to mobile homes, horse trailers, beehives, hard hats, and even IoT devices. The technology's only requirement: a clear view of the sky.

At a recent pilot project in Mesa, a contractor with no special training applied **CRYO-X**, paint across a commercial rooftop in one afternoon. "It worked perfectly," says Fourcher. "Dry time was fast, coverage was even, and the results were immediate. That's the whole point — it should be simple."

The consumer reaction proved it. **CRYO-X**, test "CryoCar," an older sedan painted with the cooling formula, sold within 24 hours at the top of its price range. The buyer, who works security shifts and waits in his car for hours each day, said it best: "This is going to make my life better."

A Market Ripe for Change

CRYO-X, is targeting one of Arizona's most heat-vulnerable demographics: RV owners, snowbirds, and mobile-home residents — many of them retirees balancing comfort with cost. "They have the means, the need, and the desire for comfort," Fourcher explains. "If you've got a \$100,000 RV and can't get it below 80 degrees, that's not luxury. That's a design flaw."

The implications go far beyond Arizona. From logistics and agriculture to defense and data centers, any environment that battles heat can benefit. "We're building a billion-dollar company one coat at a time," he says. "And we're doing it by making deep tech human."

CRYO-X, proves innovation doesn't have to live in a lab. "Consumers don't think in specs," says Fourcher. "They think, Will my home feel cooler?" Born in the desert, the company turns science into simplicity—and heat into opportunity.

MEET OUR AMBASSADORS



Ville Houttu

Privv



Ryan Moorehouse

Ruck



Jason Beck

Kraus- Anderson



Joshua Hanson

ImageAid



Kyle Desousa

Koko Ni



Jasmine Bhatti

Navi Nurses



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David Schneider

Dane Health, Inc



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Emblem



Dirk Beth

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Watergenics



Jordan Fourcher

Cryo X CO



Jay Foster

Carbon Utility



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Debin Ray

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Emini Offutt

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Chad Bellin

Disca

Silicon Oasis Ambassadorship

To be a Silicon Oasis Ambassador is to stand at the heart of Arizona's innovation movement. This invite-only network brings together founders, investors, and community builders shaping the state's tech frontier.

MEET OUR TEAM

Get to know the builders, storytellers, and connectors powering the Silicon Oasis movement behind the scenes.



Kyle Macdonald
Editor-in-Chief



Josue Romero
Managing Editor



Shray Patel
Venture Research Analyst



Makaiah Gorhan
Venture Research Analyst



Josh Hanson
Venture Research Analyst



Sean Bair
Board Member

“ We’re not just building stories — we’re building the community behind them. Every event, every article, every founder feature is powered by people who believe in Arizona’s future. ”

Pillar Partners



Driving Arizona's AI future by connecting founders to mentorship, talent, and capital.



Founder-led software community uniting Arizona builders through events, peer groups, and startup-focused resources.



A community uniting real estate, construction, and tech innovators to shape Arizona's built environment.



Accelerating defense and aerospace innovation through founder support, workforce development, and mission-aligned industry partnerships.

AZ CLEANTECH

Uniting Arizona's climate innovators across energy, water, and mobility to accelerate clean tech collaboration.



A community of fintech and payments professionals driving innovation while supporting each other's growth.



How To Reach Us



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