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SkySong – The ASU Scottsdale Innovation Center

SKYSONG – THE ASU SCOTTSDALE INNOVATION CENTER

ASU aspires to be socially and economically embedded in the communities it serves, and [SkySong, the ASU Scottsdale Innovation Center \(SkySong\)](#) is an excellent example of this achievement. Utilizing three key activities, the university is leading the transition of the McDowell Corridor from a former “motor mile” of car dealerships to a major innovation hub for the greater Phoenix Region. These activities include: innovative company and community engagement; the development of a 20-year strategic plan to guide the SkySong placedevelopment; and the implementation of entrepreneurship programming to spur the growing talent in the area.



Since opening in January 2008, SkySong has been a linchpin for the revitalization of the McDowell Corridor with over \$588 million in economic output and a projected output of \$32.17 billion by 2046. SkySong represents a major public-private partnership bringing together the university, the ASU Foundation for a New American University, the City of Scottsdale, the Plaza Companies, and the Holualoa Companies. SkySong tenants currently employ over 1,500 people on a site that had been vacant since the mid-1990s. 450,000 square feet of office space is completed, which will grow to 1.2 million square feet at total buildout. There are also 325 rental apartments that are over 90% leased and new retail opportunities being added in fall 2016. Recently, Starwood Hotels announced it will also add a 120 room hotel as well as a restaurant to the site.

ASU at SkySong provides an access point into the university for companies located at SkySong and around the region. Specifically for the 57 companies on-site, there is direct access to university resources on a daily basis through talent development and internship opportunities as well as collaborative research. For example, The Bridgestone Biorubber Process Research Center, a subsidiary of Bridgestone Tires, secured its entrance to market and occupancy of its new research and development facility, by initially joining ASU SkySong as an affiliate company. Their 12 months spent at SkySong cemented recruiting relationships with the university and created mentoring opportunities for student startups.

In June 2015, the ASU SkySong team completed a six-month review of peer institutions resulting in a 20-year plan for the continued development of the site. Subsequently ASU’s on-site staff was reorganized and a program management position as well as a SkySong Community Liaison role were created to better serve the SkySong community. Results to date have included an expansion of space for small businesses to locate at SkySong; increased targeted outreach to companies to better assess their ongoing needs and opportunities for collaboration; and simple connection points throughout the complex through casual seating areas and complimentary coffee. In addition to the space available for these companies, SkySong has 16 conference rooms that can be rented by other local companies and organizations. On average 500 meetings are held each month with approximately 5,000 attendees.

Since its opening, SkySong has also provided space for companies in several accelerator programs run by ASU's Office of Entrepreneurship and Innovation (EI). Currently there are three cohorts utilizing the space as part of specific entrepreneurship programs targeting students, faculty, staff and community members. In the last two years, four student-led companies have grown from the acceleration space into their own affiliate space within SkySong and two affiliates have become commercial tenants (see graphic 1, SkySong Space Types). Endovantage, based at SkySong since its inception, has participated in several ASU-led entrepreneurial programs, including the Furnace Technology Accelerator, the Edson Student Start-Up Initiative, and the ASU-Mayo Clinic Seed Grant Program. Originally obtaining space through the Edson and Furnace acceleration programs, Endovantage now has 10 employees on site in the affiliate space with plans for continued growth.



SkySong epitomizes what it means to be a place connected to both talent and innovation. Home to an extensive network of entrepreneurs, corporate partners, and a millennial workforce, it is a true hub for innovation in the Arizona ecosystem. The EI team supports between 400-600 student ventures every year, and ASU innovations have garnered more than \$500 million in external funding. In addition, the entrepreneurship programs based at SkySong play a significant role in its success as demonstrated by the securing of the University Economic Development Association's (UEDA's) Community Connected Campus Award as well as a State Science and Technology Institute (SSTI) Excellence in Technology Based Economic Development Award. Focusing on the facility's economic development impact, the City of Scottsdale and ASU SkySong received a Silver Excellence in Economic Development Award in the category of Partnerships with Educational Institutions for communities with populations of 200,000-500,000 from the International Economic Development Council (IEDC). These awards are also further recognition of ASU's successful development of place by connecting talent and innovation to create a vibrant ecosystem of activity.