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# Conference unites investors with regional entrepreneurs

**Andrew Johnson**

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An online social network for cheerleaders, a [Web site](#) that lets jobseekers tour companies virtually, and software that enables bar managers to digitally monitor how much liquor they pour into cocktails are among the technologies that investors will consider funding today at the Invest Southwest Capital Conference.

The daylong event is important for entrepreneurs because it gives them a chance to lobby a room of accredited investors for cash, which, in turn, can help them grow their companies and develop their products.

The conference will be held from 8:30 a.m. to 7:30 p.m. at the Four Seasons [Resort](#) Scottsdale at Troon North.

A selection panel culled from a group of 64 applicants the 14 companies who will be presenting at this year's conference.

To qualify, a firm must be an early to midstage company seeking \$250,000 to \$5 million in equity capital.

None of the companies is guaranteed to receive funding by presenting at the conference. However, one of the presenters will receive the Best Company Award, which comes with a prize of cash and business services worth \$25,000. Workers'-compensation [insurance provider](#) SCF Arizona has also pledged to invest \$200,000 in one of the companies.

The presentation lineup includes businesses from the retail, financial-services, computer-technology and bioscience fields.

Any investment that results from the conference could have a twofold impact, according to Chairman Richard Stagg.

"What we're trying to do is make sure at least a good portion of the companies have access to the type of capital that they're seeking," Stagg said. "From another standpoint, we also want to get companies funded to show the conference is meeting its objective; that's to indicate to investors . . . that we have companies both here and regionally that are worth the investment."

Most Arizona-based firms that are successful in attracting investments, whether its early-stage seed financing or venture capital, do so through financiers outside the state, Stagg noted.

"The more that we can identify there are companies that deserve funding, the more likely it is that money outside the state will move here and become locally funded money," he said.

As of last week, 55 investors had registered for the conference. Stagg said organizers are aiming to reach at least 70 attendees. Attendees can also register at the door, he said.

Reach the reporter at [andrew.johnson@arizonarepublic.com](mailto:andrew.johnson@arizonarepublic.com) or 602-444-8280.

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