

## Austin clean tech incubator to spread its message

### San Antonio and El Paso to learn about nourishing startups.

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COURTESY ISSAC BARCHAS  
Director says ATI wants to work  
'to start new clean energy companies  
in other parts of the state.'

The Austin Technology Incubator, a University of Texas effort to spawn clean tech companies, is spreading its mission.

Strategies hatched at the incubator to match burgeoning companies with venture capital money will be replicated in San Antonio and El Paso, ATI Director Isaac Barchas said.

"We want to work together to start new clean energy companies in other parts of the state," he said.

Calling on a pot of federal money, the State Energy Conservation Office will put \$500,000 toward organizing the two new incubators.

"Somebody with a patent may have a great idea, but they need a management plan that attracts venture capital," conservation office Director Dub Taylor said.

"There are plenty of technologies people have patented that would be useful, but they haven't made it out of the garage or off the inventor's workbench and into the market," he said.

Barchas said that over the past three years, ATI has worked with 50 companies to raise more than \$70 million for their projects, leading to jobs and wealth creation in Central Texas.

Among the companies developed at ATI is one developing a high-altitude wind power system; another that looks at ways to recycle large amounts of water; and one refining energy-efficient light bulbs. The idea is to replicate the success in other parts of the state.

"We're going to train them up and introduce them to our investor network and teach them how to build their own," Barchas said.

The El Paso incubator hopes to build on the city's proximity to national laboratories in New Mexico and the Fort Bliss military installation to promote new technologies, said Gary Williams, who runs the Center for Research Entrepreneurship and Innovative Enterprises at the University of Texas at El Paso.

He said the City of El Paso and factories in neighboring Juárez, Chihuahua, had agreed to be test beds for some of the emerging technology.

San Antonio is at the stage where clean energy thinkers "need help to understand entrepreneurship and financing," said Mike Burke, a venture capitalist and former petroleum company CEO who helped organize the San Antonio effort.

The San Antonio incubator will involve UT-San Antonio, the Energy Institute at Texas A&M, CPS Energy, the Southwest Research Institute, the San Antonio Clean Technology Forum and InCube Ventures.

Members of the El Paso and San Antonio incubators will come to Austin in the late summer for workshops, Barchas said.

The announcement comes as the proposed state budget would reduce the Emerging Technology Fund's current \$137.4 million budget to \$21.3 million for the next two years.

The fund, controlled by the governor's office, has given grants to several companies housed at the technology incubator. But the money for the spinoff incubators comes from a federal bucket insulated from state budget cuts, Taylor said.

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