

Denton startup supporters launch nonprofit Tech Mill

By HANAH CHO

Staff Writer

hcho@dallasnews.com

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Over the past year, a group of entrepreneurs, techies and software developers in Denton has been leading a grassroots effort to develop and promote the city as a startup hub in North Texas.

Now, the group has made it official with the launch of TechMill, a nonprofit aimed at continuing and expanding that mission.

“Initially, all the events we were throwing were individually run, though we did collaborate on them,” said Marshall Culpepper, the nonprofit’s president and software engineer for browser Firefox’s parent Mozilla.

“At some point, we had the same goal to build the Denton tech scene. We have a grand vision of how we can do that. We decided to incorporate, get some official funding and we could have these ideas develop under a more explicit direction.”

Known for its arts, music and DIY culture, the city has begun to see an emerging tech startup community.

TechMill’s founders want to provide resources to startups and entrepreneurs as well as better collaborate with the city, businesses and other partners.

To that end, the group will announce two initiatives Monday at its launch event called Bootstrap Denton.

TechMill is working on establishing a co-working space in downtown Denton to accommodate independent workers, developers and entrepreneurs. The group plans to launch a crowdfunding campaign on Kickstarter to raise money, Culpepper said.

“One of the things that the Denton community likes to pride itself on is bootstrapping businesses,” Culpepper said. “We’re trying to bootstrap our co-working space, like a startup.”

A weekly co-working event called Denton Jelly has demonstrated that there is a need for a permanent co-working space, said Clarissa Redwine, a senior at University of North Texas and a TechMill board member.

The other initiative will include hosting a technology conference in the spring, Culpepper said.

“The momentum we’ve had is just amazing,” Redwine said. “It’s amazing how the community members were like, yes, let’s do this. The city as well. They jumped on board.”

Besides the community's efforts, the city of Denton is working with the University of North Texas, Denton ISD and local businesses on developing a vision that would connect innovators, tech organizations and economic incentives under a common platform.

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