



City of  
**OAKLAND**  
California

Media Contact:

Karen Boyd  
City Administrator's Office  
(510) 449-4401  
[kboyd@oaklandnet.com](mailto:kboyd@oaklandnet.com)

## News from: City of Oakland

### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

April 14, 2015

## Oakland's thriving Tech Scene to be highlighted during Vator Splash Conference April 22-23

*Oakland, CA* — For the second year in a row, the international **Vator Splash conference and tech start-up competition** will highlight Oakland's thriving tech scene to hundreds of entrepreneurs, investors and tech leaders. The conference runs **April 22-23 in Oakland**.

Analysis of data from the State of California's Employment Development Department indicates that as of the first quarter of 2014, Oakland was home to 427 tech businesses employing nearly 7,000 people. Tech is the third fastest growing industry sector in Oakland in terms of job creation.

Oakland's tech scene has caught the attention of venture capital firms, who closed 97 deals valued at \$1.2 billion in the Oakland area in 2014. This level of investment landed Oakland in the No. 7 spot on the National Venture Capital Association's annual ranking of total venture capital invested. That's ahead of Austin, Chicago, San Diego and Washington, D.C.

Entrepreneurs – attracted by Oakland's central location, easy transit connections and talented labor pool – are establishing firms in creative workspaces that are affordable when compared to rents in neighboring Bay Area cities.

"I am excited that for the second year in a row, Oakland is hosting this unique event and competition which brings together the essential elements of the tech world – start-ups and investors," said Oakland Mayor Libby Schaaf. "With our growing tech community, I want to make sure that Oakland's presence is felt in a big way again this year." To leverage the opportunities presented by being the host city for Vator Splash, the City of Oakland is partnering with the event's organizers in several different ways.

**Mayor Schaaf** will deliver remarks on Thursday, April 23, to welcome attendees to the event held at the Kaiser Center. She will also join a panel that afternoon to dive into the issue of gender and racial diversity in the tech industry. Evie Nagy, staff writer at **Fast Company**, will moderate the panel that also includes Freada Kapor Klein, co-founder of the **Kapor Center for Social Impact**; Kimberly Bryant from **Black Girls Code**, Lisa Lee from **Pandora** and Nilka Thomas from **Google**.

Even with the sector's strong growth, Oakland has prime locations available for the tech industry. City staff will lead a Wednesday morning (April 22) tour for Vator Splash attendees, showcasing innovative co-working and startup locations in Uptown. Stops will include a tour of **Uptown Station** (the former Sears building) that's being transformed into prime office space for tech firms; **Gensler**, the Bay Area's largest architecture firm; co-working space **Impact Hub**; **The Hive**, a gathering place where crafters, entrepreneurs and urban dwellers create and interact; Internet radio giant **Pandora** and **Port Workspaces**, co-working space in the Kaiser Center overlooking

(more)

News from:  
City of Oakland

Oakland's thriving  
Tech Scene to be  
highlighted during  
Vator Splash  
Conference  
April 22-23

April 14, 2015

Page Two

Lake Merritt. Uptown, Oakland's innovation hub, was recognized as one of the nation's best neighborhoods by the American Planning Association and is packed with the dining, entertainment and transit amenities desired by today's tech employees.

Recognizing the home grown entrepreneurial base of Oakland's tech sector, a session on Thursday afternoon (April 23) entitled "Accelerator Nation: How Accelerators are Evolving and Changing the Local Ecosystem" will be moderated by City of Oakland Tech Development staffer Marisa Raya. Panelists will include Oakland tech leaders who nurture startups and other organizations through accelerators, including Jose Lopez, Chief Technology Officer at **DevLabs**; Vinitha Watson, Executive Director of music accelerator **Zoo Labs**; Rani Croager, the Founder of **Uptima Bootcamp** and Emily Kirsch, CEO and Co-Founder of **SfunCube**.

Oakland's relative space affordability allows entrepreneurs to grow by taking creative risks. A session on Wednesday afternoon entitled "Creatives conquering Oakland - what the hottest agencies here can teach you about making brave creative choices for your own business" will feature tech leaders who have thrived in Oakland or nearby cities. Panelists will include Daniel Stein, Founder & CEO, **Evolution Bureau**; Nick Cohen, Co-Founder, **Mad Dogs and Englishmen**; and Brock Boddie, General Manager, **Huge, Inc.**

More than a dozen Oakland-based speakers will share their insight during the workshops, breakout sessions, fireside chats and panel discussions at Vator Splash.

Vator Splash's tech startup competition offers the opportunity to get in front of top-notch VCs, angel and corporate investors and high-tech influencers. The top 10 startups from this online competition will present on stage on April 23.

Last year's national competition winner was OppSites, an Oakland-based firm that provides cloud-based mapping and 3-D visualization tools to connect the government and real estate sectors in a \$250 billion annual marketplace. Of the eight companies hoping to take home 2015's top prize, two are Oakland-based startups.

- Cloudstead - [www.cloudstead.io](http://www.cloudstead.io)
- BriteHub - [www.britehub.com](http://www.britehub.com)

"Don't miss out on your chance to connect with businesses, investors and City staff, and get an update from last year's Oakland-based winner OppSites," stated Mayor Schaaf. "Sign up for the event and the competition. Keep Oakland's winning streak going."

Oaklanders are being offered a special "CityofOakland15" discount code to register. For complete event details, including the full roster of speakers and registration information, please visit <http://events.vator.tv/2015-splash-oakland/>.

# # #