

2026

GREATER FORT LAUDERDALE

STATE OF TECH REPORT

BY SOUTH FLORIDA TECHGATEWAY



WORK IN THE CLOUD LIVE IN THE SUN™



TABLE OF CONTENTS

04 LETTER FROM THE TECHGATEWAY FOUNDER,
CHAIR AND FACILITATOR

06 8 TIPS TO BOOST OPERATIONS
WITH INNOVATION

07 TOP INVESTMENTS

10 GREATER FORT LAUDERDALE:
INNOVATIVE PEOPLE & TECH

12 POWERING THE BLUE GREEN ECONOMY

14 INNOVATION ON CAMPUS

16 PROFILES IN INNOVATION



WHAT IS TECHGATEWAY?

TechGateway is South Florida — the technology lifestyle destination. For entrepreneurs, employers and employees, educators, tech evangelists and anyone innovating here, “TechGateway” reflects innovation across a tri-county region spanning from Fort Lauderdale south to Miami and north to the Palm Beaches. This regional initiative, spearheaded by the Greater Fort Lauderdale Alliance, is driven by the businesses, organizations and talent transforming our tech ecosystem. When you read “TechGateway,” think South Florida tech, where innovators Work in the Cloud. Live in the Sun.™



T3 FAT Village will bring developer Hines’ “Timber, Transit and Technology” concept to life, with nearly 180,000 square feet of Class AA creative office space in downtown Fort Lauderdale.

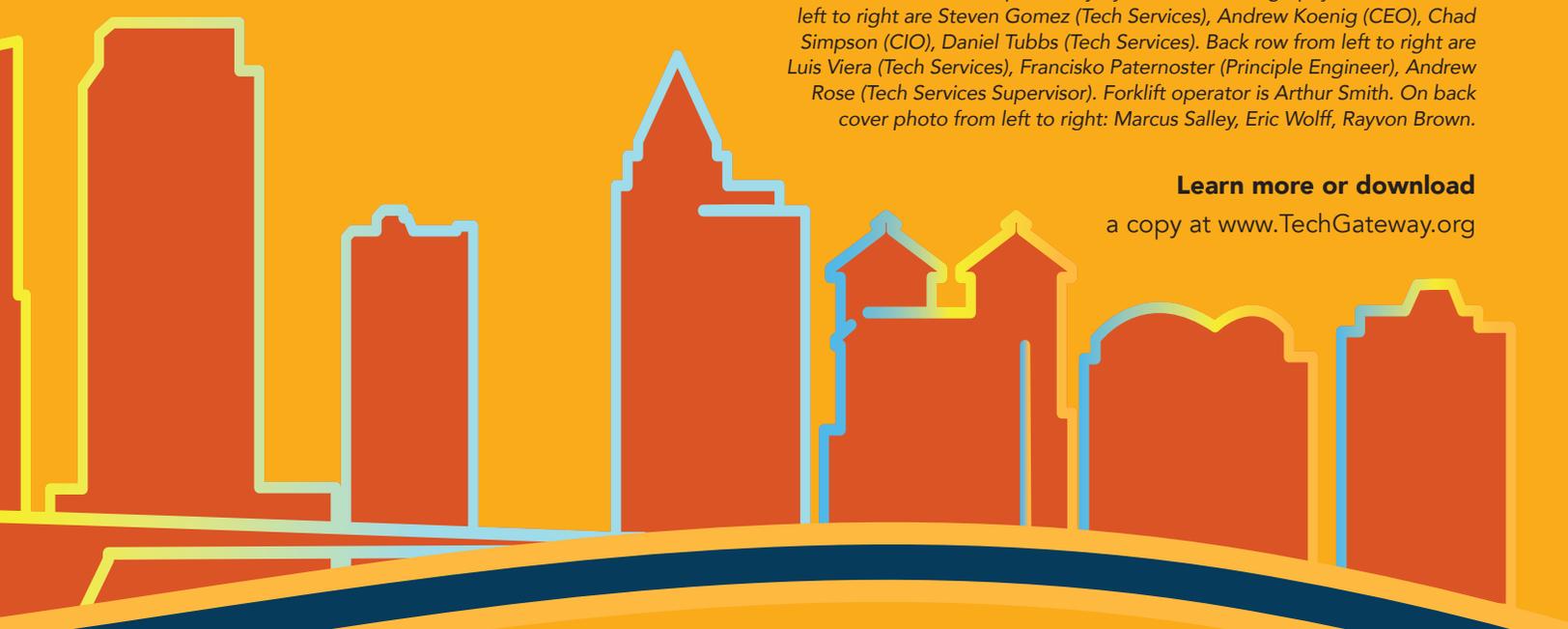
THANK YOU TO OUR SPONSORS

Thank you to our sponsors for underwriting this report on Greater Fort Lauderdale’s thriving technology, innovation, investment / VC, education and collaborative ecosystem. Discover why top tech companies “Work in the Cloud. Live in the Sun.™”



Cover and back cover photos by Ryan Pinder Photography. Front row from left to right are Steven Gomez (Tech Services), Andrew Koenig (CEO), Chad Simpson (CIO), Daniel Tubbs (Tech Services). Back row from left to right are Luis Viera (Tech Services), Francisko Paternoster (Principle Engineer), Andrew Rose (Tech Services Supervisor). Forklift operator is Arthur Smith. On back cover photo from left to right: Marcus Salley, Eric Wolff, Rayvon Brown.

Learn more or download a copy at www.TechGateway.org



INNOVATION AS A BUSINESS DRIVER

To Greater Fort Lauderdale employers, technology and workforce innovation are an imperative to developing leading-edge talent and products to compete on global stage

BY RANDEE DEICH, DAVID CODDINGTON, AND JACOB RUYTENBEEK

Across Greater Fort Lauderdale, a unique perspective on business and entrepreneurship has helped transform how technology and talent are elevating the region.

Employers, educators and business leaders here see “innovation” not simply as a way to step out of the box of common business practices. They view hiring and software and application development, deployment and analysis as ways to maximize operational efficiencies across the organization. In short, these have become business imperatives.

And at the core of the pursuit is innovation of people and process.

As businesses here know, innovation is not solely about staffing an IT department, installing servers or giving the team laptops to enable remote work. It’s investing in people and training, establishing operational programming, and creating solutions to improve the customer or employee experience. Done well, the result ultimately drives greater engagement and returns.

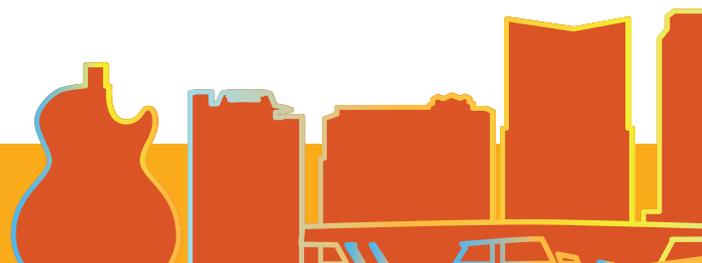
To be clear, these are not tech firms. They’re companies across critical growth sectors featuring high-wage jobs and

deep investment: aviation and aerospace, global logistics, headquarters, health and life sciences, manufacturing, financial and professional services, technology, and marine industries, and technology.

In this issue, we profile furniture and automotive retailers, law and marketing firms, even nonprofits and educators applying a bold new philosophy to integrating innovative talent and technical solutions to elevate their approach to and returns from business.

As you’ll read in this year’s *State of Technology Report*, produced annually by the Greater Fort Lauderdale Alliance and the South Florida TechGateway, with the support of our community and business partners, a variety of area employers are seeing talent innovation in a whole new light.

Education plays a key role in the development of tomorrow’s innovative companies today. From grade school to higher ed to career training organizations, businesses rely on educators to prepare top-tier talent to become their future workforce. Collaborations range from public schools to higher ed to expand career pathways, drive





Employers, educators and business leaders here see “innovation” not simply as a way to step out of the box of common business practices. They view hiring and software and application development, deployment and analysis as ways to maximize operational efficiencies across the organization. In short, these have become business imperatives.

workforce development, and strengthen industry and community partnerships.

The University of Florida Career Connections Center and the Greater Fort Lauderdale Alliance collaborate on a yearly “Career Trek.” It provides early exposure beyond traditional internships, helping students see how technology is applied inside non-tech companies across South Florida. It also increases awareness so talent can see the region’s growth and opportunities.

Nova Southeastern University, which along with FAU in 2025 earned designation as an R1 research university by the Carnegie Classification of Institutions of Higher Education, has built its reputation delivering “exciting new innovations in health care, biotechnology, oceanography, and economic development supporting Florida’s blue economy,” says President and CEO Harry K. Moon.

The Broward Education Foundation helps the business community understand how Broward County Public Schools is a large operating employer using emerging technology and AI to address workforce and operational challenges. This alignment increases awareness and shortens the distance between classroom and career to build a future-ready workforce.

The Greater Fort Lauderdale Alliance and South Florida TechGateway are excited to present this year’s *State of Tech Report* and the stories of just a few of our top employers and educators. As you’ll discover, innovations in talent development are written in their business plans — and roadmaps for future success.



DAVID CODDINGTON

Senior Vice President of Business Development, Greater Fort Lauderdale Alliance and Founder of The South Florida TechGateway



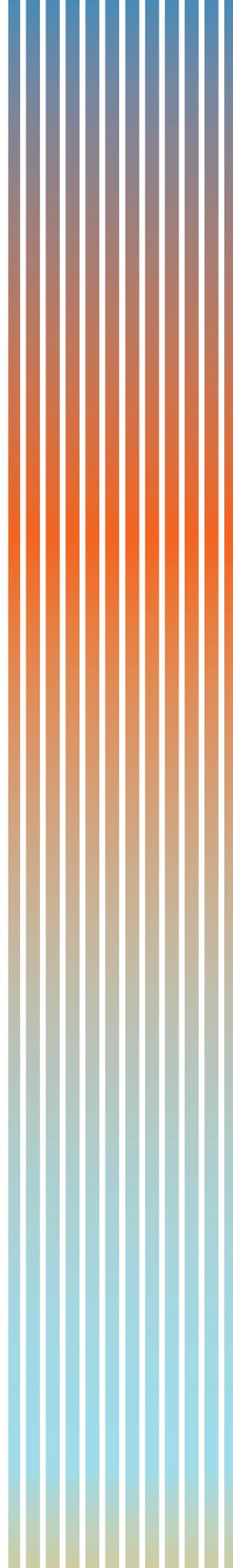
JACOB RUYTENBEEK

Founder and CEO SailPlan, Founder of Founding Blue, Chair of The South Florida TechGateway



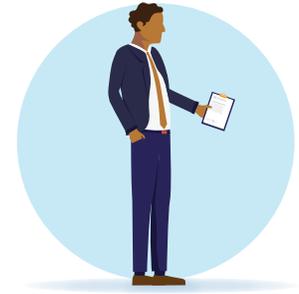
RANDEE DEICH

Director of Talent Attraction and Education, Greater Fort Lauderdale Alliance and Facilitator of The South Florida TechGateway



8 TIPS TO BOOST OPERATIONS WITH INNOVATION...

Organizations hoping to improve outcomes through technological innovation might consider the following tips from Greater Fort Lauderdale companies that have found success...

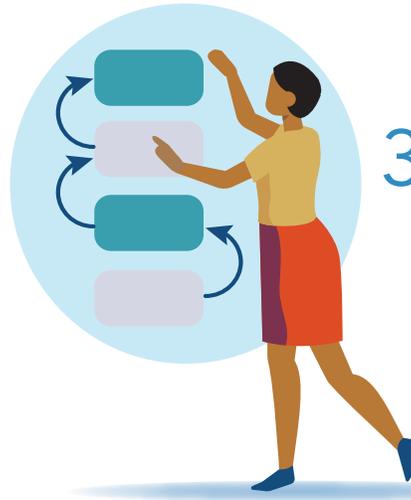


1 Start with the problems, not the technology. Don't buy shiny solutions without first identifying the problem to be addressed.

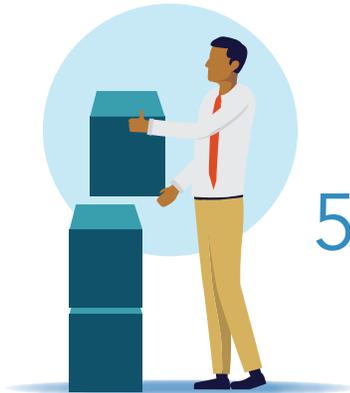
3 Integration over isolation. Most failures happen when tools don't talk to each other. Integrated systems create better data, smoother workflows, and stronger insights.



2 Design for simplicity and ease of use. Complexity kills adoption.



4 Ensure leadership alignment so innovation supports business priorities and investment follows.



5 Build incrementally, as small wins create momentum for larger transformations.

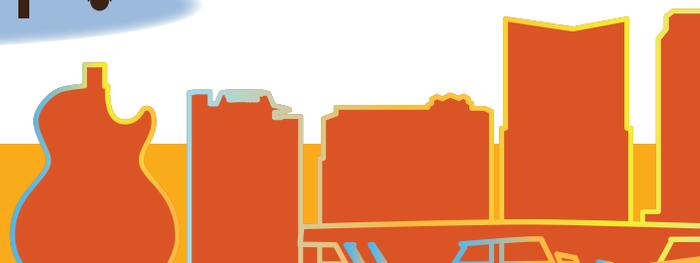
6 Don't ignore change management. Communication and training can be more important than the tech itself. Firms that approach innovation strategically, not reactively, gain the most operational value.

7 Ensure governance. Without it, innovation becomes a series of disconnected experiments rather than sustained improvement.



8 Align standards. Clear data standards, documented processes and consistent system usage are the foundation of any successful innovation program.

* Source: Kelley Kronenberg



NUMBERS TELL TECHNOLOGY'S TALE

U.S. & STATE INVESTMENT

More than

\$421B

capital invested in the U.S. in 2025.

Florida ranked #6 in the U.S., with

\$11.2B

capital invested in the region in 2025.

Florida ranked #5, with

806

deals in Florida in 2025.

The average capital invest per deal in Florida in 2025 was

13.9M

SOUTH FLORIDA METRO INVESTMENT

Ranked #1, based on capital invested, with

468

deals across the tri-county region (Broward, Miami-Dade and Palm Beach counties) in 2025.

\$8.2B

invested in the region, account for nearly 3 out of 4 dollars (73%) invested in the state of Florida.

South Florida's capital investment is nearly

5x

the amount invested in the Tampa-St. Petersburg-Clearwater metro (\$1.7 billion) — the second largest metro area in the state.

STATES WITH HIGHEST CAPITAL INVESTMENT*

Ranked by capital invested (2025)



FLORIDA METROS WITH HIGHEST CAPITAL INVESTMENT*

Ranked by capital invested (2025)



*Capital raised through/counts of Venture Capital, PE Growth/Expansion and Equity Crowdfunding rounds
Source: PitchBook Data, Inc. data as of 01/12/2026, GFLA Research

CAPITAL INVESTMENTS TRENDS

CAPITAL INVESTMENT AND TOTAL DEALS, FLORIDA

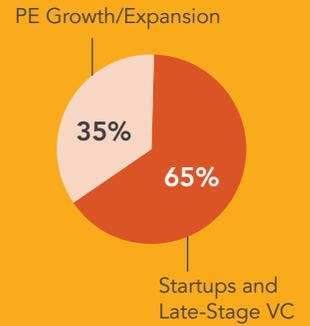
In 2025, Venture Capital investment overall increased \$115.2 Billion or 37.6% in the U.S going from \$306.6B in 2024 up to \$421.7B in 2025.

In 2025, Florida's Capital Investment reached \$11.2B. Compared to 2019, pre-pandemic investment, Florida's capital investment increased nearly \$6.3B or 127% from \$4.9B invested in 2019. Florida grew more than 14 percentage points faster than the U.S growth of 112.6%.

DEAL ACTIVITY¹ FOR FLORIDA BY YEAR



2025 FLORIDA CAPITAL INVESTMENT

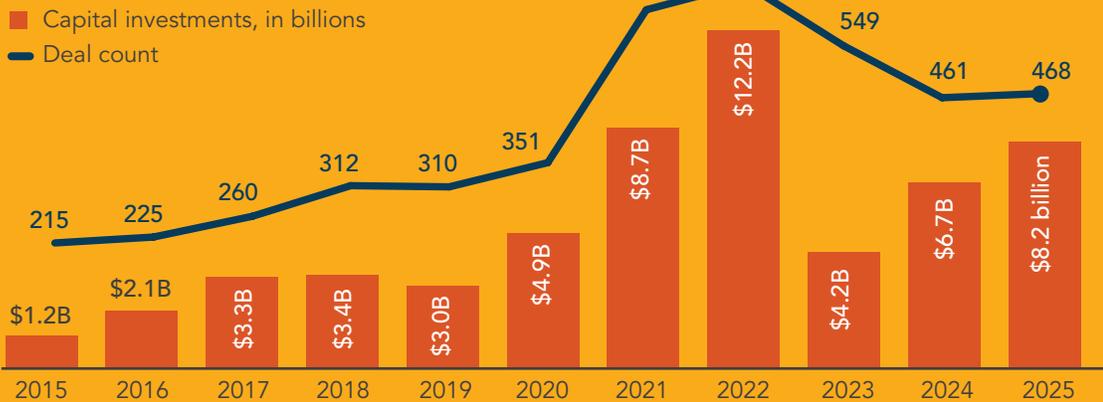


In 2025, Startups and Late-Stage VC investment represented 65% of the total investment in the state of Florida, a nearly 20 percentage points growth compared to the previous year share.

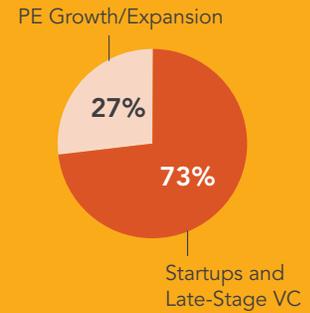
CAPITAL INVESTMENT AND DEALS, SOUTH FLORIDA

In 2025, Venture capital investment in South Florida experienced an increase of nearly \$1.5B or 22% compared to 2024. South Florida remains #1 metro in the state with \$8.2 billion invested accounting for nearly 73% of the total capital invested in Florida in 2025.

DEAL ACTIVITY¹ FOR SOUTH FLORIDA BY YEAR



2025 SOUTH FLORIDA CAPITAL INVESTMENT



In 2025, Startups and Late-Stage VC investment represented 73% of the total investment in South Florida, a 27.5 percentage points growth compared to the previous year share or nearly \$3B, going up from \$3B in 2024 to 5.98B in 2025

¹Capital raised through/counts of Venture Capital, PE Growth/Expansion and Equity Crowdfunding rounds

Source: PitchBook Data, Inc. data as of 01/12/2026, GFLA Research



TOP BROWARD COUNTY DEALS AND EXITS BASED ON CAPITAL INVESTED

TOP DEALS¹ IN BROWARD COUNTY, FL IN 2025

COMPANIES	DEAL DATE	DEAL SIZE (USD M)	DEAL TYPE	CITY	INDUSTRY/VERTICAL
Napster	08-Jan-2025	3,000.00	Later Stage VC	Boca Raton	Media and Information Services, AI, Virtual Reality
Origis Energy	14-Jan-2025	850.00	PE Growth/Expansion	Miami	Energy, CleanTEch
GoldState Music	17-Apr-2025	500.00	PE Growth/Expansion	West Palm Beach	Financial Services
NewsMax Media	03-Mar-2025	225.00	PE Growth/Expansion	West Palm Beach	Publishing
Flex (Financial Services)	05-Mar-2025	225.00	Later Stage VC	Miami	FinTech, AI, Big Data
3650 Capital	27-Mar-2025	215.00	PE Growth/Expansion	Miami	Financial Services
MaintainX	09-Jul-2025	150.00	Later Stage VC	Miami	Information Technology, AI, Mobile
Syncomune	21-Aug-2025	131.83	Early Stage VC	Fort Lauderdale	HealthTech, Life Sciences, Oncology
Exowatt	13-Nov-2025	120.00	Early Stage VC	Miami	CleanTech, Energy
Cast AI	23-Apr-2025	108.00	Later Stage VC	Miami	Information Technology
ONE Amazon	31-Mar-2025	105.00	Later Stage VC	Miami	FinTech, Life Sciences
Flow Life	24-Apr-2025	100.00	Early Stage VC	Bay Harbor Islands	Real Estate Technology
Rocket Youth Brands	14-Feb-2025	100.00	PE Growth/Expansion	Miami	Education and Training Services
Iru	07-Feb-2025	100.00	Venture Growth	Miami	Information Technology, Cybersecurity, AI
Open Blue Cobia	24-Mar-2025	98.66	Venture Growth	Miami	AgTech
Ubicquia	17-Jan-2025	70.59	Later Stage VC	Fort Lauderdale	CleanTech, Big Data, AI
Lighter	11-Nov-2025	68.00	Later Stage VC	Miami	Information Technology
Glow Financial Services	17-Oct-2025	65.00	PE Growth/Expansion	Miami	Financial Services, TMT
Flex (Financial Services)	04-Dec-2025	60.00	Later Stage VC	Miami	FinTech, Big Data, AI
NGU Sports Lighting	21-Aug-2025	60.00	PE Growth/Expansion	Palm Beach Gardens	Business Products and Services (B2B)
Dorsia	13-Feb-2025	50.40	Early Stage VC	Miami Beach	FoodTech, Restaurant Technology
American Capital Financial Group	01-Sep-2025	50.00	PE Growth/Expansion	Miami	Financial Services
GoTu	17-Nov-2025	45.00	Later Stage VC	Miami	Information Technology, HRTech
SellersFi	13-Jan-2025	44.80	Later Stage VC	Weston	FinTech, AI, Big Data
Kasa Living	19-Aug-2025	40.00	PE Growth/Expansion	Miami	Real Estate Technology

TOP EXITS² IN BROWARD COUNTY, FL IN 2025

COMPANIES	EXIT DATE	EXIT SIZE (USD M)	EXIT TYPE	CITY	INDUSTRY/VERTICAL
Modernizing Medicine	03-Mar-2025	5,300.00	Buyout/LBO	Boca Raton	Digital Health, SaaS
CentralReach	23-Apr-2025	1,850.00	Merger/Acquisition	Fort Lauderdale	HealthTech
Touchland	16-Jul-2025	700.00	Merger/Acquisition	Miami	LOHAS & Wellness, TMT
Corellium	02-Dec-2025	170.00	Merger/Acquisition	Delray Beach	Information Technology, Cybersecurity
Dynamic (Financial Services)	23-Oct-2025	90.00	Merger/Acquisition	Miami	FinTech
Inspected.com	01-Jun-2025	35.00	Buyout/LBO	Plantation	Information Technology, SaaS
Social Snowball	25-Jun-2025	35.00	Merger/Acquisition	Miami	Information Technology, Marketing Tech
Intelligent Observation	07-Aug-2025	14.00	Merger/Acquisition	Miami	HealthTech

¹Capital raised through/counts of Venture Capital, PE Growth/Expansion and Equity Crowdfunding rounds

²Exits from Venture Capital, PE Growth/Expansion and Equity Crowdfunding rounds, by exit size

Source: PitchBook Data, Inc. data as of 01/09/2025, GFLA Research

GREATER FORT LAUDERDALE: INNOVATIVE PEOPLE & TECH

Greater Fort Lauderdale's economy is being driven by innovation in technology and progress and a commitment to preparing its workforce for the 21st Century workplace.

This issue of the State of Tech Report examines companies and organizations whose deliberate approach to innovative talent recruitment, training and inclusion are helping ensure future success.

"It's clear that technology delivers desired outcomes only when data is reliable and people are equipped to use it inside real operations," says Jacob Ruytenbeek, the chairman of South Florida TechGateway and founder and CEO of SailPlan, a data solutions provider to the maritime industry. "Organizations, talent pipelines and supporting institutions that align early see faster and more durable progress."



Manish Hirapara,
CEO,
PeakActivity

It's all part of the innovation-driven economy that dates back to the creation here of the IBM PC, the mobile phone, and technology that changed the hospitality, construction, even pet products industries, says Manish Hirapara, CEO of PeakActivity and co-chair of the Broward Workshop Tech Committee. Workshop members foster cooperation between the private and public sectors as well as

all socio-economic and political lines. Innovation in products and people "solve real business problems and fuel growth, not just as an end in itself, as we see in other major metros," he says.

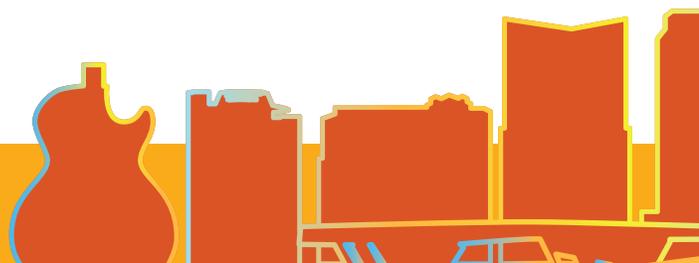
Innovation through technology functions as a force multiplier for corporate expansion across the region in healthcare, logistics, finance, aviation, marine industries and real estate, he says.

"This cross-sector application of technology allows for tech-enabled job creation and helps us achieve an outsized share of economic growth, while strengthening the competitiveness of established businesses," Hirapara says.

Business is driving growth. Downtown Fort Lauderdale alone generated a record \$43 billion in annual economic impact in 2025, up 44% since 2019, notes the Fort Lauderdale Downtown Development Authority. It's fueled by business migration across high-wage sectors, and the influx of young and mid-career talent lured by the region's innovative, entrepreneurial-focused business employers. Investment in major real estate projects, such as T3 FAT Village and the Broward County Convention Center expansion and Omni



*All articles by Jeff Zbar.
The freelance business and
marketing writer can be
reached at jeff@jeffzbar.com.*





Hotel is creating a dynamic and enduring hub of economic activity.

This is an ideal moment to launch an innovation-driven company with an innovation-minded workforce focused on outcomes, says Michael Burtov, Chief



Michael Burtov, Chief Innovation Officer, Nova Southeastern University

are entrepreneurial-minded talent, many of whom bring “a diverse, international population with strong immigrant-founder energy and global perspective,”

Innovation Officer with Nova Southeastern University and the executive director of the Alan B. Levan I NSU Broward Center of Innovation. The next technology waves are already forming — quantum, advanced automation, new materials, and accelerated progress in biotech and healthcare. Leading them

he says. They are at the forefront of ideation, development, execution and commercialization to address real-world problems and opportunities, with talent at the foundation of future success, he says.

“There’s also something intangible here: people show up with big goals,” Burtov says. “They come to build a new life, a new company, or a new chapter. That mindset matters.”



“It’s clear that technology delivers desired outcomes only when data is reliable and people are equipped to use it inside real operations”

– JACOB RUYTENBEEK



A SEA-CHANGE FOR THE BLUE GREEN ECONOMY

With South Florida the forefront of the blue and ocean economy, the Marine Research Hub fosters collaboration by universities, oceanographic researchers, innovators and inventors developing solutions and talent across the marine and climatic environments.

Incubator, accelerator and commercialization can be found at the various universities and organizations. The Research Park at Florida Atlantic University and The Tech Runway at FAU accelerate and incubate technology development.

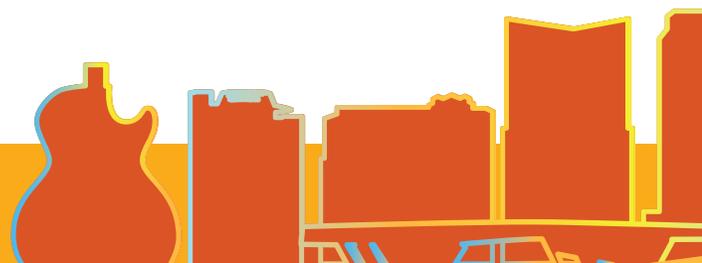
The FAU College of Business's Business Pitch Competition this year has a new track for blue/ocean solutions, funded by the Marine Research Hub. Florida International University's StartUP FIU is a university-wide initiative to foster innovation and economic impact, including in blue tech.

The annual Ocean Exchange recognizes and helps advance innovation to improve the health of the oceans and the blue economy. The event last year received a record number of submissions from companies around the world. Solutions explored alternative materials, CO2 reduction and sequestration, data/robotics, digitalization, energy, fisheries/marine habitat, vessel/port operations, and water treatment.

"Firms that embed robust technology and data practices will set the standard for impact and growth," says Katherine O'Fallon, executive director with the Marine Research Hub.



Katherine O'Fallon, executive director of the Marine Research Hub, visited Greenland with the NSU Rising Seas Institute.





PhD researcher Nikolet Kostur studies marine invertebrate communities on artificial structures in urban, subtropical environments. This photo, taken by technical diver and photogrammetry expert Jimmy Gadomski, won 3rd place in the Science and Innovation category for UN Decade of Ocean Science Sustainable Development at the UN Oceans Conference.

WAHOO BAY: THE LIVING LAB FOR OCEAN LITERACY

Researchers and students here are literally at the leading edge of climate science. Wahoo Bay, a public marine education park and living laboratory at the Hillsboro Inlet, delivers immersive field experiences and data-driven investigations in real time.

The solutions at Wahoo Bay include the University of Miami Coastal Architecture, Structural Engineering Lab's SEAHIVE technology, with Pompano-based 3D printing manufacturer enhancing the wave dampening walls.

Using Wahoo Bay's Fishial.AI software, sponsored by the Wye Family Foundation, children at the Pompano Beach Winter Camp Tech Rec Center identified and tagged fish, data then used by students at Florida Atlantic University's Center for Connected Autonomy and AI.

"Innovation works best when it is part of the culture, not a side project," says Katie Hendrickson, executive director of Wahoo Bay & Shipwreck Park.



INNOVATION ON CAMPUS

From grade school to grad school, educators are preparing the next generation of career-ready talent.

FLORIDA ATLANTIC UNIVERSITY

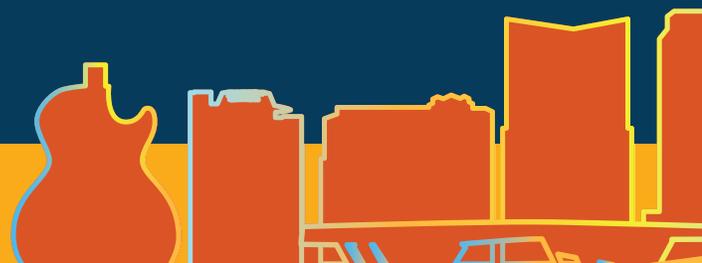
RESEARCH PARK AT FAU: HOME FOR FUTURE SUCCESS

“ For some start-ups, university talent helps bridge today’s concept and tomorrow’s success story. The innovative ventures of the Research Park at FAU enjoy immediate access to the talented and sought-after students and research faculty at Florida Atlantic. The level of talent and innovation shown by students and graduates of Florida Atlantic has become a competitive advantage for the innovators of all industries in the Research Park.



Student interns prepared due diligence for a recent \$100 million acquisition, with their successes inspiring their classmates and demonstrating how entrepreneurship and innovation translate into real world application, positive industry disruption and revenue generating opportunities. That’s what sets the South Florida tech and innovation space apart.

– **ANDREW DUFFELL,**
PRESIDENT AND CEO, RESEARCH PARK AT FLORIDA ATLANTIC UNIVERSITY



NOVA SOUTHEASTERN UNIVERSITY

DARWIN, INNOVATION & SURVIVAL OF THE FITTEST

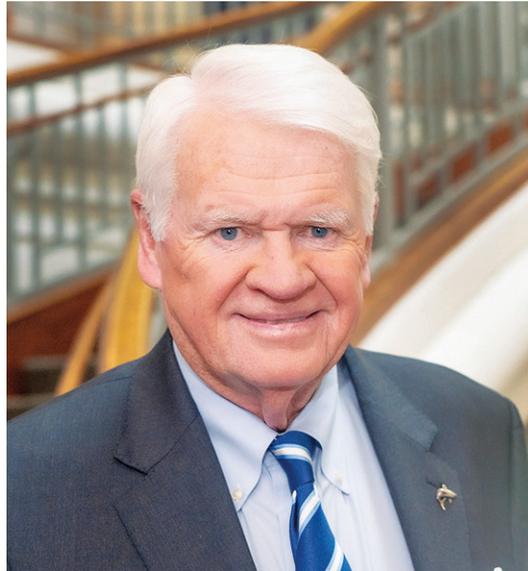
Innovation and the application of novel technology is driving advancement in modern business and education. The arrival of big data and machine learning drove the innovative economy to its current place. Artificial intelligence promises to take us far into the next frontier of human advancement. Institutions of higher learning and technical training are producing a talented, capable, and conscientious workforce in areas such as AI, analytics, cybersecurity, information systems, business, high-tech innovations and more.

“Darwin was right — survival of the fittest,” Harry K. Moon, president of Nova Southeastern University, says at a recent artificial intelligence and tech innovations panel discussion at the annual meeting of the Florida Chamber.

The Alan B. Levan I NSU Broward Center of Innovation leads efforts to scale South Florida’s tech and innovation ecosystem by supporting entrepreneurs, researchers, and corporate innovators, and called this “the best moment in history to start an innovation-driven company.”

“Humans’ strength hasn’t come from physical dominance, but from the ability to adapt, to create, and most importantly — to build and master tools,” Moon added.

Hyperautomation and AI-enabled tools have simplified processes, boosted accuracy,



Harry K. Moon, president of Nova Southeastern University.

and delivered significant cost savings, says Leonard Pounds, Senior VP, Office of Innovation and Information Technology, the university’s strategic hub for enterprise technology, driving innovation and aligning technology with institutional goals.

“Technology innovation strengthens our organization by improving efficiency, scalability, and decision-making,” he says. Integrating innovation management and fostering an innovation-focused culture speeds technology adoption, reduces manual work, and increases transparency.”



FLORIDA ATLANTIC WORKFORCE INNOVATIONS NETWORK (WIN)

HELPING SOUTH FLORIDA THRIVE OUTSIDE THE CLASSROOM



Expanding Access to Certifications

Creating industry-led credentials that support small businesses.

Skills

their

FLORIDA ATLANTIC UNIVERSITY

A WIN-WIN FOR WORKFORCE TRAINING

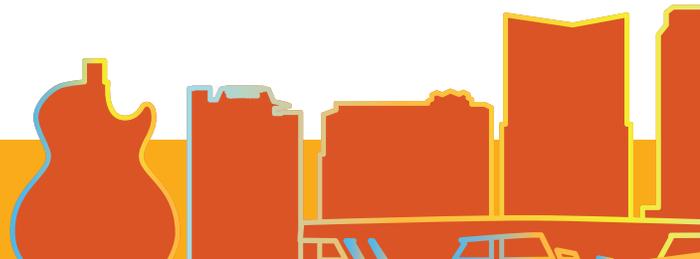
Florida Atlantic University's Workforce Innovations Network (WIN) is building the next generation workforce ecosystem. AI-native technologies, paired with an adaptive learning ecosystem, elevate technical skills and transferable skills, such as critical thinking, communications, and "civitas," or civic engagement.

WIN's "Pocket Career Launchpads," for example, matches the needs of both employers and talent, says Colin Polsky, FAU Associate Vice President, Broward Campuses and head of the WIN workforce program. FAU is the county's state-designated higher educational partner. Modeled after similar programs at Purdue University and the California Community College system, WIN will match

learner's validated credentials and experiences with employer needs. The result is meaningful training opportunities, apprenticeships and microtraining, especially on rewarding, yet short-term projects for more impactful training that's mobile-friendly, skills-first, on-demand and affordable.

Employers engage faculty and students and other learners, and not just degree seekers or traditional-age college students, says Jennifer Oddo, a consultant with FAU who helped launch the Purdue University program at Youngstown State University in 2020.

"We're helping higher ed produce young grads who can hit the ground running to take advantage of the current economy," she says.



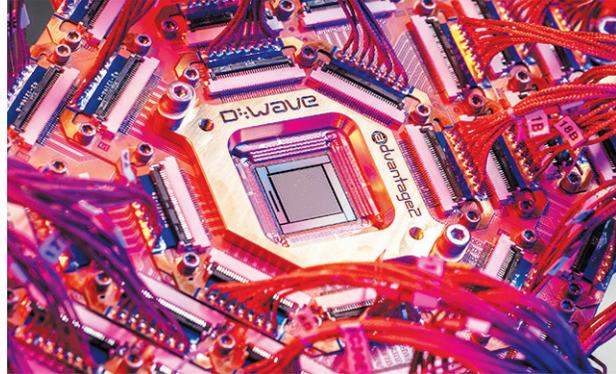
FAU QUANTUM NEWS

A FIRST FOR FLORIDA QUANTUM

Florida Atlantic University recently acquired D-Wave Quantum Inc. and this year will install the Advantage2 quantum computing system on FAU's Boca Raton campus. This will make FAU the first university in Florida to publicly host a dedicated quantum computer on site, spurring pioneering research, hands-on student training and real-world applications in such areas as logistics, transportation and materials discovery.

This hub for quantum advancement will attract investment and prepare the next generation of technology workforce and leaders, says Stella Batalama, Dean of the FAU College of Engineering and Computer Science.

"This is part of a deliberate strategy — investing



early in transformative infrastructure across AI, autonomy, and now quantum — to elevate FAU as a national leader in research, innovation and workforce development."

BROWARD EDUCATION FOUNDATION

INNOVATION IN THE CLASSROOM

The Broward Education Foundation plays a critical role in ensuring today's students and educators are prepared for tomorrow's workforce, especially as artificial intelligence reshapes how work is done.

Alignment between BEF, Broward County Public Schools and leadership, and the broader community mobilizes strategic partnerships that bring together employers, civic leaders and resources to advance workforce-aligned initiatives, says James Knapp, president and CEO of the foundation, the only 501(c)3 charitable organization solely dedicated to supporting Broward County Public Schools.

Equipping educators with better tools, training and support improves student outcomes. For example, as the school district integrates AI

as both an instructional tool and an enterprise workforce strategy, BEF helps strengthen the human infrastructure. BEF also reinforces efforts, such as the districtwide rollout and adoption of Microsoft Copilot.

BEF helps ensure innovation is grounded in responsibility by supporting professional learning, ethical frameworks, and community engagement. This helps safeguard trust while building capacity. As educator confidence and capability grow, students gain critical AI literacy, learning to engage technology as problem solvers and creative thinkers.

"Ultimately, BEF serves as the connector between education and industry, helping translate classroom innovation into real-world readiness and elevating Broward's talent pipeline for the workforce of tomorrow," Knapp says.

PROFILES IN INNOVATION

Greater Fort Lauderdale's leading employers are elevating workforce innovation to create teams prepared for the careers of the 21st Century. Read how eight are empowering tech and team to serve up seamless solutions.

MUSEUM OF DISCOVERY AND SCIENCE INNOVATION-BACKED DISCOVERY AND SCIENCE



At the Museum of Discovery and Science (MODS), innovation is powered by people. Teams spanning exhibits, IT, audience engagement, education, life sciences and guest services work as a unified engine to design, build and operate the systems behind every guest experience. Together, they blend technology, storytelling and science to advance learning, access and engagement.

That collaboration comes to life across the museum. At the Deerfield Satellite location, teams created the Florida Ecosystems Theater, where projection mapping, directional audio, adaptive lighting and responsive media immerse guests inside Florida's natural stories — alongside an AI-powered bull shark that answers questions in real time.

The Everglades Theater's flexible, black-box design

enables staff to instantly shift between cinematic presentations, engineering workshops and interactive exhibits, supporting hands-on STEAM learning, says Joseph P. Cox, MODS president and CEO.

MODS teams are also pioneering systems that merge digital animation, environmental modeling and natural-language interaction, including the nation's first custom-built holographic theater. In the AutoNation® IMAX® Theater, they balance iconic 15/70mm film with dual-laser digital projection.

The approach to team innovation allows rapid prototyping, smart investment and seamless integration of new tools with legacy systems, ensuring team and system innovation continuously elevates how guests experience science, Cox says.



KELLEY KRONENBERG

THE LAW OF INNOVATION

To law firm Kelley Kronenberg, innovation is a disciplined business strategy, rather than a technology experiment. Its team of 15 employees and a six-member Technology & Innovation Committee span infrastructure, cybersecurity, development and automation and blend operational reliability with continuous improvement.

Ongoing investments in innovation and development fund initiatives to measurably improve efficiency, profitability, client experience and compliance.

Innovation strengthens core outcomes: Accuracy, effectiveness, efficiency and value. Automating workflows, integrating systems and improving data visibility empowers the team.

They reduce human error, equip attorneys with timely information, eliminate redundant processes, and drive stronger financial performance. Technology removes friction from day-to-day operations so legal professionals can focus on high-value work, says Christopher E. Self, the firm's interim Chief Information Officer.

Modernization of financial operations. Automated data pipelines and integrated Power BI dashboards move leadership from static, monthly reporting to near-real-time insight into accounts receivable, billing and cash collections. This accelerates collections, improves forecasting accuracy, reduces manual reporting, and fundamentally changes how financial decisions are made. The result is improved performance visibility and business agility.

Talent that sustains a culture of innovation. The firm prioritizes cultural fit alongside technical aptitude from cross-functional thinkers who understand both legal operations and technology.

Structured interviews, scenario testing and an emphasis on internal development creates a collaborative team that treats innovation as a shared responsibility, and a competitive advantage.

"We use innovation not as a buzzword but as a way to solve operational bottlenecks, modernize workflows, and enable our teams to focus on high-value legal work instead of administrative tasks," Self says.



MILLER CONSTRUCTION

BUILDING A BETTER BUSINESS

At Miller Construction Company, innovation is a workforce strategy rooted in a people-first philosophy. The firm uses technology not to replace experience, but to strengthen trust, collaboration and continuous learning across its teams. Ongoing training and professional development ensure employees understand how to apply new tools effectively, turning innovation into a shared capability rather than a specialized function.

Advanced technologies such as Building Information Modeling (BIM) and life-cycle analysis help teams reduce risk, improve accuracy and make better decisions throughout a project's life cycle. To support adoption, Miller takes an integration-first approach, deploying proven platforms like Procore

and Microsoft Teams to create a connected digital environment that simplifies communication, centralizes information and increases transparency without adding unnecessary complexity.

Procore, combined with BIM coordination, has become a cornerstone of this approach, enabling real-time documentation, clash detection and accountability that reduce rework and delays. By prioritizing interoperability, flexibility and user adoption — and reinforcing technology with inclusive hiring and continuous education — Miller develops an innovation-focused workforce equipped to deliver consistent, high-quality outcomes for clients.



STARMARK

WHERE INNOVATION MAKES WORK SMARTER



At Fort Lauderdale–based Starmark, innovation is designed to build a workforce that works smarter, faster and with greater confidence. Led by Chief Digital Officer and Partner Brett Circe, the firm treats technology as a practical performance tool that reduces friction, improves decision-making and empowers teams with clear, actionable data.

Starmark focuses innovation on people first. Clean, intuitive web and mobile interfaces were built on top of complex media-planning databases, removing intimidation and making sophisticated tools accessible to everyone. This approach improves onboarding, alignment and daily management of large-scale campaigns. New applications further support teams through automation, real-time

alerts, budget analysis and integrated dashboards connected to platforms like Google and Meta, while a digital asset management system provides instant visibility across creative work.

Workforce development reinforces the culture. Starmark hires tech-savvy talent and supports them with a structured two-week onboarding program centered on Agile practices, collaboration and client engagement. A buddy system and hands-on learning accelerate confidence and adaptability.

With a growing remote workforce, Starmark even uses a VR “digital twin” of its office to enable immersive collaboration, proving that thoughtful innovation can directly elevate how teams work.

RICK CASE AUTOMOTIVE

INNOVATION BY HIRING AND DEVELOPING THE RIGHT PEOPLE



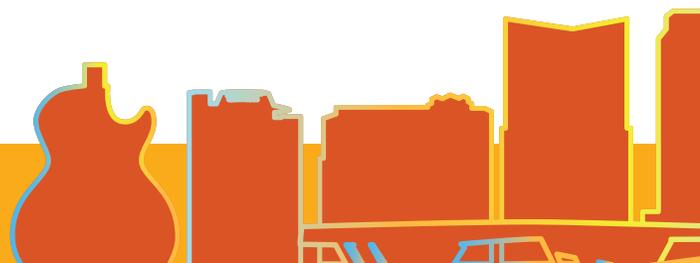
Rick Case Automotive believes innovation starts with people, not platforms. The company intentionally recruits and hires associates who are curious, adaptable and motivated to grow. They then equip them with technology that enhances, rather than replaces, their skills. From the start, new hires are introduced to a culture where innovation is viewed as a support system for better service, smarter decisions and long-term career development.

Training for both tech and non-tech employees alike is structured and continuous, President and CEO Rita Case says. Its 30/60/90-day feedback loops during an associate’s critical first year reinforce expectations, identify strengths and tailor additional training. These checkpoints also open early career-pathing conversations, helping associates see clear

opportunities ahead and encouraging engagement from day one.

Technology plays a direct and complementary role. In areas like its service business development center, AI is deployed as a support tool — not a substitute — allowing associates to build expertise while maintaining high service standards. Succession planning further reinforces this people-first strategy, with most promotions filled internally.

By building trust, developing talent early, and aligning innovation with human growth, the dealership achieves higher retention, stronger productivity, and above-industry performance while creating a workforce ready to innovate from within. “We focus on people’s growth and their development in combination with their use of technology,” Case says.



CITY FURNITURE

INNOVATION DRIVES SAFETY, QUALITY AND CUSTOMER SATISFACTION



City Furniture's innovative approach to technology is grounded in a focus on its people. Pursuit of digital tools seeks to improve safety, quality, customer satisfaction, financial performance, company culture and career advancement. By aligning technology with outcomes, City Furniture strengthens operations across distribution centers, warehouses and showrooms while staying ahead in a highly competitive retail environment.

One of the company's most impactful recent innovations is the launch of its 3D Room Planner and 3D model integration. Powered by 3D Cloud, this transformational platform allows customers to visualize true-to-scale City Furniture products in their own spaces. The results are immediate and measurable: customers who used the 3D tools generated double-digit increases in average order value, reported higher confidence and satisfaction, and engaged more deeply with both in-store and virtual design associates.

Behind the scenes, City Furniture built a proprietary warehouse slotting and cutaway algorithm to ensure products are placed in the right location at the right time.

"The biggest lesson we've learned is that transformation isn't about the software — it's about people and leadership," says CEO Andrew Koenig, who traveled to Japan to study the Kaizen methodology of "continuous improvement" or "change for the better."

"Technology accelerates what already exists in your culture. If teams don't trust leadership, don't understand the 'why,' or aren't properly trained, even the best systems will fall flat. At City, every implementation starts with clarity — purpose,



City Furniture empowers every employee with innovation — from the warehouse to the showroom to the delivery vehicles.

process, people, then platform. That order has to be non-negotiable, and it's the foundation behind every successful transformation we've achieved."



JRM CONSTRUCTION

BUILDING A TECH-SAVVY TEAM FROM THE GROUND UP



JRM Construction Management takes an innovative, intentional approach to recruiting and developing the talent that powers its technology strategy. Rather than hiring reactively, the company has built a long-standing candidate pipeline that enables it to quickly identify, screen and engage top technical talent for both skills and cultural fit. Adaptability, curiosity and the ability to thrive in a fast-paced environment are core traits JRM prioritizes from the first interview.

Once hired, associates in its 18-member technology team are supported by a structured development model that blends hands-on experience with continuous learning, says Dennis O'Brien, the company's Chief Technology Officer.

Product managers lead initiatives that emphasize innovation and software-driven operations.

All are encouraged to pursue certifications aligned with their specialties, reinforcing expertise while keeping skills current.

This people-first approach ensures those closest to the work are empowered to contribute ideas and drive improvement. By investing in training, inclusion and career development, JRM creates a workforce that not only supports its technology platform, but actively advances it, fueling smarter decision-making, greater transparency and sustained innovation across the organization.

JM FAMILY

INNOVATION REDUCES MILES, DRIVES RETURNS



JM Family Enterprises is making significant, long-term investments in people, platforms and programming to elevate outcomes across its enterprise, workforce and dealer network. Rather than treating technology as a back-office utility, the company views technology and a tech-savvy workforce as strategic drivers of efficiency, experience and measurable business performance.

The company is committed to people and purposeful talent development. Through its ITS Academy, the company recruits undergraduate and graduate candidates into a nine-month, immersive program that blends hands-on technical training with broad exposure across the organization. Associates rotate through key functions, gaining a deep understanding of how technology supports real-world business needs before joining their permanent teams.

Modern digital platforms automate complex

treasury and enterprise workflows while strengthening customer-facing capabilities in automotive parts distribution. These systems help dealers respond to demand with greater speed, accuracy and reliability, translating technology investment directly into operational gains.

"Hiring the right talent starts with investing in people and giving them real opportunities to make an impact," says John Damalas, Group Vice President and Chief Technology Officer with JM Family Enterprises.

"In return, we're building a strong pipeline of early-career technologists who understand our business and can deliver value on day one. It is a practical way to match the right people to the right roles and reinforce the benefits of intentional talent strategies."

SOUTH FLORIDA TECHGATEWAY

WORK IN THE CLOUD. LIVE IN THE SUN.®

Miami - Fort Lauderdale - West Palm Beach

2026

Your GATEWAY to a Career in TECHNOLOGY

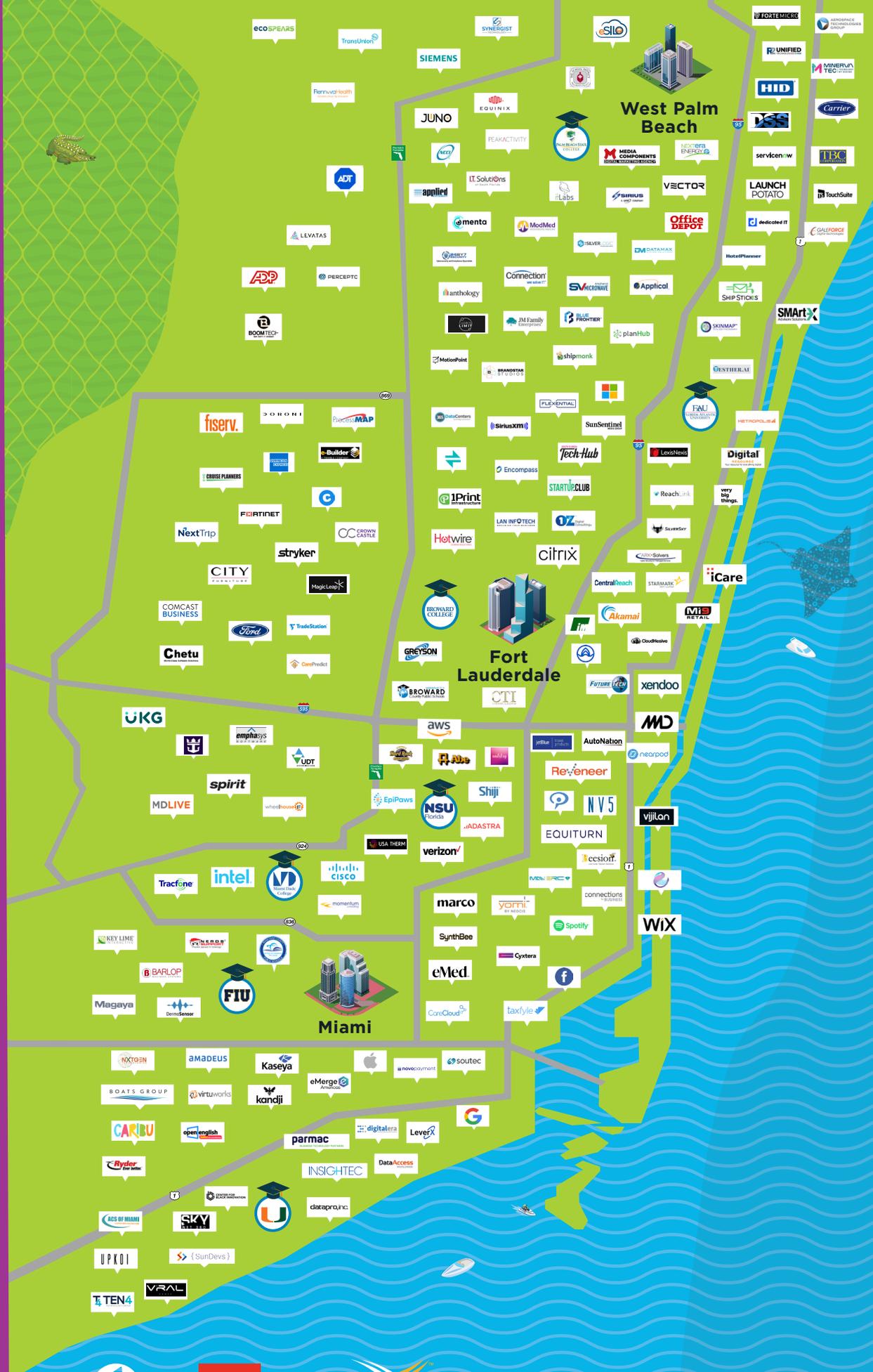
- Nearly 135,000 estimated Net Technology jobs in South Florida*
- \$139,717 Annual Average Earnings

Source: *2025 CompTIA State of TechWorkforce; Lightcast™, 2025.3

For more information about technology companies, academics and organizations in South Florida visit TechGateway.org



Hologram Welcome Message from David Coddington Founder of TechGateway



FOUNDING PARTNERS:
Florida Power & Light
Starmark





2026 STATE OF TECH REPORT

INNOVATIVE TECH SOLUTIONS IN THE WORKFORCE

BY SOUTH FLORIDA TECHGATEWAY

Today's leading employers are taking tech innovation beyond the IT department. This edition of the annual State of Tech Report from the Greater Fort Lauderdale Alliance and South Florida TechGateway explores how organizations are unleashing investment and tech solutions that elevate employee opportunity to improve engagement and drive greater returns.

WORK IN THE CLOUD LIVE IN THE SUN™

