



## Digital Convergence Initiative's new leader charts new course

BY CATHERINE DOMINGUEZ

The Digital Convergence Initiative (DCI) has a new president and her first order of business is to bring new life to the initiative aimed at growing technology along the Interstate 35 corridor.

Sloan Foster will take over for Alex Cavalli who was serving as executive director of the DCI and now acts as an advisor for the initiative. Cavalli stepped down to devote more time to his Austin-based consulting firm Gallagher, Cavalli, Dixon LLC.



Foster

Foster says that because the DCI is nonprofit, the group decided to change the top position from an executive director title to president. Foster will retain the non-paying position for two years.

Although the initiative started off with a bang last year — helping to organize experts for the South by Southwest Interactive Festival in Austin as well as being involved with the World Congress on Information Technology 2006, also in Austin — it soon lost its drive and has been dormant for the past six months or so, according to Foster.

Foster says she is ready to get the group back on track targeting the growth of technology businesses in the Texas Technology Corridor, which extends from San Antonio to Waco.

The DCI is funded through donations and originally had a budget of \$100,000. However, Foster says she, along with the DCI board members, are currently developing a new budget and declined to discuss figures.

Foster, who is the chief marketing offi-

cer with San Antonio-based Armida Technologies Inc., says creating a vision for the group is a priority for her. She is working on several ways to help boost the initiative — including a new Web site to help connect tech companies.

Foster is no stranger to the technology industry. In 2004, Foster, along with Bill Lawrence and Matt Reedy, founded Armida. The company specializes in the development of software and hardware that delivers streaming video over wireless networks for commercial, industrial and government customers.

Dean McCall, a member of the DCI's board of directors and president of San Antonio-based Salsa.Net, says Foster is the perfect fit for DCI and believes she can steer the initiative in the right direction.



McCall

"Her entrepreneurial spirit and drive will be a valuable asset to us going forward," McCall says. "Being the executive at one of the region's up-and-coming technology companies arms her with the ability to identify what others in the corridor are looking for in terms of 'regional collaboration.'"

### The plan

The DCI was formed late last year by the Greater Austin-San Antonio Corridor Council, a regional economic development organization, and was conceived by the IC2 Institute, a tech think-tank based at the University of Texas at Austin.

Because DCI's goal is to foster regional activity, other technology-based orga-

nizations are helping with the effort, including the San Antonio Technology Accelerator Initiative (SATAI); Salsa.Net, a locally based nonprofit tech-advocacy group; and the Baylor University Department of Communications.

Foster's first step is to get the DCI Web site up and running with a portal to help connect companies toward a goal of keeping business in Texas.

"What we want to do with this Web site is prevent time and money from going to other states," Foster says. "We want tech companies to go to this Web site, type in the service they are looking for and get a list of companies that could help them."

"Hopefully, we can keep both the money and the collaboration in Texas."

McCall says the group has identified about 2,000 companies along the corridor that will be part of the DCI's database.

Foster says she also plans to have a place on the Web site that will feature a technology-based job bank for those looking for work in the industry.

"We want to create a job bank so people can go in and post their resume and look for available positions," she explains.

Foster says she hopes the Web site will be up and running by the first quarter of 2007.

While working on the site, Foster says she is also developing an internship program to connect Texas-based colleges and universities with the many companies involved in the DCI.

"We want students to know that there is technology in Texas and hopefully it will stay here," she says. "We want to keep those (students) in the state."