

SATAI announces winners of annual tech STAR awards

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by Catherine Dominguez

The San Antonio Technology Accelerator Initiative (SATAI) has announced David Spencer as its 2007 tech hero.

The award is given annually to an individual who has played a major civic role in paving the way for the technology industry in San Antonio. The AT&T Tech Hero award will be presented to Spencer at SATAI's STARS of Innovation Banquet on April 5 at The University of the Incarnate Word.

Spencer is president of Mandelbrot Ventures and also serves as the chair of the Texas Emerging Technology Fund advisory committee. He has played an important role in founding the Center for Infrastructure Assurance and Security at the University of Texas at San Antonio which is a National Security Agency certified center for developing anti-hacking talent and intellectual property.

"I'm honored," Spencer says. "But I ultimately have a selfish reason for doing the community work that I do because I want San Antonio to have a vibrant-as-possible economy so when my boys grow up they want to stay here," he says. "I'm going to keep plugging along to create an environment that helps others succeed whether I get recognized or not," he says.

SATAI is a nonprofit tech advocacy group that assists researchers, inventors, entrepreneurs and other companies in turning their innovations into viable commercial enterprises.

Mandelbrot Ventures is a boutique investment firm specializing in early, pre-seed and seed stage investments in Texas-based technology or tech-related companies.

Spencer is passionate about growing San Antonio's technology sector and says local city and county leaders have done a great job in bringing large corporations to San Antonio.

"We have so many key people out hunting the (large companies)," he says. "Most cities would give their eye teeth to land those buffaloes we have landed."

Bringing large companies, such as Toyota Motor Corp. and Microsoft Corp., to San Antonio has been the most common route for growing the tech industry locally, mostly because it is more immediate than cultivating companies from inception, Spencer says.

Although there is risk and time involved to develop and grow new companies, Spencer says it is critical to the future of San Antonio.

"The hunting side is better understood and easier to measure," he says. "When you are gardening, you are planting the seeds, but you don't know what the plant will look like."

Jim Poage, president and CEO of SATAI, says Spencer was an obvious choice for the tech award. He says Spencer has done a great deal to help promote entrepreneurs locally.

"He invests in small companies and medium-sized companies," Poage says. "A lot of people talk about doing that, but he has taken the money he has earned and put it back into companies to help them grow."

Shining stars

Sponsorship for the banquet was provided through a \$50,000 grant from the AT&T Foundation, the philanthropic arm of AT&T. The AT&T Foundation supports nonprofit organizations that increase technology access and promote technology innovation that benefit the communities they serve.

AT&T Inc. will be the platinum sponsor for the event.

At the banquet, SATAI also will induct three local people into the SATAI Technology Hall of Fame and recognize three local companies as Technology Super Stars.

The Hall of Fame inductees are honored for their technology contribution to the city. They are **Matt Reedy, chief technology officer with Armida Technologies**; Bob Sanchez, chairman and COO of Frontline Systems; and Fred Dinger, former CEO of OsteoBiologics Inc.

The Technology Super Star companies are Bauhaus Software, BroadRamp Inc. and MP4 Solutions LP.

Bauhaus Software, headed by CEO Dan Kraus and President Paul Ford, specializes in creating 2D animation software that allows an animator to take an idea from storyboard to the final product.

BroadRamp was launched in 2004 and Greg Nakagawa serves as the company's CEO. BroadRamp has created a content delivery system that allows for immediate Web-based video and audio program launching with no time-delaying buffering and caching. All that is needed to use the technology is a Web browser and a broadband connection -- eliminating the need for downloading and installing software, such as RealAudio or WindowsMedia, at the receiving end of the broadcast.

MP4 Solutions LP, led by Cameron Powell, president, is a Texas limited partnership formed to create, design and deploy medical software applications that focus on mobile/wireless technologies.

For tickets to the banquet, call 458-2523.