



The Computerworld Honors Program

Honoring those who use Information Technology to benefit society

Final Copy of Case Study

YEAR:
2012

STATUS:
Laureate

Organization:
City of Riverside

Organization URL:
www.riversideca.gov

Project Name:
Innovation Economy Initiative

What social/humanitarian issue was the project designed to address? What specific metrics did you use to measure the project's success?

The 2008 housing market collapse hit the City of Riverside, California, doubly hard because a large number of residents were employed in housing construction and development. Many people lost their homes as the City experienced one of the highest home foreclosure rates in the country. This economic recession has resulted in unemployment rates exceeding 14%, 1 in 17 homes in foreclosure, and property values dropping back to 1999 levels. Property tax revenues declined 40% in 2009 alone. Even though each had outstanding innovative talent, City, university and business communities were not focused on how they could work together in leveraging technology to create a more vibrant, attractive community. It was clear that Riverside needed to change. More than 4 million people representing about 11 percent of California's total population surround Riverside. The City needed to energize its economy, attract business, and increase the number of college-degreed residents. A study commissioned by Riverside's Mayor and city management concluded that high-technology businesses with their high-paying jobs were not locating in Riverside because of the shortage of skilled labor, a state government that was making doing business in California difficult, the presence of few existing high-technology companies, and no comprehensive plan to attract or to grow them. The City's high-technology CEOs and technology leaders were challenged to solve these problems.

Please describe the technologies used and how those technologies were deployed in an innovative way. Also, please include any technical or other challenges that were overcome for the successful implementation of the project.

Technology CEO collaboration to help each other, discuss IT and other initiatives, and recruit technology graduates and talent. Cloud/shared infrastructure to incent technology leaders and companies to stay/move here. Web services for message reach, solution integration, networking and more. The City of Riverside in partnership with UCR and the Riverside Technology CEO forum (high-technology companies with headquarters in Riverside) created "the Technology Imperative" that became the high-tech road map for the City. By working together, the IE Initiative (collaborative between the City of Riverside, UC Riverside, and the City's research-oriented high-tech companies) brings together ideas, resources, people, money and processes to attract new high-technology businesses, incubate new start-up technology companies and create high-paying local career opportunities in technology, bio-medicine, and environmental science. "The IE Initiative is one of the key high-tech initiatives assisting our city in seizing its destiny," says Mayor Loveridge. "As the founding sponsor of the IE Initiative, we believe this program fits with the City's overall goal to encourage innovation, business and community collaboration, as well as aid and support to our high-tech businesses." Since the signing of the initiative, the Innovation Economy Corporation (IEC) and others have begun commercializing and incubating innovation. An agreement with the University of California, Riverside, allows IEC to obtain the rights to intellectual property (IP) and research conducted by the university. IEC looks for IP that has the potential to transform those assets into high-value, worldwide, game-changing businesses by leveraging its experienced management team, best-of-breed commercialization processes and resources, access to worldwide markets, technology infrastructure and ability to attract capital that supports the development of portfolio businesses and funding of new opportunities.

Please list the specific humanitarian benefits the project has yielded so far.

UCR's Department of Entomology has one of the most modern research centers of its kind in the world. Its \$22 million state-of-the-art facility houses 20 research groups, a 3-million-specimen insect collection and containment facilities that enable scientists to safely investigate genetically engineered organisms, exotic parasites, microorganisms and predators collected worldwide. In June 2011, Dr. Ray of UCR's Ray Laboratory (one of the research groups) and his team were featured as the cover story in the "Journal of Nature" for their breakthrough findings in the fight against mosquito-borne diseases such as malaria, dengue and yellow fever that result in several million deaths every year. As a result, articles were published all around the world including the Los Angeles Times, New York Times, BBC News, Vancouver Sun, Chicago Tribune, Times of India as well as radio and television coverage on MSNBC, CBS and NPR's Science Friday. The Austrian wrote, "The biggest breakthrough against malaria in years, scientist have identified odor molecules that baffle bloodthirsty mosquitoes." They identified in the lab and verified in African trials three classes of volatile odor molecules that can severely impair, if not completely disrupt, the mosquitoes' carbon dioxide detection systems. Their innovative research covers three of the deadliest species of mosquitoes. It was funded with grants from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation and the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases. In 2010, UCR's Office of Technology Commercialization filed for patents and licensed this intellectual property to Innovation Economy Corporation to create new portfolio company, Olfactor Laboratories Inc. Olfactor was established as a result of partnerships between UCR, the City of Riverside and the Innovation Economy Corporation.

Please provide the best example of how the project has benefited a specific individual, enterprise or organization. Feel free to include personal quotes from individuals who have directly benefited from the work.

Branded as "the City of Arts and Innovation," the City of Riverside is the cultural hub of inland Southern California. Business attraction and growth are top City of Riverside priorities. Focus on gaming, cloud, web services, new media, life sciences and micro-technology is having a

significant positive impact on the City. UCR is nationally ranked in video gaming, OmniPlatform and Acorn have become successful cloud based organizations, and all new city solutions leverage the web, including the City's highly acclaimed mobile-based 311 system. Of prime importance is incubating, supporting and helping entrepreneurs grow technology businesses in Riverside. Through government, private sector and university collaboration, several incubators are fostering hundreds of patents and turning the best ideas into prospering businesses. With the growth of these innovation incubators, Riverside is striding forward in our goal of keeping a larger number of our best and brightest living and working here. Because of successful advancements by UCR researchers and local commercialization companies, Angel Investors have relocated to Riverside and have started making significant investment in Riverside start-ups. \$12 million dollars in R&D funding has been awarded through the U.S. Department of Defense Small Business Innovation Research and Technology Transfer programs. In support of this developing research and technology nexus, networking groups and resource organizations are springing up in the City of Riverside. The city itself created SmartRiverside, a non-profit organization to oversee Riverside's technological development. Among its achievements, SmartRiverside's Wireless Network provides free wireless Internet access to much of Riverside while also being leveraged as a critical public safety infrastructure for mobile fire and police resources. The CEO Forum (CEOs of high-tech companies in Riverside) and TriTech (Small Business Development Center) help connect high-technology entrepreneurs with area resources and business development opportunities.