**CITY OF PHILADELPHIA**

**MAYOR'S OFFICE OF COMMUNICATIONS**

# City of Philadelphia Joins Coalition to Attend SXSW Interactive and Music 2016 in Austin, TX

*The City's Startup PHL initiative will join more than 30 companies and organizations promoting Philadelphia as a hub for startups and entrepreneurs.*

PHILADELPHIA — The Philadelphia Department of Commerce will join a coalition of Philadelphia startups, corporations, musicians, and non-profit partners in Austin at the SXSW Interactive & Music Festival this March. The initiative, called *Startup PHL Presents: Amplify Philly SXSW Edition*, will promote Philadelphia as a hub for startups, and promote the companies, music, and technologies that are created here.

"This initiative is the result of a community-driven effort to organize attendees and exhibitors for a larger Philadelphia impact at what is considered one of the most influential technology conference in the world," said Mayor Jim Kenney. "I'm excited that the City is a part of this collaborative effort."

Archna Sahay, Director of Entrepreneurial Investment at the Philadelphia Department of Commerce, will attend the festival and will exhibit as part of a shared Philadelphia booth. The Philadelphia booth will also feature early-stage companies, ROAR, Habitat, LoopIt, and AnneeLondon, who would not have an opportunity to participate in the tradeshow without community support. Other Philadelphia companies exhibiting alongside the *Amplify Philly SXSW Edition* booth include: RJMetrics, Cloudmine, Picwell, Eventuosity, Oz, Zivtech, Arcweb and Chariot Solutions. A sendoff event took place in Philadelphia on March 3rd.

Local nonprofit Philly Startup Leaders coordinated the group. "There's always been a bit of Philadelphia at SXSW but Philly's strength comes from its unified community," said Brock Weatherup, President of Philly Startup Leaders. "This year, startup and music entrepreneurs from around the region joined together with support from the city to show everyone in Austin how the city that spawned a nation is birthing the new age of entrepreneurship."

Sponsors of *Amplify Philly SXSW Edition* include: Comcast NBCUniversal, Independence Blue Cross, Ben Franklin Technology Partners, Children's Hospital of Philadelphia, Startup PHL, Pennovation Works, Wharton Entrepreneurship, and Philadelphia startups: Guru, Zivtech, and Chariot Solutions. In-kind sponsors include Zeo

Brothers Productions, M3 Printing, and REC Philly.

"It's fantastic to see Philadelphia companies – from startups to Fortune 50 companies – representing our city at SXSW and showcasing its dynamic environment for entrepreneurialism, innovation and collaboration," said Sam Schwartz, Chief Business Development Officer at Comcast Cable. "Comcast was a startup more than 50 years ago, and today, Philadelphia's tech scene is thriving. We're excited that SXSW offers us the opportunity to attract new talent to join our entrepreneurial community."

"As Philadelphia's most active early stage investor in emerging technology, we're proud that Ben Franklin is helping to amplify Philly's story of innovation on such a groundbreaking stage as SXSW," said RoseAnn B Rosenthal, President and CEO of Ben Franklin Technology Partners of Southeastern Pennsylvania. "That such a collaboration of innovators would form so organically to bring Greater Philadelphia's story to SXSW speaks to what a unique, vibrant, living and breathing technology community we have."

Attending SXSW in a coordinated effort is one more exciting development in Philadelphia's startup community and reflects Philadelphia's growing tech scene. In recent years the focus on supporting startups in the city has increased significantly, from major corporations such as Comcast and Independence Blue Cross investing in innovation, to the continued growth of grassroots efforts such as Philly Startup Leaders, N3RD Street, and Philly Tech Week. The City is also quickly becoming a hub for social entrepreneurs nurturing and growing B Corps like ROAR, which raised over a quarter of a million dollars during their crowdfunding campaign.

Just since the beginning of this year Philadelphia-based companies Curalate, VeryApt, and Thrive Commerce, each made funding announcements, three of the 2016 Forbes' 30 under 30 are Philadelphia founders, and eCommerce leader, Revzilla, announced a joint venture with private equity firm J.W. Childs. New Jersey-based Linode also announced a Philadelphia office in Old City, joining N3rd Street tech firms already clustered in the area.

Terry Booker, Vice President Corporate Development and Innovation at Independence Blue Cross, said, "We are thrilled to join Comcast, Ben Franklin Technology Partners, the City of Philadelphia and others in Austin at SXSW to showcase Philadelphia. Our region provides the right environment where both large and small organizations welcome entrepreneurs and are open to helping them succeed. This initiative is another step we're taking to get Philadelphia on the map for innovation."

In conjunction with *Amplify Philly SXSW Edition,* the City will relaunch [www.startupphl.com](http://www.startupphl.com) a site designed to serve as the online gateway to tech in Philly. The site originally launched in October 2012 to highlight the Startup PHL initiative: a $6 million public private venture fund managed by First Round Capital, and the Call for Ideas, a grant program to fund innovative proposals that support Philadelphia's entrepreneurial community. The relaunch will include resources and incentives for companies starting or moving to Philadelphia, students, job seekers, and media. Notably, the site will include a platform for corporations and governmental departments to post project opportunities in order to solicit solutions from growing startups.

For more information on *Startup PHL* please visit [www.startupphl.com](http://www.startupphl.com).

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