

TECH TOWN TACOMA

A major tech recruiter arrives, and an incubator grows ideas, businesses and jobs

When worldwide tech recruiting, consulting and outsourcing firm **Oxford Global Resources** outgrew its Federal Way space, Tacoma quickly jumped to the top the list of potential locations for its Washington State office. Tacoma's hip downtown vibe, cultural and recreational offerings, cost of living, access to a pool of talent for internal hiring and a convenient location for its 25 employees were just some of the reasons the City of Destiny was the optimal choice. (Learn more about why Oxford opted for Tacoma at bit.ly/OxfordTacoma.)

"We are thrilled to be in Tacoma and look forward to continued growth here," said Jeremiah Baker, Oxford's director of business development. "We also look forward to becoming more involved with the business community."

Oxford, through its staff augmentation and consulting services, provides expertise within IT, health care technology, life sciences and engineering. The firm moved into the historic **Hunt & Mottet Building** in January 2017.

"Oxford is just the latest addition to the landscape that points to the South Sound's growing focus on tech," said EDB CEO and President Bruce Kendall. "Companies like cybersecurity firm **Infoblox**, literally right next door to Oxford's new home, have been drawn here for our lifestyle, cost of living and proximity to talent from the **University of Washington Tacoma** and other regional educational institutions. We'll be seeing more tech additions and expansion in the future."

Hatching homegrown ideas and innovation

Tacoma is also fast becoming a center for inspiring high-tech startups and training future professionals, offering a life-science innovation incubator, state-of-the-art working space and resources that support high-tech entrepreneurs and help grow local talent, companies and jobs.

The **Readiness Acceleration & Innovation Network (RAIN)** is a collaboration between **UW Tacoma**, **MultiCare Health System** and **Madigan Army Medical Center**. With an eye on making Tacoma a biotech hub, the nonprofit incubator is dedicated to innovation in the life sciences, providing students with real-life training, and start-up companies with space and support for ideation, research and development, prototyping, business development and launch. Here's a snapshot of what's transpired since RAIN opened its doors last summer:

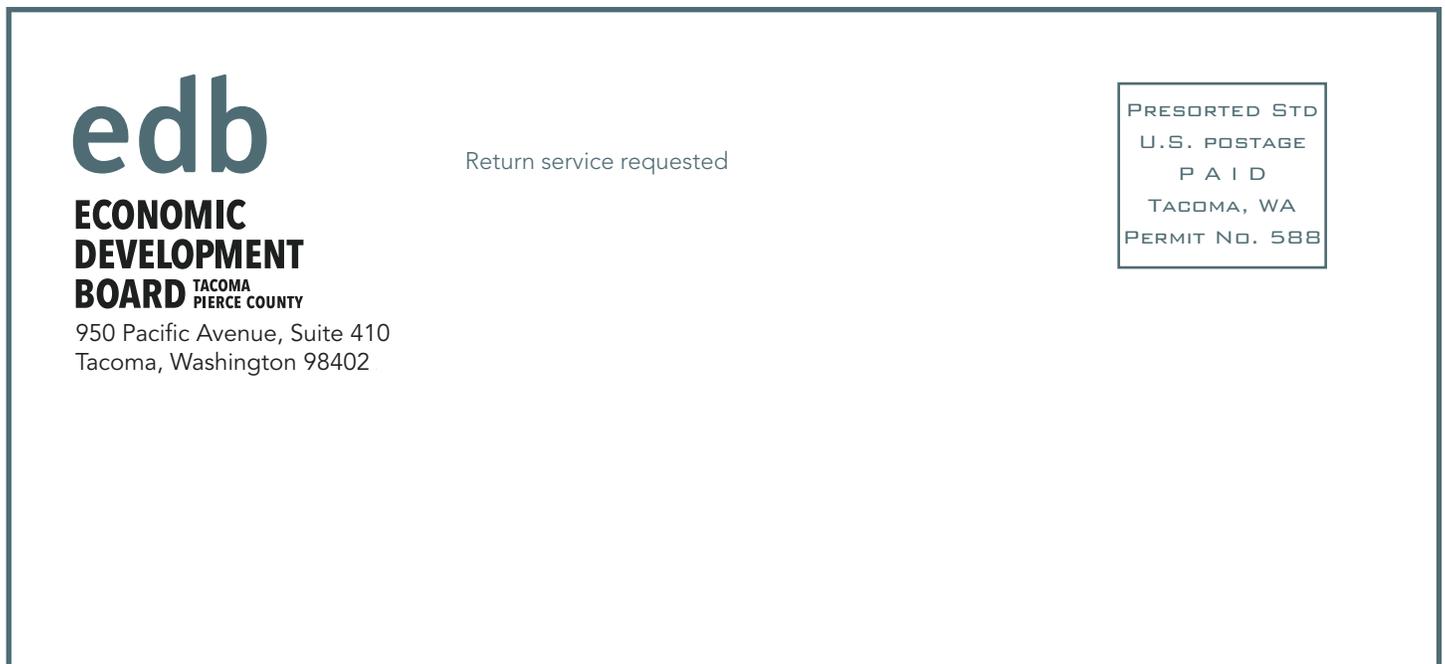
- **RAIN is drawing biotech companies to Tacoma** by offering a cost-effective alternative to develop their products, along with a network of experts, interns and biotech facilities. Currently in the incubator are: **Orneon Health Inc.** (biometrics for consumer-based genomics), **Odysseus Technologies** (carbon nanotube development) and **E3 Engineering** (biotech industrial engineering).
- **RAIN has partnered with Keiretsu Forum NW**, the regional chapter of the world's largest angel investor network, and hosts monthly meetings featuring presentations from innovative startup companies seeking funding and resources. (Think Shark Tank.) "This partnership is an important step for us," said Kristine Grace, RAIN's director of marketing. "We're developing several projects with companies that are building products and looking for access to our scientific team, health care partners and other opportunities that RAIN offers."
- **Students are being trained** in advanced lab techniques, research models and networks that will help people and communities and advance their future biotech careers. RAIN's international **Genetically Engineered Machines (iGEM)** team, a group of high school and UW Tacoma students, developed a DNA-based arsenic

- receptor that detects contaminants. The team competed at MIT last November with more than 300 international high school, college and community teams. They earned a bronze medal along with the Stanford, MIT and Pasteur Paris teams. This year's team, which is still seeking sponsorship, is working to develop a biosensor. You can learn more at the 2018 team launch party March 8. Details are available at bit.ly/iGEM2018.
- On May 18-20, **RAIN will host a BioHackathon**, where 150 participants will solve a biologically based "challenge problem" that will advance science with a product or app. "Our goal is to draw more awareness to Tacoma as a biotech hub," Grace said. "This is an opportunity for participants to access our network partners in medicine, biology, engineering and science." A coinciding tech fair, open to the public, will be held May 19. Seattle and Eastside tech companies will present products, and network with RAIN participants and visitors.

Learn more about RAIN, including how to get involved, at rainincubator.org.

Space to innovate

Recognizing that innovation and ideas need space to grow and thrive, Tacoma has two great working spaces dedicated to tech. More appealing and inspiring than the isolated home office or noisy coffee shop, both offer a variety of memberships, from private offices to communal spaces.



- SURGETacoma** offers the benefits of working in an energized, high-tech start-up office—a state-of-the-art working space, co-working space and networking opportunities—without the long-term commitment and cost of setting up shop. A location near **UW Tacoma** and views of **Mount Rainier** are added bonuses. Find out more at surgetacoma.com.
- The Union Club**, located in one of Tacoma's most iconic historic buildings, is dedicated to supporting and promoting Tacoma's tech and art scene. Learn more at unionclubtacoma.com.

There's a lot going on, and a lot on the horizon. We'll provide more updates on the South Sound's growing tech scene in future issues of *Teamwork*.

2018 EDB ANNUAL MEETING | MARCH 8. There's still time to grab your spot for the largest economic development gathering in the South Sound. Register today at edbtacomapierce.org/march8.

Teamwork is a service of the EDB, a non-profit corporation focused on recruitment and retention of primary businesses in Tacoma and Pierce County, Washington, USA.

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