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News Release

## Austin's A-List of Most Promising Startups in 2015 Revealed

May 14, 2015, AUSTIN, TX -- The top 12 most promising startups in the Austin area were announced and honored today by the [Austin Chamber of Commerce](#) through its [Innovate Austin](#) initiative, and [South by Southwest Interactive](#).

The companies, selected by a panel of independent judges from more than 275 nominations, were officially revealed and named to the annual [Austin A-List of Hottest Startups](#) in ceremonies held this evening at ACL Live at the Moody Theater. The 12 honorees for 2015 were named in three investment stage categories: emerging, growth and scale, and represent key sectors of innovation including big data, biotechnology, hardware, software, consumer packaged goods, music technology, agriculture, medical devices, e-commerce and mobile app development.

“Austin is rich with innovative startups that are primed for rapid growth. The A-List platform shines a spotlight and amplifies our diverse and rich talent, helping to maintain our lead as the most innovative, entrepreneurial region,” said Michele Skelding, SVP of Global Technology and Innovation at the Austin Chamber of Commerce. “That’s what drives economic growth and job creation, and what continues to drive our global competitiveness.”

Recognition as an A-List Company is intended to increase the visibility of Austin's most fundable, scalable and innovative regional startups, and drive increased venture capital funding to Central Texas. Since the inception of the annual A-List awards, there has been a combined \$358,670,000 in investment for all A-List honorees. Recent venture capital activity for Central Texas companies continues to show momentum: first quarter 2015 funding is [31% ahead of the same period last year](#), and at \$265.33 million, is the highest quarterly total since the first quarter of 2012.

Skelding, who co-hosted the awards ceremony added: “Austin’s innovation ecosystem has never been stronger, and the A-List winners and participants are poised to make their mark, elevating our region’s ability to continue to attract and retain top innovative companies, talent and capital.”

The awards ceremony featured remarks from co-host and SXSW Interactive Director Hugh Forrest as well as several high profile speakers. This included Gene Austin, Chamber Chair and CEO and President of Bazaarvoice, Bob Metcalfe, Professor of Innovation at The University of Texas at Austin, Hank Seale, Founder and Chairman of Q2, and a special presentation from Erik Qualman, #1 Best Selling Author and 2015 Pulitzer Prize Nominee.

In addition, Mikaila Ulmer, the local 10-year-old founder and CEO of [BeeSweet Lemonade](#), who had a successful appearance on ABC’s SharkTank, received the first-ever *Rising Star Entrepreneur Award*.

"Entrepreneurs and the entrepreneurial spirit are powering so much of what makes Austin's current economy so exciting," said Hugh Forrest, Director, South by Southwest Interactive. "Given that so much of what we do at SXSW Interactive focuses on startups, I'm delighted that we are a part of this event and can help with the Austin Chamber's ongoing goal of strengthening Central Texas as a hub of innovation."

Partners of the Austin A-List of the Hottest Start-ups 2015 included: SXSW Interactive, Google, Merrill Lynch, IBM, SkylesBayne, SafeGuard World International, Cushman & Wakefield | Oxford Commercial, STG Design, Booz Allen Hamilton, Facebook, Texas Mutual, Altera, Silicon Hills Wealth Management, Bazaarvoice, Visa, Husch Blackwell and SunPower.

### **Below are the A-List companies for 2015:**

#### **Emerging (Early/Seed Stage) - Received funding less than \$1M or Under \$1M in revenue:**

**Everfest:** Everfest is a global calendar and search engine for festivals, finding nearby music, film, food, drink, art, sports and culture festivals that connect users with rich experiences.

**Bitfusion.io:** Bitfusion implements unique software technologies to expose the benefits of hardware accelerators such as FPGAs to boost application performance by up to 100x—transparently, automatically, and without application rewrite.

**Green & Grow Inc.:** Green & Grow Inc. develops and commercializes new agricultural products based on non-living, non-toxic, microbe derived by-products that have been specifically formulated to significantly improve many crops.

**ENTvantage Dx:** ENTvantage Diagnostics, Inc. provides Primary Care and ENT physicians with timely information on the cause of ear, nose and throat illnesses with rapid, in-office diagnostic tests.

#### **Growth (Mid-Stage) - Received funding between \$1M-\$10M or Revenue \$1M-\$20M:**

**CognitiveScale:** CognitiveScale's Cognitive Clouds systems source, analyze, and interpret all types of structured and unstructured data and context signals—while learning and reprogramming themselves continuously to deliver better results.

**Neogenis Labs:** Neogenis' patented nitric oxide nutraceuticals & nutritionals have revolutionized cardiovascular care and sports nutrition, and promote overall health and wellbeing by utilizing the best nature and science have to offer.

**Illumitex:** Illumitex has radically transformed traditional LED design with the creation of LED lighting that emits a uniform, highly precise beam directly from the source, opening the world to more versatile—and energy efficient—lighting applications than ever before imagined.

**EPIC:** EPIC creates grass-fed animal-based protein bars, made from a variety of humanely-treated, hormone and antibiotic-free meat, that contain between 10–16 grams of protein, making them nutrient dense and healthy.

**SparkCognition:** SparkCognition is the world's first Cognitive Security Analytics company that develops cutting-edge Machine Learning, AI algorithms, which provide the intelligence to uncover trends, threats, and anomalies, and provide accurate remediation.

#### **Scale (Later Stage) - Received funding above \$10M or Revenue \$20M+:**

**SpareFoot:** SpareFoot is the technology and thought leader of the self-storage industry, providing the simplest and best marketplace by organizing every storage facility in one simple interface online.

**Silvercar:** Silvercar completely reimaged car rental, eliminating the need for counters, paperwork, lines or hassle while traveling. The Company is delivering the industry's most innovative products, the most professional concierge service, and the finest fleet of cars anywhere.

**Volusion**: Volusion, LLC provides best-in-class ecommerce solutions to empower the success of all business types, from startups to large enterprises.

**About the Austin Chamber**

The mission of the Austin Chamber of Commerce is to provide leadership that facilitates the creation of a prosperous regional economy and effective advocacy for its more than 3,000 members. For more information about the Austin Chamber of Commerce visit [www.AustinChamber.com](http://www.AustinChamber.com).

**About SXSW Interactive**

An incubator of cutting-edge technologies and digital creativity, the SXSW features five days of compelling presentations from the brightest minds in emerging technology, scores of exciting networking events hosted by industry leaders and an unbeatable line-up of special programs showcasing the best new apps, Page 3 of 3 hardware, video games and startup ideas the community has to offer. From hands-on training to big picture analysis of the future, SXSW Interactive has become the place to experience a preview of what is unfolding in the world of technology. Visit <http://sxsw.com/interactive>.

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