

SOUTHERN ARIZONA TECH + BUSINESS EXPO 2026

SOUTHERNARIZONA



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TECHNOLOGY
COUNCIL

a place to connect and grow

Welcome and Thank You for Attending the 2026 Southern Arizona Tech + Business Expo Showcasing Technology and Innovation!

Welcome to the 14th Annual Southern Arizona Tech + Business Expo and thank you for joining us for the largest technology and innovation event in Southern Arizona.

We are grateful to our sponsors, exhibitors, presenters, volunteers, and attendees whose support makes this event possible. We hope today's program inspires new ideas, meaningful connections, and opportunities for growth.

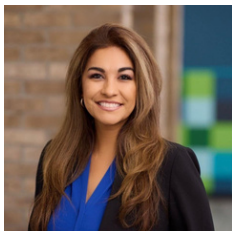
At the Arizona Technology Council, our mission is to strengthen Arizona's technology sector and help make our state the fastest-growing technology hub in the nation. We encourage you to stay engaged through our events, committees, and networking opportunities to maximize the value of your membership and build lasting relationships within our innovation community.

Upcoming Southern Arizona signature events:

- Arizona Photonics Days: January 27-29
- Women's Innovation Network, A Celebration of Connection: February 19
- Lucky Clover Classic Golf Tournament: March 12
- International Day of Light: May 16
- Arizona Aerospace Summit: July 20

Thank you for being part of this year's Expo. We are committed to supporting your success and hope you enjoy an exciting and productive event.

Sincerely,



Paloma Santiago

Vice President,
Southern Arizona Regional
Arizona Technology Council



TECHNOLOGY FOR MODERN MINING

South32's Hermosa project in southern Arizona is the only advanced mine development project in the United States that could produce five federally designated critical minerals – including zinc and manganese – all of which are essential minerals for powering the nation's clean energy future. To do this in the cleanest, safest way possible for our employees and communities we are using proven, state-of-the-art technology.

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Visit us at booths 1 & 2



**BRIGHTER
FUTURES
TOGETHER**

AGENDA

12:00pm - 1:00pm

Registration & Networking

1:00pm - 1:20pm

Welcome & Opening Remarks

1:20pm - 2:00pm

AI Keynote Fireside Panel Chat:
“AI in Action - Transforming Education, Healthcare and Law”

- *Moderator: Aaron Eden - AI Trailblazers*
- *Benjamin McLarin - Tucson Medical Center*
- *Heather Buchta - Quarles*
- *Dr. David Ebert - University of Arizona*

2:00pm - 2:10pm

Annual Awards Presentation

2:10pm - 2:50pm

Cyber Keynote Fireside Panel Chat:
“Beyond the Firewall: Protecting IT, Finance, Energy & Data Infrastructure”

- *Moderator: Greg Durnan - AcaciaIT*
- *Mark Frieden - Hughes Federal Credit Union*
- *Jeremy Kelly - UNS Energy - TEP*
- *Stephen Solewin - IBM*

2:50pm – 3:00pm

Annual Awards Presentation

3:00pm – 6:30pm

Expo, Networking, and Champagne Reception



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There's a special mix of talent, infrastructure, culture and pro-business support here that helps organizations push the boundaries of what's possible. Arizona meets big ideas with big support and even bigger opportunities for growth. From startups to global brands, Arizona is home to anyone with a dream and the drive to make it happen.

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AI MODERATOR



Aaron Eden
Owner



Aaron Eden brings 30 years of experience building and leading technology teams and startups. At Intuit, his team automated 1.5 million hours of manual work in just two years. He now leads Brain Bridge, helping organizations integrate AI with human teams, and co-founded AI Trailblazers, a nonprofit offering apprenticeships to underserved communities. Previously, he founded Moves the Needle, a consultancy specializing in design thinking and lean innovation for Fortune 100 companies.



PANELIST



Benjamin McLarin

Associate VP of Information Technology



Benjamin McLarin is a senior technology executive with extensive experience in IT strategy, infrastructure, cybersecurity, and operations across healthcare, insurance, and financial services. As AVP of Technology at TMC Health, he oversees technology architecture and enterprise infrastructure, including cybersecurity, cloud solutions, networking, and IT service delivery.

Previously, he served as Vice President of Architecture and Infrastructure at AAA (ACE), overseeing national infrastructure operations, and held senior IT leadership roles at Stanford, USC, and a regional healthcare system in Florida.

A decorated U.S. Navy veteran, Benjamin studied management information systems at North Carolina State University. He is active in several professional organizations and has served on leadership boards for HIMSS and the National Association of Health Services Executives (NAHSE).

Where Arizona's Workforce Begins



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to explore business solutions.

Source: Lightcast Economic Impact Study, The Economic Value of Pima Community College, reflecting FY2023-24 (published August 2025).

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PCC's annual economic impact

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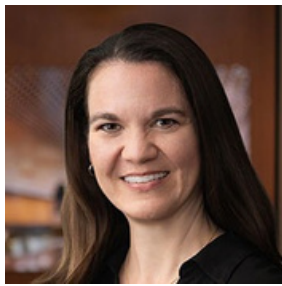
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AI PANELIST



Heather Buchta

**Intellectual Property Attorney,
Partner**

Quarles

Heather Buchta brings nearly 25 years of IT experience, advising clients on artificial intelligence, technology, data privacy, and intellectual property. She specializes in AI governance and risk management, software agreements, IT outsourcing, privacy compliance, and trademark and copyright matters. Serving industries including software, education, healthcare, and manufacturing, Heather combines deep industry knowledge with practical insight into emerging technologies, evolving regulations, and business risks.



PANELIST

Dr. David Ebert

Chief AI and Data Science Officer

**THE UNIVERSITY
OF ARIZONA**

David S. Ebert is the inaugural Chief AI and Data Science Officer at the University of Arizona, where he directs the Arizona Institute for AI and Society and serves as a Professor of Electrical and Computer Engineering. An IEEE Fellow, his research focuses on explainable AI, visual analytics, and human-machine collaboration to solve real-world challenges. Previously, he held leadership roles at Purdue University and the University of Oklahoma. He is a recipient of the IEEE Computer Society VGTC Technical Achievement Award.



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CYBER MODERATOR



Greg Durnan

Founder & CEO

AcaciaIT

Greg Durnan is the founder and CEO of Acacia Information Technologies (AcaciaIT), established in 1992. Under his leadership, the company has grown into one of Arizona's leading IT service providers, with offices in Tucson and Scottsdale.

For more than 30 years, AcaciaIT has helped businesses leverage technology to improve operations, strengthen cybersecurity, and support growth. As a managed services provider, the company delivers comprehensive IT support, security solutions, and specialized compliance services, including HIPAA, PCI, DFARS, CMMC, and SOC 2.



PANELIST



Mark Frieden

Vice President Cyber Security



Hughes

Federal Credit Union

Mark Frieden started his career in the Credit Union industry in September of 2010 when he joined Hughes Federal Credit Union as an IT Manager for the Information Security & Technology Department. In October of 2021 Mark was promoted to VP of Cybersecurity when Cybersecurity was split off from IT. Prior to this Mark Frieden worked for a startup fiber optics sensing company as the IT Manager/Network Administrator and held this position for 10 years. Mark Frieden also spent nearly 3 years as the IT Manager/Principal at the University of Arizona College of Optics. Mark Frieden has also worked as a 911 Operator and law enforcement radio dispatcher.



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CYBER PANELIST



Jeremy Kelly

Director of Enterprise Security



Tucson Electric Power

Jeremy Kelly is a security leader with more than 20 years of experience advancing security, governance, and risk management within highly regulated environments. As Director of Enterprise Security at Tucson Electric Power, he leads a broad portfolio spanning cybersecurity, physical security, operational technology security, and enterprise security risk management. He is passionate about protecting critical infrastructure and helping organizations balance security, reliability, compliance, and innovation in an increasingly complex threat landscape.



PANELIST



Stephen Solewin

Solutions Architect & FlashSystems Specialist



Stephen Solewin is a Solutions Architect and IBM FlashSystem Specialist who helps organizations modernize their data infrastructure with high-performance, cyber-resilient storage solutions. He works with clients to design and implement storage strategies that support hybrid cloud, AI, business continuity, and digital transformation initiatives. Stephen is passionate about helping organizations unlock greater value from their data while simplifying complex technology challenges.



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AWARDS



Innovation Leader of the Year **HartSCI**

The company has made a significant contribution to the Southern Arizona tech community and/or significant contribution to advancing or transforming an industry sector. The company is a recognized technical or innovation leader in Southern Arizona.

Manufacturer of the Year **PowerPhotonic, Inc.**

The company demonstrates leadership as a manufacturer in the region with a new process or product, and involvement with the business and wider community of Southern Arizona.

Startup of the Year **Intelligent Clinical Systems, Inc.**

A company in a technology industry that has achieved significant business success and technical innovation or scientific achievement and has been created and/or funded within the past 24 months.

Southern Arizona Member Organization of the Year **Leonardo Electronics US, Inc.**

The organization has demonstrated support and alignment with AZTC's vision statement: The Arizona Technology Council is the driving force behind making Arizona the fastest growing technology hub in the nation; connecting and empowering Arizona's technology community.





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For more information please
contact **Luis Ochoa** at (520) 770-8702
or luis.ochoa@quarles.com.

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