



**startup  
junkie**  
CONSULTING

# 2025 ANNUAL REPORT



**EMPOWERING  
INNOVATORS &  
ENTREPRENEURS**

# 2025

## OUR TEAM



2025 was a year of growth for our team. We completed the first year of three new, statewide programs, ARise, 75Strong, and the LRIC, we saw strong growth in our existing programs, and served entrepreneurs and communities in every corner of the state. With all of this growth, our team is still passionate and driven to fulfill our mission to empower entrepreneurs, innovators, and small business leaders. We look forward to even more momentum in 2026!

-The Startup Junkie Consulting Team-

## OUR PARTNERS



UNIVERSITY OF  
CENTRAL  
ARKANSAS



U.S. Small Business  
Administration



CITY OF  
FAYETTEVILLE  
ARKANSAS



ConwayCorp



# WHO WE ARE

Through united efforts, Startup Junkie Consulting is improving lives through innovation and entrepreneurship. Our mission is to inspire and empower entrepreneurs, innovators, and small business leaders. Our team conducts program spanning across Arkansas, and extending from Canada to South America and across Asia.

## OUR STORY

**2008** - Startup Junkie Consulting was founded

**Sept 2014** - Won a competitive Regional Innovation Cluster award from the Small Business Administration for the Ozark RIC

**2015** - Sister organization, Startup Junkie Foundation was established to expand the depth, reach, and impact of services

**November 2016** - Startup Junkie Consulting DBA Conductor launches with the University of Central Arkansas as the founding partner

**March 2018** - Establishment of the Conductor 10X Growth Accelerator program, in partnership with the State of Arkansas, Metova, and the Arkansas Economic Development Commission

**May 2020** - Launched Korea bridge program starting work to build entrepreneurial ecosystems in Asia

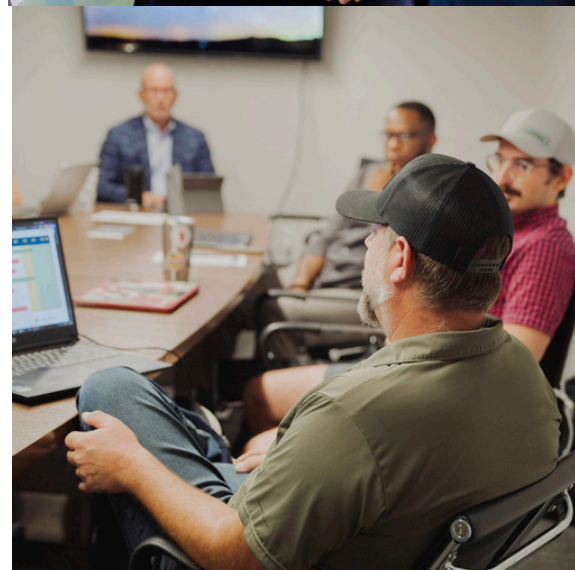
**July 2022** - The Arnold Innovation Center, powered by Conway Corporation, opens to provide a coworking space for small business owners in the Central Arkansas area

**July 2024** - In Partnership with the Arkansas Economic Development Commission, launched ARise - Arkansas Innovators, Startups, and Entrepreneurs, a statewide program for tech and tech enabled, Arkansas-based companies

**September 2024** - Won a second Regional Innovation Cluster from the SBA to run the Lithium RIC in south Arkansas, Louisiana, and Texas

**October 2024** - Launched 75Strong, a three-year, statewide initiative to foster entrepreneurship and small business growth in rural Arkansas

**2026 & beyond- ???**





# NORTHWEST ARKANSAS BY THE NUMBERS

**904 CONSULTING MEETINGS**

**97.1 NET PROMOTER SCORE**

**105 TOTAL EVENTS**

**8066 EVENT ATTENDEES**

## CLIENT COMPANIES





# STARTUP CRAWL 2025

THE BIGGEST STARTUP PARTY & EXHIBITION IN ARKANSAS!



3,000  
ATTENDEES

60  
BOOTHES



14  
BREWRIES



3  
MUSICAL PERFORMERS





# Conductor



**515 CONSULTING MEETINGS**

**92.6+ NET PROMOTER SCORE**

**21 TOTAL EVENTS**

**792 EVENT ATTENDEES**

## OUR PARTNERS



UNIVERSITY OF  
CENTRAL  
ARKANSAS



ConwayCorp



CONWAY REGIONAL  
HEALTH SYSTEM



CONWAY  
GETSMART







ARNOLD INNOVATION CENTER

POWERED BY  ConwayCorp

WHERE BUSINESSES START, COLLABORATE, AND GROW

**184**  
TOTAL  
MEMBERS

**15**  
MEMBER  
EVENTS

**3**  
OFFICES  
FILLED

# MEMBER SPOTLIGHTS

## CAITLYN BAILEY

Owner of Cross Creek Sandwich Shop

**"THE ARNOLD INNOVATION CENTER IS LIKE A SECRET SAUCE FOR ME AND HOW I RUN CROSS CREEK SANDWICH SHOP! WE ARE TRULY FORTUNATE TO HAVE IT AS OUR DISPOSAL AND FOR SUCH AN AFFORDABLE RATE!"**



## ZEE BARFOOT

Founder of Zee Barfoot CPA, PLLC

**"JOINING THE AIC HAS BEEN IN THE TOP 3 THINGS I HAVE DONE FOR MY COMPANY. THERE IS NOTHING LIKE THIS ANYWHERE AROUND!"**



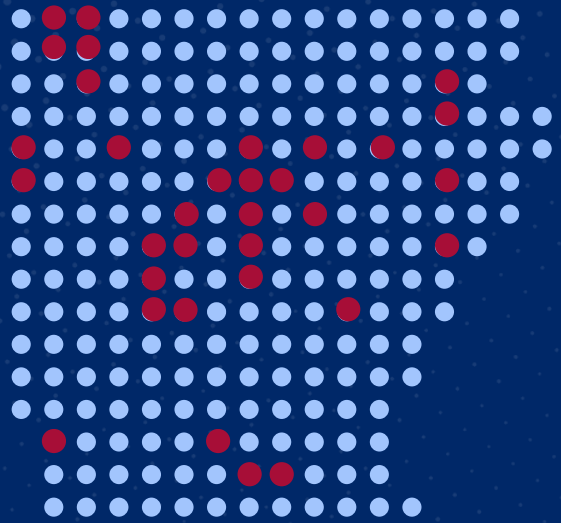


Innovators | Startups | Entrepreneurs

a statewide program for tech  
and tech enabled ventures

[www.AriseArkansas.com](http://www.AriseArkansas.com)

DISTRIBUTION  
OF STARTUPS



**150+ companies across the state**



Humimic  
biosystems



**PORTFOLIO**



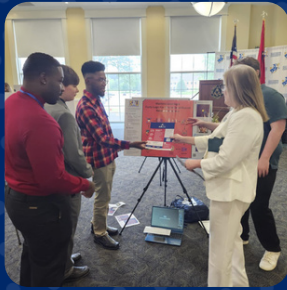
**40+ advanced SMEs**







# ARISE ACROSS ARKANSAS



## STATEWIDE IMPACT & OUTPUTS



139

STARTUPS  
ENROLLED

Companies receiving  
comprehensive ARIse  
services



715

CONSULTING  
SESSIONS

1:1 sessions with  
entrepreneurs across  
Arkansas



584

STRATEGIC  
REFERRALS

Direct connections to  
customers, partners,  
and industry advisors



## OUTREACH & ENGAGEMENT



31

EVENTS

975

ATTENDEES

171

OUTREACH  
MEETINGS

3,500+

ATTENDEES







# BUILDING BUSINESSES BUILDING COMMUNITIES



[www.75strongarkansas.com](http://www.75strongarkansas.com)

## OUR MISSION

To build capacity in communities across Arkansas by educating, equipping, and deploying economic developers, chamber executives, community leaders, university representatives, and others as entrepreneurial developers.

## STATEWIDE IMPACT & OUTPUTS



35

CITIES  
REPRESENTED



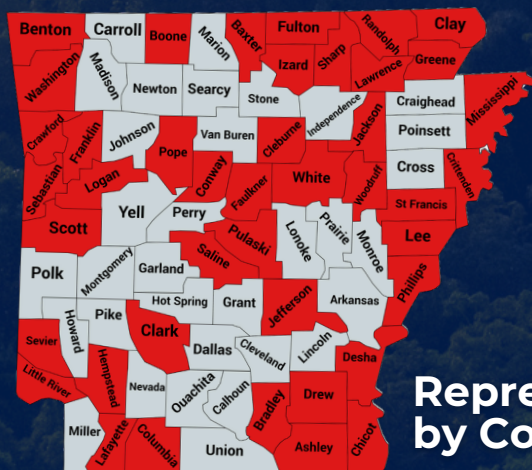
66

COHORT  
MEMBERS



43

COUNTIES  
REPRESENTED



Representation  
by County

■ Represented  
■ Not Represented





# ESO SUMMIT 2025

75Strong officially launched at the 2025 ESO Summit. Cohort members attended a kickoff prior to the summit and then spent the remainder of the time alongside ESO leaders from across the state networking, learning, and collaborating on how we make Arkansas an even better place for companies to start and grow.



  
**140**  
ATTENDEES

## 75STRONG ACROSS ARKANSAS



### COMMUNITY VISITS

- OSCEOLA
- POCAHONTAS
- WEST MEMPHIS
- MARION
- CONWAY
- HELENA-WEST HELENA
- PINE BLUFF
- CHEROKEE VILLAGE
- SPRINGDALE
- HOPE
- CAVE CITY
- NEWPORT

*"Through my participation in 75Strong, I've gained valuable tools, resources, and connections that allow me to support existing businesses, create opportunities for new entrepreneurs, and strengthen local partnerships."*

Christy Burns, Hope Chamber



The team went around the state this year to meet with cohort members in their communities to learn about their work and support the building of entrepreneurship coalitions to strengthen their strategic plans.



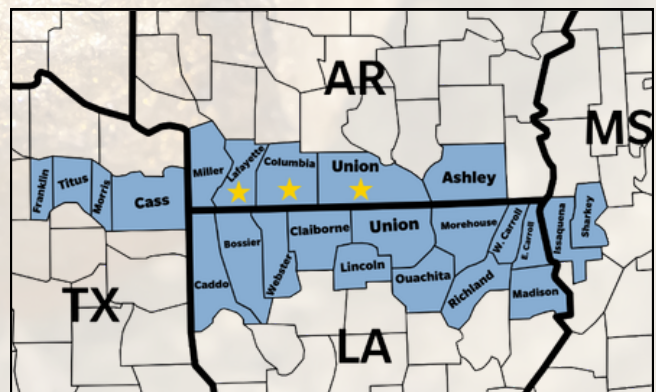
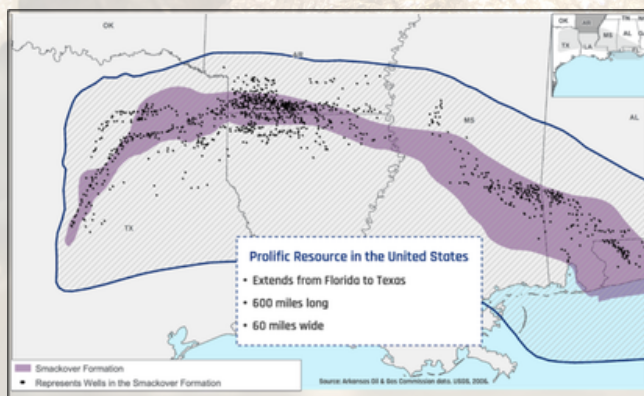


# <sup>3</sup>LiRIC

Lithium Regional Innovation Cluster

The Lithium Regional Innovation Cluster (LRIC) is a public-private initiative focused on advancing U.S. energy innovation and strengthening the lithium value chain, crucial for the nation's energy security and electric vehicle transition. Based in the resource-rich Smackover Formation, it brings together innovators, entrepreneurs, and researchers to drive technological progress and collaboration.

Supported by Startup Junkie and funded by the U.S. SBA, LRIC provides no-cost consulting, training, and access to capital to help small businesses and innovators develop cutting-edge lithium technologies. Its mission is to enhance U.S. competitiveness, foster partnerships, and build a more sustainable energy future.



**93  
VENTURES  
ONBOARDED**

**35  
PARTNERS**

**31  
ADVANCED  
SMES**

**227  
MEETINGS**





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junkie**  
CONSULTING

# KOREA

## ECOSYSTEM & SPONSORSHIP PARTNERS:



(사) 벤처기업협회  
KOREA VENTURE BUSINESS ASSOCIATION



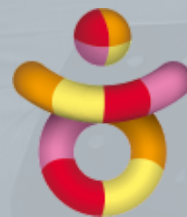
**K I T A**  
한국무역협회



Korea Trade-Investment  
Promotion Agency



중소벤처기업진흥공단  
Korea SMEs and Startups Agency



KOREA  
TOURISM  
ORGANIZATION

Programs delivered: 4 programs in 2025

Startups supported: 38 startups across multiple cohorts

Geographies represented: United States, Korea, Indonesia, Singapore

Average employment growth: 2.2x across participating startups

Average startup size: ~25 employees per company

Average monthly revenue: ~\$30,000 USD per startup

Projected revenue growth: ~2.0x average 12-month revenue forecast



Oh my goodness... there's not enough room here to say all the ways AIC has **grown and improved my business**, joining AIC was **life changing** for me!

Thank you for the investment in time. The resources Brett provided are incredible!

The meetings were **substantive and important** for providing much-needed direction.

It was a very helpful conversation. Everything I was hoping for **and then some!**

Your organization is **vital** to innovation in our community.

The cross pollination of small local businesses has helped **immensely**.

I've recommended lots of people for it and will continue!

Real world, tactical advice and help.

As someone who never thought I would be a small business owner, and previously would not have described myself as someone who had the skillset to own and run my own business, the support I've received from Conductor has made this possible for me. **Now I can't imagine doing anything else!**









# EMPOWER

**ENTREPRENEURS, INNOVATORS, AND  
SMALL BUSINESS LEADERS**