

2018 Nevada County Tech Connection Annual Report

We Make it Work Because We Want to Be Here

The [Nevada County Economic Resource Council](#) (ERC) launched the Nevada County Tech Connection (NCTC) in early 2017 with a grant from [Northern Rural Training and Employment Consortium](#) (NORTEC). The ERC formed NCTC in response to the local tech businesses and professionals lamenting the lack of visibility into Nevada County's tech ecosystem. The manufacturing and technology industry is thriving in Nevada County. We have a history of digital and manufacturing technology, starting with the Grass Valley Group. We have world-class professionals who have moved to Nevada City and Truckee because of the lifestyle. We have gritty, resourceful, local entrepreneurs who have built enterprises from scratch and march to their own beat of innovation and lifestyle...not only because they can, but because they WANT to.

The common characteristic in our community is that we are here in spite of the odds against us (tight housing and limited broadband ring a bell?). Nevada County and its surrounding areas speak to the pioneering spirit that has lived in its residents since gold drew a community of rugged pioneers here over 150 years ago. We MAKE it work. We make it work in return for a great quality of life (snow, rivers, lakes), good schools, low cost of doing business, abundant entertainment options, access to alternative health, spiritual and lifestyle choices, clear roads, and seeing a sky full of stars at night that are not dimmed by city lights.

We Persist Because the Community Needs Us

There are companies that sell their products globally, individuals that work remotely with world-wide enterprises, and people that provide niche services. We work hard and retreat to our family, friends, hobbies and the great outdoors. Some of us are hermits at heart. It's not easy to get these hermits to network and mingle, yet we persist.

We persist because there is a younger generation that needs to know about the opportunities that exist locally and in the world as technology paves the way for innovation in every industry we know of.

We persist because we want to support local professionals who need to grow their network.

We persist because we want to provide community for those who are looking to move here and WANT to relocate, however they can make it work.

We persist because we want to provide a support network, talent pipeline, and local market for new and accomplished entrepreneurs and businesses.

We persist so that we can be the collective voice for an industry that provides high wages, high growth opportunities and potential for economic development that will uplift the entire community.

We wish we would see all of you at every event -- it's pretty cool when you come out and share your knowledge and stories, your intelligence and humor, and learn from and teach each other.

We Can't Do it Without Your Participation

This year we had the pleasure to meet so many amazing people and businesses. And we haven't even scratched the surface of the talent that exists in this county.

The truth is that if we want to continue living and thriving in this beautiful area, we have to participate and contribute to our ecosystem. We need to give support and get support.

These are just a few reasons to network with your professional community [here](#):

- Find Mentors.
- Find Talent.
- Find Opportunities.
- Find Inspiration and Ideas.
- Meet new suppliers, service providers and perhaps even new friends!

And [here](#) are a few ways in which your participation could add value to the rest of the community:

- Provide insight to educators, students and parents about the trends, skills and careers available in your industry.
- Make your professional skills available for a cause - hackathon anyone?
- Mentor a new professional.
- Host an event or meetup.
- Just be available for a helpful conversation and be the friendly face of the Nevada County tech world :)



Our Programs Provide the Platform

Here are a few highlights of 2018 and examples of how Nevada County Tech Connection is providing a platform for individuals who have a great initiative and need a home to host those initiatives, are building community, or are just doing innovative things by themselves and need a helping hand.



Global Game Jam 2018 - Gerritt Dorland, software engineer at [AJA Video Systems](#) decided he did not want to travel to Chico State each year to attend Global Game Jam, so he proposed we host a Global Game Jam event here at the Tech Hub. With the assistance of co-host Dillon Lankenau, Software Developer at [Traitware](#), he led the participants through a fun filled weekend of developing a variety of new video and board games! In January 2019 we will be hosting our second [Global Game Jam](#).



Supporting community builders in Truckee - Tahoe Silicon Mountain has pioneered building the tech community in Truckee, bringing together a robust network of entrepreneurs and freelancers. NCTC was pleased to support Techstars StartUp Weekend and Tahoe Pitch Camp this year, and we look forward to continued collaboration and promotion of this community in the mountains of Nevada County.



AgTech Micro Conference - James Hipkin, CEO of [Red8 Interactive](#) and one of our Business Champions, is an avid foodie and supporter of local nonprofit Sierra Harvest. He came up with the idea of hosting an AgTech event in conjunction with Sierra Harvest's extremely popular Sustainable Food and Farm conference. And within 2 months the staff and (largely) volunteers of NCTC produced the first ever AgTech Micro Conference in Nevada County. In 2019 we will be hosting the second annual [AgTech event](#), which is made possible by this year's volunteer Event Manager [Helena Carapau](#) who is new not only to Nevada County but to the country, having recently immigrated here from Portugal.



TTT Bill Kilday Presentation (collaboration with Arts Council)

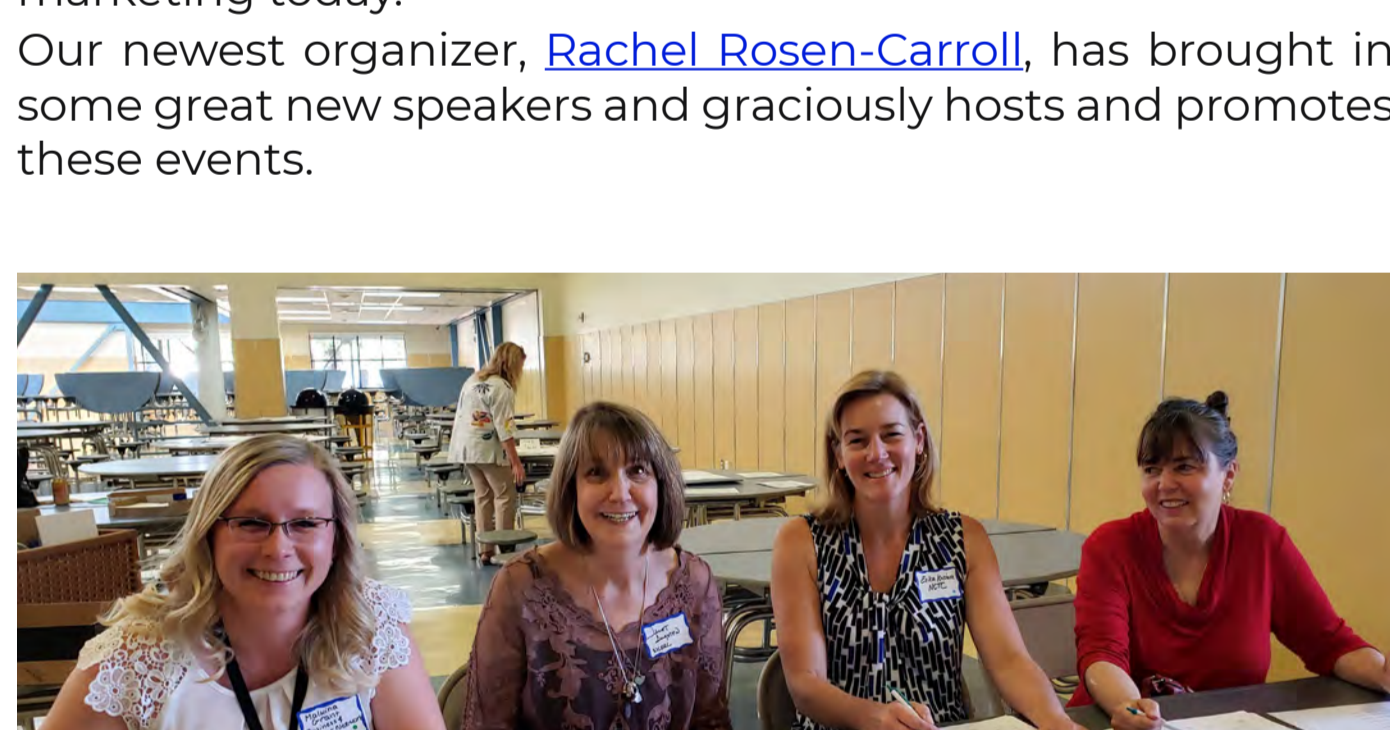


Nevada County Online - In early 2018 we heard that the Nevada County Online meetup was about to shut down for lack of an organizer. This online marketing meetup started by Brenda Tello-Horton, Co-Founder of ProPlanner Inc., and led by some awesome community members in the past, had been a great place for small businesses to learn about the latest marketing tools and trends. Although the scope is somewhat broader than tech, NCTC decided to take over this meetup because technology is a large part of what drives marketing today.

Our newest organizer, [Rachel Rosen-Carroll](#), has brought in some great new speakers and graciously hosts and promotes these events.



Many of you may have mingled with your peers at [TechTonic Tuesday](#). It continues to be NCTC's signature event, bringing highly regarded experts from the technology and startup world into our community to share their perspectives. It is an event not to be missed! And for those who do not know its history, this too was an event started by a local tech professional -- John Lorange, of Telegraph Hill Software. NCTC took it over in 2017.

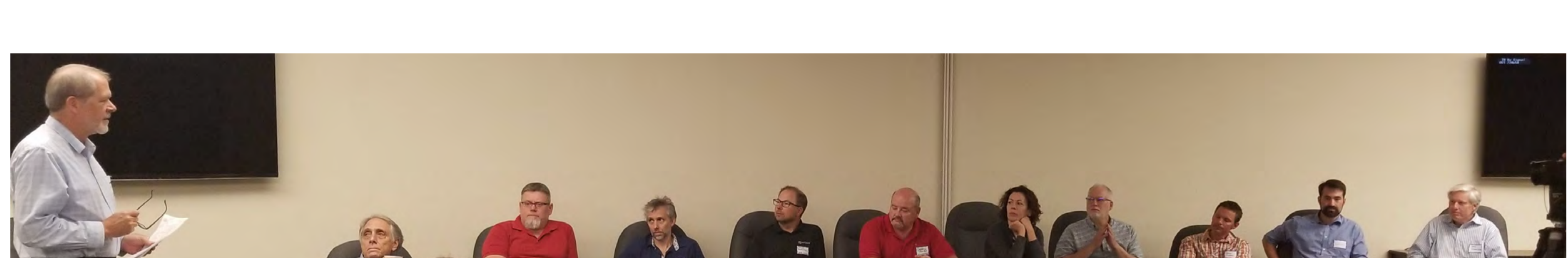


Tech Talent Forum and Pipeline Model - The Nevada County Economic Resource Council brought in workforce development consultant Heidi Lyss to assist the talent development task force in creating an advisory group and model that has led to a strong industry-led tech educational collaboration in Nevada County. As a result of two in-depth forums and Heidi's in-depth research and outreach, we now have a roadmap of promising ways to build the tech talent pipeline in Nevada County over the next few years. Download the [Tech Talent Development Report 2018](#) to learn more.

A Hub for Information About Our Local Tech Community - Since Red8Interactive brought our [website](#), a hub of information for our tech community to life, we have been showcasing local tech events, talent, businesses, and initiatives through the calendar, directory and resource pages. [Erika Kosina](#), blogger extraordinaire, has written articles that highlight everything that is going on in our tech community. Craig Rohrsen has documented all of our presentations on video -- you can see them on our [YouTube channel](#). [Eric Little](#), lawyer in residence at the Tech Hub, has contributed blogs on startup essentials and classes on current topics involving privacy law for small and online businesses.

You can get the latest information about our tech community through weekly email updates ([sign up here](#)) and posts on social media. Join our [Facebook group](#) to stay connected and hold conversations with your peers. For those who prefer communicating via Slack, [ask us](#) for an invite to the NCTC Slack channel. You can also find a wealth of information and resources on our [website](#), which we are in the process of redesigning.

John Smulo, CEO of Pleasanton-based [Purple Cow Agency](#) and recent transplant to Grass Valley, has volunteered to manage changes and updates to our website on pro bono basis, for which we are very grateful.



We Have Big Plans for 2019

We have learned and accomplished a lot over the past two years. In 2019 we will continue to serve as the platform for all things tech in Nevada County.

- We hosted over 92 events in 2018! Many of these networking and educational events will continue. In order to maintain and enhance the quality of the events, refreshments, speakers, and overall experience, we will be requesting a minimum donation of \$5 per person, starting February 1, 2019. Dependents 18 and under will be free.
- Our talent development task force will step into phase two and pick a project or two that they can sink their teeth into to bring the education and business communities closer.
- We will be forming a formal business advisory council of Tech CEOs and leaders. We will invite businesses in growth or enterprise phase who meet our criteria and are making an economic impact in our community.
- We will reach out to and bring together a forum of manufacturers to determine what their immediate priorities are, and evaluate how we can best provide them with support and representation.
- We are launching a drive to promote our local businesses and talent and will provide you a choice of listing options in our business and talent directory, from free to featured, at very low cost. We want to give you every opportunity to promote yourselves.
- We will launch an information kit to encourage businesses and individuals in the technology field who are looking to move away from the bigger cities in California to consider Nevada County.

We are actively seeking feedback, suggestions, and your participation. We need volunteers to participate in our tech talent and community development task forces, presenters, educators, youth program facilitators and a host for TechTonic Tuesday. Tell us your skills and we will find you a project that matches your interest.

Before we sign off, we want to extend our gratitude to a few individuals without whom we wouldn't be where we are today. Thank you to [Barbara Bitner](#), [Richard Sink](#) and [Jordan Enright-Schulz](#), who helped us accomplish so much, and brought us to where we are today.

Thank you [business champions and community partners](#) who aid, advise, and volunteer their time and resources for us. You are the spokes in the wheels of the Tech Connection and the Nevada County Tech Hub.

With warm regards and wishing you a great 2019. Shaviti Karki-Pearl and the [NCTC Consulting Team](#) ~Brought to you by the Nevada County Economic Resource Council in partnership with Northern Rural Training and Employment Consortium