



## **ABILENE ANGEL NETWORK HITS STRIDE AS LOCAL STARTUP AND INVESTMENT ECOSYSTEM SEE EXCITING GROWTH**

*Austin, TX – February 27, 2025*

The Central Texas Angel Network (CTAN), recognized as one of the leading angel networks in the country, is proud to announce the next phase of its Abilene chapter, the Abilene Angel Network. Established in 2024 in partnership with the Abilene Regional Growth Alliance, the Abilene Angel Network is poised to make significant strides in supporting early-stage founders and expanding the investment ecosystem in the Big Country region.

This collaboration is a critical part of CTAN's mission to empower startups and build strong entrepreneurial communities across Texas. With a goal of Abilene constituting 10% of CTAN's total headcount, the partnership exemplifies the shared commitment to fostering innovation, connecting founders with funding, and delivering meaningful impact to local economies across Central Texas and beyond.

### **Michael Bob Starr to Lead as Regional Director**

Michael Bob Starr, a charter member of the Abilene Angel Network and resident of Abilene, will take over the role of Regional Director. Starr is a seasoned leader with a distinguished career in both military and civilian sectors. He served as the Commander of the 7th Bomb Wing at Dyess Air Force Base in Abilene, Texas, where he led a team of over 12,000 military and civilian personnel. He has been an active member of the Central Texas Angel Network (CTAN) and brings unparalleled leadership experience and a passion for economic development to this position. Under his guidance, the Abilene Angel Network is building on its foundation of six active members and is actively recruiting more accredited investors to join its ranks.

### **Courtney Queen to Source Founders and Build Opportunities**

Courtney Queen, Associate Dean for Strategic Partnerships and Associate Professor at Texas Tech University Health Sciences Center, will play a pivotal role in sourcing founders and identifying promising companies in the Big Country region. With her expertise and local

connections, Queen aims to expand the deal flow and help entrepreneurs navigate the funding pipeline to secure the resources they need to succeed.

### **Driving the Growth of Abilene's Startup Ecosystem**

The partnership's overarching objective is to cultivate a thriving startup ecosystem in Abilene. This includes attracting interested partners, engaging founders, and rallying funders to contribute to the community's growth.

### **2024 Milestones and Progress**

In just its first year, the Abilene Angel Network has:

- Onboarded six members
- Hosted its inaugural kickoff event, along with a visit to Dyess Air Force Base to explore innovations in virtual simulators for training airmen
- Strengthened its pipeline of startup deal flow through CTAN's proven investment model
- Invested in their first startup companies

"Our goal is to enhance Abilene's ability to develop, foster, and support innovative start-up companies. That starts with providing the education, mentoring, and financial capital entrepreneurs need to thrive," stated Michael Bob Starr. "The Central Texas Angel Network – with all the experience, credibility, and resources they bring to the table – is indispensable to our efforts to grow the Big Country's start-up ecosystem, and we're excited to join CTAN in their broader mission to drive innovation across Texas."

As the Abilene Angel Network continues to grow, CTAN invites interested partners, founders, and funders to join this exciting venture. Together, we can build a robust entrepreneurial ecosystem that creates opportunities for the entire region. For more information or to get involved, please contact the CTAN team at [director@ctan.com](mailto:director@ctan.com).

### **About Central Texas Angel Network (CTAN):**

Central Texas Angel Network is one of the largest and most active angel investing organizations in the United States. Since its inception in 2006, CTAN has been dedicated to supporting early-stage startups and entrepreneurs throughout Central Texas. CTAN provides capital, mentorship, and strategic guidance to help promising ventures succeed and drive economic growth in the region.

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