

History



When we started out, people asked: Why should a University own a research park? Today the answer is clear: To support innovation, technology commercialization, job creation and economic development.

- Bruce Wright, Associate Vice President for Tech Parks Arizona

Tech Parks Arizona has deep roots within the University of Arizona community. The office began life as the UA Office of Economic Development in 1994 with a broad regional economic development mission.

That year, the University of Arizona took the bold step of acquiring an industrial park from IBM and transforming it into a university research park to help commercialize UA-developed technologies.

The Park began actively recruiting companies and attracted its first major tenant, Microsoft, in 1996. Since that time, the Tech Park has contributed greatly to regional economic development and is one of the region's largest employment centers.

In 2001, the Association of University Research Parks honored the UA Tech Park by naming it the top university research park in North America.

In 2003, Arizona Center for Innovation, a business incubator, was developed to accelerate technology commercialization, helping entrepreneurs transform their ideas into successful companies.

In more recent years, the Tech Park's focus has turned to facilitating the testing, evaluation, and demonstration of new technologies through initiatives such as the Solar Zone and The Security Innovation Hub.

In 2007, through a creative financing model, the University acquired a second property closer to main campus to develop a second research park.

In 2010, the Office of Economic Development was designated the Office of University Research Parks to reflect the University's expanding emphasis on research parks.

In April 2013, UA President Ann Weaver Hart initiated Tech Launch Arizona to enhance the University of Arizona's technology commercialization efforts. As part of that refocusing, the Office of University Research Parks was renamed Tech Parks Arizona and incorporated as a component of Tech Launch Arizona.

Fiscal year 2014 marked the best year to date for technology commercialization at the University of Arizona

Here are some important milestones for the University of Arizona's research parks.

UA Tech Park: Stepping Stones to Success

1970s [-]

1979

IBM creates the original structure, a state-of-the-art facility, and houses its Storage Systems Division on the site.

1990s [-]

1994

The University of Arizona purchases the site from IBM. Campus Research Corporation is created to negotiate lease arrangements.

Two tenants and 1,200 employees (IBM and Raytheon) work on-site.

1995

The University of Arizona begins park operations.

1996

Integrated Biomolecule Corporation, the Park's first new tenant, begins operations at the Park.

Microsoft leases space at the Park.

1997

Microsoft sublets its space to Keane, Inc., whose Tucson operation was later purchased by Convergys.

UA purchases the lease hold on Building 9040.

Vail High School and Arizona International Campus begin offering classes on-site.

1998

The University completes the Tech Park's inaugural Master Land Use Plan.

1999

The University establishes on-site Park management offices.

NP Photonics – the Park's first UA faculty-led company – begins operations.

The Park's first economic impact study reports that the Park houses 17 tenant companies, is responsible for the creation of 8,635 jobs, generates \$28.8 million in tax revenue, and has a \$1.53 billion total dollar impact (based on FY 03-04 data).

2000s [-]

2000

An economic impact study reports that the Park houses 21 tenants, is responsible for

the creation of 12,539 jobs, generates \$38.8 million tax revenue, and has a \$1.51 billion total dollar impact (based on CY 1999 data).

2001

The Park's 1.89 million square feet of leasable space is almost filled.

2002

The Park's third economic impact study reports that the Park houses 31 tenant companies, is responsible for the creation of 12,495 jobs, generates \$49 million in tax revenue, and has a \$1.87 billion total dollar impact (based on FY 2000-01 data).

Tucson Technology Incubator closes.

2003

Building 9070, a 70,000-square-foot multi-tenant building, is completed.

Arizona Center for Innovation opens with 4,500 square feet of office space and 8,000 square feet of lab space.

2004

Citi becomes a major tenant and moves into Building 9060.

The Park publishes a revised Master Land Use Plan.

2005

The Arizona Board of Regent approves the Park's Development Guidelines.

The Center for Technology Commercialization opens.

An economic impact study reports that the Park houses 31 tenants, is responsible for the creation of 13,305 jobs, generates 49 million in tax revenue, and has a \$1.95 billion total dollar impact (based on FY 03-04).

2006

UA South begins offering classes on-site.

2008

Pima Community College begins offering classes on-site.

2009

An economic impact study reports that the Park has 32 tenants, is responsible for the creation of 13,027 jobs, generates 63.9 million in tax revenue, and has a \$2.45 billion total dollar impact, (based on CY 2007 data).

Vail K-12 Academy and High School starts construction of its new site.

Started water infrastructure improvements.

The Park adopts a 10-year business plan.

2010s [-]

2010

Preliminary results for an economic impact study report that the Park houses 37 tenants, is responsible for the creation of 14,686 jobs, generated \$77.3 million in tax revenues, and had a \$2.97 billion total dollar impact (based on CY 2008 data).

Vail Academy and High School construction is complete and classes begin.

The Solar Zone infrastructure project begins.

2011

The Master Water System Construction, Phases I–VI, is completed - a \$5.5 million project.

The Solar Zone infrastructure project is completed - a \$2.6 million project.

The Solar Zone Amonix and TEP Solar City projects are completed.

2012

United Health Services (Optum Rx) takes occupancy in Building 9040.

The Solar Zone TEP II and AstroSol projects are completed.

DRS takes occupancy in Building 9070.

2013

The Solar Zone E.ON project is completed.

A new café opens in Building 9040.

2014

Phase One of the Solar Zone is completed.

UA Tech Park at The Bridges: A New Park Takes Shape

2000s [-]

2007

The University of Arizona acquires 54 acres of land at 36th Street and Kino Boulevard.

2009

Pima County completes flood control improvements on the site.

Arizona Board of Regents approves the Arizona Bioscience Park Master Land Use Plan.

UA receives a \$4.7 million grant from the Economic Development Administration, U.S. Department of Commerce, for infrastructure improvements.

Construction of on-site infrastructure begins.

2010s [-]

2011

The Tech Park at The Bridges is “development-ready.”

2012

Construction of Nobel Way is completed and accepted by the City of Tucson.