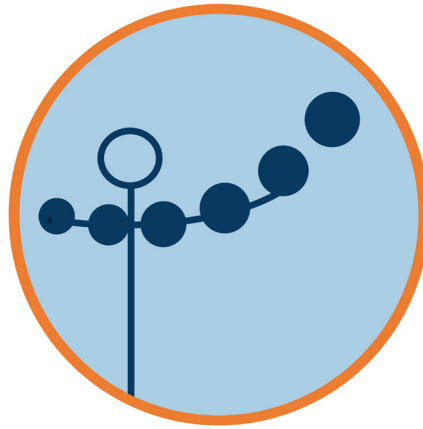




SWFL TECH

SWFL TECH

2025 ANNUAL REPORT

REBUILDING OUR REGIONAL TECH COUNCIL



LAURA SCHMIDT SWFL TECH PRESIDENT & BOARD CHAIR

As we reflect on 2025, I want to begin with gratitude.

SWFL Tech exists today because of the vision, commitment, and volunteer leadership of many people who came before us. Each helped build a foundation for an organization dedicated to strengthening Southwest Florida's technology community. I am grateful for that work and for the opportunity we have to build upon it.

For SWFL Tech, 2025 was fundamentally a year of strengthening that foundation.

During the year, our Board established a three-year roadmap to provide greater clarity about where SWFL Tech can make the greatest contribution to the region. We focused significant energy behind the scenes—reestablishing strong governance and operating practices, improving our technology stack and membership operations, and beginning to refresh our marketing and communications strategy so that SWFL Tech can better help Southwest Florida tell its technology story.

At the same time, we continued to bring people together. SWFL Tech hosted quarterly networking mixers, Tech Day at the Ballpark (in partnership with the Lee County EDO), and our annual TechMatch event (in partnership with Career Source SWFL and FGCU). These events create opportunities for relationships, ideas, employment and partnerships to develop across the region. We also served as fiscal agent for the Southwest Florida Aspirations in Computing high school program, supporting an important effort to encourage the next generation of technology talent.

We also reached an important financial milestone. One of our goals for the year was to strengthen the organization's financial position by establishing a reserve equal to one year of our annual operating budget. I am pleased that we accomplished that goal. For a nonprofit organization that is rebuilding and preparing for its next stage of growth, that reserve provides both stability and flexibility as we move forward.

I am deeply grateful to every individual who served on the SWFL Tech Board during 2025. Our progress reflects the collective talents, subject-matter expertise, professional relationships, and—perhaps most importantly—the volunteer time contributed by many people who care deeply about this region and its future.

That same spirit extends well beyond SWFL Tech.

Southwest Florida's technology ecosystem is strengthened every day by economic development organizations, educational institutions, employers, entrepreneurs, investors, workforce organizations, nonprofits, community leaders, and countless individuals working to create opportunity. SWFL Tech recognizes, values, and seeks to lift up that work. Our goal is not to duplicate what others are doing well. It is to connect, amplify, convene, and help identify the places where collaboration can move the entire region forward.

That is the opportunity I see for SWFL Tech.

Our greatest strength is not any single program, event, or organization. It is the collective capacity of the people and organizations across Southwest Florida who believe technology can be an important driver of economic opportunity and regional prosperity.

As we move forward, I hope SWFL Tech can continue to become a trusted regional connector—an organization that listens first, brings people together, shares the stories and accomplishments of others, and helps turn common priorities into collective action.

There is much more work ahead, and we know we have more to learn and improve. But 2025 gave us a stronger foundation from which to do that work.

To our members, partners, volunteers, Board members, and everyone who has contributed to SWFL Tech—past and present—thank you.

I look forward to what we can build together.

WHO WE ARE

Founded in 2008 as the Southwest Florida Regional Technology Partnership, the organization now operates as SWFL Tech. SWFL Tech is a volunteer run regional 501c3 nonprofit technology council focused on strengthening Southwest Florida's technology sector by connecting people, organizations, ideas, and opportunities across the region.

MISSION

Championing the growth of Southwest Florida's technology sector in collaboration with a vibrant ecosystem dedicated to advancing technological excellence and economic prosperity.

○ SWFL TECH - INVESTORS (2025)



○ BOARD OF DIRECTORS:

Laura Schmidt, President & Board Chair (Lee)
Gabriel Denny, Treasurer (Lee)
Debbie Peterson, Secretary (Lee)
Chuck Hausman, Governance Chair (Lee)
Wendi Fowler, Finance Chair (Collier)
Ed Fritz, Director of Workforce (Charlotte)
Warren Baucom, Director of Economic Development (Lee)
Justin Jaffry, Director of Marketing (Collier)
Jacquelyn Mosier, Director of Membership (Lee)
Wes Sprecher, Director of Community (Lee)
John Schlager, CIO Advisory (Lee)

Note: SWFL Tech board nominations are considered on a rolling basis. We continue to seek out nominations from the following counties: Hendry, Glades, Sarasota, Manatee, DeSoto

○ 2025 ROADMAP

PILLAR	COMPLETED	NEXT STEPS
FINANCIAL & GOVERNANCE STABILITY	Secured sustainable revenue model with reserve. Ratified 501c3 policy and practice statements.	Developed earned revenue/grant strategy to address data informed gaps.
ORGANIZATIONAL INFRASTRUCTURE	Modernized tech stack; clarified board roles and expectations; onboarded 3 new members with needed skill sets.	Identify 3 additional board members to support succession planning for key roles.
VISIBILITY & BRAND PRESENCE	Relaunched newsletter; refreshed brand presence.	Expanded newsletter reach + consistent narrative voice across region. Develop stronger media relations.
COMMUNITY & WORKFORCE ECOSYSTEM	Re-established quarterly socials. Held annual TechMatch recruitment event and Tech Night at the Ballpark.	Increase relevance of event planning to internal and external metrics.
REGIONAL COLLABORATION & INNOVATION	Established shared-objective partnerships.	Developing research + insights agenda to guide priority setting.



SWFL Tech Night Out



Tech Day at the Ballpark

"Rebuilding SWFL Tech reminded us why this organization exists - to bring people together so that the tech company in Southwest Florida never loses its sense of connection or purpose."

Laura Schmidt, SWFL Tech President



Tech Match



Aspirations in Computing

COLLECTIVE COMMITMENT: BUILDING THE ECOSYSTEM TOGETHER

Southwest Florida's technology momentum is not driven by any single organization — it is powered by a growing network of schools, colleges, employers, innovators, investors, nonprofits, and community groups working together to expand opportunity across the region. This shared commitment is one of the strongest signals that Southwest Florida is evolving into an emerging tech hub.

The organizations featured throughout SWFL Tech's communications reflect a broad and active ecosystem. From early STEM engagement in K–12 to advanced research at FGCU, from startups building new digital tools to employers modernizing operations, each plays a role in shaping the Gulf Coast Tech Corridor. The following snapshot highlights contributors across key sectors.

K-12

Schools across the region are introducing early experiences in computing, robotics, and digital problem-solving building a strong foundation for tomorrow's workforce.

- Bonita Springs Elementary - STEAM Lab introducing early robotics and coding
- Dunbar High School - just one example of Lee County's technical academies and programs found across 40 Middle and High Schools providing real-world, hands-on partnerships with local businesses
- FIRST Robotics Teams – Inspiring creativity, coding, and problem-solving among youth

HIGHER EDUCATION & RESEARCH

Colleges and universities are expanding programs in AI, data science, cybersecurity, and applied research — strengthening the region's talent pipeline and innovation capacity

- Florida Gulf Coast University (FGCU) – AI Institute, Data analytics, AI/ML programs, and RERI leadership.
- Florida SouthWestern State College (FSW) – Expanding cybersecurity and applied technology programs.

NONPROFITS & ECOSYSTEM BUILDERS

Nonprofit partners and regional organizations accelerate workforce development, support innovation, and strengthen the overall tech ecosystem through programs, events, and community leadership.

- CareerSource Southwest Florida – Workforce alignment and co-host of the annual TechMatch event.
- Horizon Foundation - Improving Lee County's business environment via public-private partnerships.
- SWFL Aspirations in Computing Affiliate (NCWIT) – Recognizing young women in computing.
- 35 Mules – Supporting early-stage innovation ventures.
- SWFL Tech – Convening, connecting, and promoting the regional technology community.
- The Edison Awards - Recognizing and fostering innovations and innovators.
- SWFL Inc. - Supporting, promoting, and protecting business and community success.
- BSides SWFL - Community-driven annual cybersecurity conference.
- The Immokalee Foundation – expanding digital skills and AI exposure through its Microsoft TechSpark Fellowship.

COMMUNITY BUILDERS

These groups strengthen local identity, support peer learning, and build professional networks — all essential components of a healthy tech ecosystem.

- SWFL Tech Alliance
- Women in Tech & Entrepreneurship - Ft. Myers Chapter
- Naples Tech
- Sarasota Tech
- Lee County AI Meetup
- AI Collective - Naples Chapter

○ 2025 RESULTS

4
SOCIAL EVENTS

+10
INVESTORS

≈150
TECHMATCH PARTICIPANTS

The subscribers represent 25% growth

SOCIAL MEDIA

+2100
SUBSCRIBERS

+2000
**LINKEDIN IMPRESSIONS/
MONTH**

+300
NEWSLETTER SHOUTOUTS

23%
**GROWTH LINKEDIN
FOLLOWERS**

VOLUNTEER
1320
HOURS

This year, our dedicated volunteers contributed **1320 hours** of service, showcasing their commitment and passion for our mission.

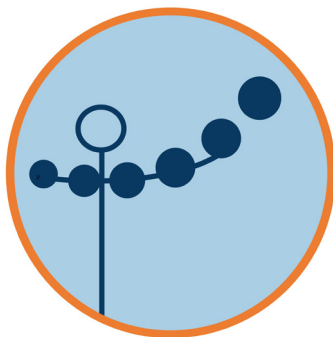
ELEVATING THE ECOSYSTEM
~300
**ORGANIZATIONAL
CONTRIBUTIONS**

~20
INDIVIDUAL LEADERS

~+50
**FEATURED
ORGANIZATIONS**

1 YEAR OF OPERATING RESERVES; 2025 RESERVE GOAL ACHIEVED

A key 2025 organizational goal was to strengthen SWFL Tech's financial resilience. SWFL Tech maintained a lean operating model in 2025 and achieved its goal of establishing reserves equal to one full year of annual operating expenses.



SWFL TECH

THANK YOU
TO OUR INVESTORS, VOLUNTEERS,
AND FOLLOWERS

SUBSCRIBE

To our newsletter at swfltech.org

FOLLOW

Our LinkedIn at SWFL Tech

SUPPORT

Our action and cause in 2026