

Creative Space

By JENNIFER MADDOX



When most Texans think of Bryan/College Station, usually images of Aggieland, tradition, and agriculture come to mind. Rarely do people think of art, design, and cutting-edge web technology. But the founders of The Creative Space are hoping to change that.

The Creative Space is a shared workspace on the fifth floor of the Varisco Building in historic downtown Bryan. Currently, it's made up of seven men representing five companies: Ryan Plesko of BuildingProcess.com; Bill Erickson of Erickson Media Group; Roby Fitzhenry, Travis Ward, and Jeff Blickenstaff of Always Creative (formerly 372 Media); Freelance Programmer Cody Bailey; and Michael Cummings of MC Photography. It is currently the only collaborative workspace of its kind in Texas.

"The Creative Space was created so that a group of like-minded individuals could work together in a collaborative environment," said Plesko. "It allows us, as a group, to possess the resources of a larger company while still in the early stages of our own endeavors."

One of the main objectives of The Creative Space is to reverse the perception that Bryan/College Station is not a technology-savvy town. Although The Creative Space has only been around for a couple of months, it's already

doing its part to change that, and it's generating a lot of buzz.

On August 22nd, the open house drew nearly 100 people, including Dennis Goehring, Economic Development Director for the City of Bryan, John Hendry of the Downtown Bryan Economic Development Association, Chuck Martinez of the Research Valley Partnership, and College Station City Councilman Chris Scotti.

For more information about The Creative Space and its companies, visit:

www.thecreativespace.org
www.buildingprocess.com
www.wearealways.com
www.ericksonmediagroup.com
www.michaelcummingsphotography.com

The Creative Space is also responsible for bringing RefreshBCS (refreshbcs.org) and other web technology events to Bryan/College Station. Within three months of starting the local branch of Refresh (refreshingcities.org), a Google representative came in as a speaker, attracting a crowd of over 150 people. Amazon Web Services (aws.amazon.com), who sent a recent Refresh speaker, reported on the trip on the Amazon Web Services Blog:

"I flew to Aggieland - College Station and Bryan - to meet with a bunch of designers and developers who had invited us to come and speak to their group. These college grads have started something really innovative - similar to [the] 'incubator' concept, 'The Creative Space' is space (yes! physical space) for start-ups. If you have an idea, you are in [or] near Bryan, TX, this is a place to check out."

In addition, The Creative Space has already spoken with cutting edge heavy-hitters, such as Facebook, DivX, 37Signals, and Matt Mullenweg, to send future guest speakers.

But that's not all The Creative Space has planned. "One of the most exciting events we will be hosting is BarCampTexas," said Bailey. BarCamp (barcamp.org) is a popular ad-hoc conference that promotes learning and sharing ideas in an open environment. Sessions are planned the day of the conference and can cover any topic.

The Creative Space and its founders have a strong vision for the future. "We want to continue to grow and add more talented professionals to the group," said Plesko. "We also want to provide a way to educate the community about what is going on in the tech and arts communities around the nation." ✦