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Promoter makes last-minute fan area pitch

Party tent idea is outlined in letter.

By Jacob Barker

Just days away from an onslaught of Missouri and Georgia fans descending on Columbia, one man has dared to ask: Can Tiger Town be resurrected?

This late in the game, probably not.

"I guess anything is possible, but if I am to base it on the process we have in place, no, it is not feasible for anything to happen on city property, public streets, by Saturday," said Assistant City Manager Carol Rhodes, who sits on the city committee that reviews special events and coordinates street closures.

Scheduled for the public comment portion of tonight's Columbia City Council meeting is a presentation from Andrew Quart, who is offering to finance the implementation of a Tiger Town party area holding as many as 10,000 people, should the city allow it.

"It is my understanding that the event is not being implemented due to lack of desire to finance the project," Quart wrote to the city, referring to the game-day fan zone that had been planned for downtown but was scrapped a few weeks ago. "I would like to formally extend my offer to implement and finance the Tiger Town Project on behalf of the city of Columbia."

For an entrance fee of \$15, Quart is proposing a party tent on Friday and Saturday that will serve drinks, have live music and broadcast the MU-Georgia football game. His proposal also mentions shuttles to the stadium beginning at 3:30 p.m. for the 6:45 p.m. game. The estimated cost for the entire party: \$50,000 per game.

"I have not seen a proposal," Rhodes said. "Andrew has not submitted any paperwork to the city. This is just a presentation, as I understand it, of his ideas."

In his letter to the city, Quart touts his event-planning experience at casino company Caesar's Entertainment, where he says he organized events that drew more than 10,000 people, including tailgating events at Ole Miss in Oxford, Miss. In his online LinkedIn profile, Quart says he worked at Caesar's for nearly five years and is now a political consultant.

Quart could not be reached by the Tribune's deadline today, and it is unclear where the event would take place. His paperwork sent to the city is only the paperwork required for scheduling

public comment to the council. In addition to providing a description of the event and his promotion experience, it asks whether the city would allow the event and where it could be held.

But another submission Ouart sent Rhodes says the event would be held at Peace Park. That is University of Missouri property, and Rhodes forwarded the information to John Murray, MU's assistant director of business services. Murray could not be reached before deadline to comment on any communication about the event, and MU spokesman Christian Basi said he was not able to track down information about the proposed event this morning.

There are other events planned for game day. MU's new offering, Tiger Landing, kicked off last week at the Reynolds Alumni Center. Weather permitting, it could be held outside on the Carnahan Quadrangle this week, offering food, drink and family activities.

Georgia fans will have their own pre-game party in a tented-off portion of Lowry Mall. The University of Georgia Alumni Association will charge \$40 for entrance and provide a full bar and tailgating food for customers.

In addition, Andrew Watkins, technical director for the Missouri Theatre, said the University of Georgia will host an event at the theater on Friday evening.

Reach Jacob Barker at 573-815-1722 or e-mail jtbarker@columbiatribune.com.

Central Missouri Development Council backs Tiger Town USA initiative

By [Nuria Mathog](#)

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COLUMBIA — **Tom Atkins' Tiger Town USA logo is an image of fierce MU pride,** but the concept originated hundreds of miles from Columbia.

Atkins "came to me while he was on vacation in Florida," said Don Stamper, executive director of the Central Missouri Development Council. "He's a really creative guy. When he gets an idea into his head, the result is usually pretty great."

The ensuing proposal, Tiger Town USA, is a nonprofit group designed to create a distinct brand image for Columbia and promote interest in the city. The logo accompanying the brand, which is still subject to change, features a stencil-style tiger above the slogan for which the campaign is named.

Atkins said he drew his inspiration from Mayor Bob McDavid's goal of improving the city's growth and viability.

"You look around, and everyone's looking for a brand," he said. "Well, why can't Columbia have a brand? We have a lot of great things going on for us: education and medical services and insurance businesses. We need to tell people about these things and not let them take them for granted."

The Central Missouri Development Council formally endorsed Tiger Town USA at its Aug. 21 board meeting. Stamper said the council had encouraged its members to embrace the initiative and viewed it as a beneficial step for the city.

"It's a good idea for the community," Stamper said. "We want people who come to Columbia to have a positive experience — to hear that we're proud of our athletes and our Tiger heritage."

Stamper said since introducing Tiger Town USA, the development council has received a lot of positive feedback.

"Our membership has been very responsive," he said. "I expect a high level of participation on behalf of the business community."

Atkins said he hopes to spread awareness of the brand with the help of banners and billboards strategically placed around the city, including a large banner across the section of Broadway by the Boone Hospital Center. He is also considering developing a line of merchandise bearing the Tiger Town USA logo.

To gain support for his project, Atkins met with key community players, including MU athletics director Mike Alden and Chamber of Commerce Board of Directors chair Randy Coil.

"We want to get as much exposure to the community as we can this week," Atkins said. "You only get one chance to make a good first impression."

Once the project gets off the ground, Atkins intends to charge businesses for using the logo based on how much it's used. He also hopes Columbia residents will be encouraged to make donations to his nonprofit organization.

For now, though, Tiger Town USA is an entirely self-funded project. Atkins said he is unsure how much the project will ultimately cost.

While acknowledging the similarity in names, Atkins said there is no relationship right now between his proposal and the Tiger Town tailgating events canceled earlier this month because of insufficient funding.

However, this could change with Andrew Quart in the picture.

Quart spoke at Tuesday's City Council meeting about his intent to provide funding for the game-day events in what he referred to in council documents as "Tiger Town USA of Columbia."

In the documents, Quart outlined a plan to charge tailgaters \$15 for access to a giant tent featuring live music, beverages and ESPN coverage of the game. The costs would be financed by Quart's company, Game Day Entertainment LLC, for an estimated \$50,000 a week.

At the council meeting, Quart attributed his plan to his love of the Southeastern Conference and a desire to create a venue large enough to hold 10,000 fans.

As of Tuesday night, Ouart said he was still finalizing details with the council, but said he would be able to provide more information once negotiations were complete.

Ouart said he was not personally acquainted with Atkins but would be interested in working with him in the future.

"He's the perfect example of an internal leader within the city of Columbia," Ouart said.

Stamper agrees. He attributes the warm reception to Tiger Town USA to Atkins' track record of community involvement. Atkins is a former member of the UM System Board of Curators, where he served from 2001 to 2006.

"He's an enormous supporter of the University of Missouri," Stamper said. "A lot of this is born out of that tremendous heart of his for our great university and community."

Atkins is not alone in his mission to generate interest in the city. Woodruff Sweitzer and True Media are collaborating with the Convention and Visitors Bureau to produce a separate media marketing campaign for Columbia, according to a news release.

The campaign will focus on attracting tourists to Columbia through an extensive communications project involving radio, print, television and other forms of media.

Supervising editor is Jacob Kirn.



MU tracking app may aid on battlefield

By Janese Silvey

A University of Missouri engineering team has developed a smartphone application that would allow users to determine how far away an object is and — if it's moving — how fast and where the object is going.

The application could have military and civilian uses, said Qia Wang, a doctoral student in MU's College of Engineering who is leading the software development. On the battlefield, soldiers could determine how close enemy tanks or forces are. On the homefront, users could determine how close they are to a tourist landmark or an animal in the wild.

Although the research team has a working prototype, the application is not ready for the market, Wang said.

"We're refining the interface to make it more user-friendly," he said. "We're doing some improvements. Maybe in the future we can release it."

The application works in three ways depending on the scenario, said Kevin Zeng, a computer science professor and Wang's adviser.

The easiest use is when a user knows the size of the object being sought, such as a tank or vehicle. In that case, the user can snap a photo of the object in the distance to pinpoint its GPS coordinates, allowing the application to determine the distance from the smartphone's location.

The application would require two images if a user isn't sure what the object is. In that case, one person would take a photo of the object and send it to the smartphone of a second user, who would snap an additional image. Using triangulation, the software could figure out the location of the target.

In the third scenario involving moving objects, a user would have to know what the object is, such as a vehicle, Zeng said.

"So you see some car speeding in a school zone, and you would like to see the speed of that, you could take a video of it and" the application "would give you the speed of the car and track where it is and where it is going."

Details about the software were published in the Proceedings of the Society of Photo-Optical Instrumentation Engineers.

The research was funded by the Leonard Wood Institute at Fort Leonard Wood.

Reach Janese Silvey at 573-815-1705 or e-mail jsilvey@columbiatribune.com.



Beyond Meat is beyond awesome for our economy

By Brent Beshore

As for startup news in Columbia, very little comes close to what's headed our way. A small company with big plans — and big-time investors — is opening up shop and bringing with it an unprecedented opportunity for advancement. Beyond Meat manufactures what the Chicago Herald describes as "the most real faux meat ever." Slate magazine called "fake meat so good it will freak you out." The New York Times claimed it was so good it was "fooled badly by its product."

Aside from having a lauded product, it's also backed by Kleiner Perkins and Obvious Corp., some of the savviest and most innovative investors in Silicon Valley. Kleiner Perkins' other investments include Amazon, Google, AOL, Electronic Arts and more recently Path, Zynga and Shazam. Obvious Corp. is largely known for creating Twitter but also invests in select companies with similar social missions.

So what does it mean for Columbia? Besides adding manufacturing and other jobs, it also shines a bright spotlight on Columbia as a viable destination for venture capital-backed companies. To learn more, I talked with Beyond Meat founder and CEO Ethan Brown.

Brent: Out of all the possible locations you could have chosen, why Columbia?

Ethan: I've been working with the University of Missouri since 2009 on this project and have enormous respect for the faculty and staff, including Fu-hung Hsieh, Harold Huff, Hattie Francis and Chris Fender. When it came to put our first commercial-scale production facility in place, we felt that doing so in a way that strengthened and grew our relationship with Mizzou was the right approach. We wanted to be sure that we could continue to innovate together and to make a contribution to the local economy as a way of expressing our appreciation for the strong sense of partnership and trust the university has shown us.

Brent: What type of operations will be located in Columbia?

Ethan: Manufacturing "chicken" and other delicious, sustainable and healthy plant-based proteins for the center of the plate.

Brent: Who were some of the people and attributes that made Columbia an attractive place to locate?

Ethan: It really boils down to the university and the university partners, including Fu-hung Hsieh, Harold Huff, Hattie Francis, Chris Fender and Mike Brooks, among others. After making that basic calculation — that being next to our engine of innovation — we were very pleased to also learn of the skilled and professional workforce that is available in Columbia, Mo.

Brent: What contributions do you think Beyond Meat will make to the Columbia business and startup ecosystem?

Ethan: We are very focused on remaining at the forefront of transitions that are occurring in the food industry and believe that we can provide the university and Columbia with a strong partner in this regard, a business that hopes to make a contribution in the areas of human health and the environment, among other areas.

Brent: Is there anything that people could do to help you successfully transition to Columbia?

Ethan: We've received fantastic support from the community and hope we can continue to grow together. Folks can help us best by encouraging friends and family locally and across the country to buy our products.



Investor network injects cash into local science and technology startups

MU MENTION PAGE 2

By Jacob Barker

When Katie and Brian Thompson pitched their company to Columbia's local angel investment group back in April, Craig Edlund saw the value in their technology right away.

Edlund worked 17 years at local water and wastewater services firm Alliance Water Resources, so he was familiar with the potential of the Thompsons' startup, Elemental Enzymes. Scientists-turned-entrepreneurs, the Thompsons have spent the past year refining their technology, which offers a less expensive and more efficient way to produce enzymes for a variety of industrial and environmental uses, including treating contaminated water.

"I've been involved in water, wastewater my entire career," Edlund said. "So there was certainly a connection there where I understood, if not all the science, at least some of the applications."

Edlund wasn't the only member of Centennial Investors who was impressed with Elemental Enzymes. Of the 61 members in the local angel capital organization, more than half agreed to invest in the startup, one of the largest percentages the group has ever mustered.

One of the attractions of Elemental Enzymes, said Edlund, who is leading the deal for Centennial, was its potential to get to market quickly and avoid the regulatory hurdles that slow down technologies such as medical devices. The \$400,000 investment from Centennial, finalized this week, should speed along the company's march toward production and sales even faster.

"This is going to let us get to the next stage," Katie Thompson said. "Basically, to let us finish up our R&D and allow us to get products on the market."

Centennial's investment in Elemental Enzymes marks the 12th for the group of local investors and raises the tally of cash it has put into local science and technology startups to around \$2.5

million. It's not a huge amount after five years in existence, but it is capital that comes at a critical time for risky startups that have the potential to become worth huge sums.

Although the investments could pay out big for members, they also could yield hefty returns for Columbia in jobs and further investment. Many of the companies that have received capital from Centennial Investors are still viable, employing people locally, and their angels have carved out an important place for themselves in Columbia's entrepreneurial ecosystem.

"I think that we help to advance the progress of a number of these companies," said Bruce Walker, the president of Centennial and the former dean of the University of Missouri's business school. "Without the investment by Centennial Investors, they either wouldn't be under way, or they wouldn't be making the progress that they are."

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In 2005, the Columbia Chamber of Commerce was gearing up for its 100th anniversary. In addition to the standard party to mark the milestone, members thought something more was in order.

"We threw a good party, but we wanted to do something more lasting than a party," Landmark Bank President Andrew Beverley said.

Beverley ended up taking the reins on a chamber committee that set out to find something the business group could add to the community. What it came up with was Centennial Investors, a network of affluent people with the means to inject Mid-Missouri science and technology startups with the capital they need to bring their products to the marketplace.

At the time, the university had just added economic development as one of its core planks. Plans were in motion for the Life Science Business Incubator at Monsanto Place and Discovery Ridge, university-sponsored enterprises intended to nurture companies looking to commercialize research.

"It just seemed like the perfect time for the community to step forward with equity capital to make that happen," Beverley said.

The popularity of angel capital groups was on the rise — in 2005, there were about 250 angel capital groups operating in the country, up from about 100 in 1999, the Angel Capital Association said. After deliberating for some months on the structure of the group, they ultimately decided it would need to rely on active investors, those who could be personally involved and put in plenty of time vetting companies seeking funding.

Rather than set up a pool under the control of a board, Centennial would solicit accredited investors — people with a net worth of more than \$1 million or who made at least \$200,000 in each of the previous two years — who would personally decide whether they wanted to invest in a particular company. Other than an annual \$500 membership due, which mostly pays for the

group's dinner meetings and other small expenses, investment decisions would rest with the individual.

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Although individuals have the final say, there are benefits to being in a group, Beverley said. For one, investors can pool their resources, putting a smaller amount of capital at risk for each startup. And even though the chamber does help some — it put up \$10,000 during the group's formation and provides some nominal administrative support — the heavy lifting is done by investors such as Edlund, who take the lead on a deal and really vet a company and its founders at the time of investment and in the coming years.

Establishing a group also gives companies a go-to source for funds, which increases deal flow and also reduces the investors' risk. Rather than choosing one company to take a risk on, Centennial members can write a bunch of smaller checks, increasing the likelihood that they will have a stake in a company that actually does take off. That's important in the high-risk, high-reward game of startup investing. "Out of 20, you'd be doing well to hit one home run," Walker said.

In 2006, the group was formed, and the next year, it made its first investment: \$327,500 for a 10 percent stake in Equinosis. The company, founded by Kevin Keegan, produces a device that detects lameness in horses and is still working out of the Life Science Business Incubator.

Keegan's company, like many others, is born of university research and coached by the Missouri Innovation Center, led by Jake Halliday. Many of the companies he works with would not have made it without the local angel investment group. Banks don't often loan to technology startups with long investment horizons, Beverley said, and the companies are still too small to access capital from established venture firms.

"You really don't have the choice of dropping into the angel group in Urbana-Champaign, Ill., and asking them for money," Halliday said. "They invest locally. And venture capital firms do not invest in raw startups."

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Of the 12 deals Centennial has invested in since it began, only two have gone belly up, Walker said. But that is to be expected — angel investors should only count on one in 10 companies to be successful. A typical investment usually ranges from about \$150,000 to \$500,000, though the number of Centennial members who participate varies.

The group doesn't seek dividends or intend to stick with the company for the long haul. Instead, it hopes to sell its stake — or "exit" — in five to seven years as the company matures. That hasn't happened with any of the companies yet, but that hasn't dampened the number of people looking to get in on the deals put in front of the group.

"I think the growth of membership is particularly remarkable considering we haven't had a huge success story to point to," Walker said.

That's not to say the group isn't picky about the companies it invests in. About 100 contact the group each year. Of those, about 30 apply, and only about 25 are sent to be pre-screened by Missouri Innovation Center staff. Only about 10 actually make a pitch at a Centennial meeting in a given year, and only two receive funding.

Before they are selected, students from the business school assist Centennial members in a further round of exhaustive due diligence on the company's finances, its founders and its business plan. If it is approved for funding, Centennial must negotiate the company's value and the stake its investment will buy. If it goes through with the transaction, Centennial often gets a seat on the company's board and continues to observe, coach and counsel the business.

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Most of the companies come from university researchers who want to turn their technology into a business. To do that, they often turn to Halliday and his staff.

"We deliberately prepare the companies to present to Centennial Investors," Halliday said. "Our argument is, if we can't raise capital for a company that is based out of the incubator and has a bias for local startups, we are probably wasting our time going and looking for capital somewhere else."

But other companies come from afar. Tomas Hode was working out of North Carolina and looking for a place to locate his cancer treatment company, Immunophotonics, when he was put in touch with Halliday. Halliday set up Hode, who is working to develop a cancer treatment using lasers and a chemical injection, with some space in the incubator and began preparing him to make a pitch to Centennial. Hode had made one formal investment pitch before, and "it didn't go well at all."

His pitch to Centennial, though, yielded one of the largest investments the group has made in one company — \$500,000. And the investment served as training and a vote of confidence that has helped it attract additional capital. Immunophotonics has been able to continue working here, and if the company gets government approval to begin conducting clinical trials in the coming years, it hopes to test its treatment at Ellis Fischel Cancer Center.

"Very quickly I was put in front of a lot of key people in the community here," Hode said. "Everything from the medical school to Ellis Fischel to Centennial Investors."

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But the angel capital group is only one piece of the puzzle. As companies finish their development and look to take their technology to market, they often need millions of dollars from larger venture capital firms. Often, those are clustered in places such as Boston or Silicon Valley. And they like to keep their investments close.

"Our biggest challenge is not losing our companies from the area," Halliday said. "When they outgrow the investment they can secure from Centennial, they necessarily have to deal with venture capital firms that are not here."

The other missing piece is a seed capital fund that provides even smaller amounts to businesses in even earlier stages of research and development than those that come to Centennial.

Walker said a seed fund has been discussed by Centennial, and although some members are open to the idea, no firm plans are in place.

Still, deal flow is increasing, and Halliday said there is growing interest in the region among startup and venture investment types. Centennial would like to see more potential companies, and as its reputation and Columbia's grows, it might have its work cut out for it.

"It's drawn the business community and the university closer together," Beverley said. "I think they can attract researchers who are interested in commercialization if they have the whole ecosystem to support it."