

BIGfrontier has big idea for Midwest tech corridor

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Some of the great resources that Chicago has over many other regions in the U.S. are its vibrant networking organizations that host events designed to bring entrepreneurs together with investors, mentors, service providers and media.

While many national networking organizations have shut down because of a lack of sponsors, two of Chicago's largest--First Tuesday and BIGfrontier--are still thriving. BIGfrontier, in fact, is doing so well that it is expanding to Milwaukee next month and hopes to eventually establish a high tech corridor in the region.

Founded by Chicagoan Steve Lundin in April 2000, BIGfrontier has the big idea of putting on the first "Northern Lights Bash" in Milwaukee on April 30. Why Milwaukee?

"The power of the university system in Wisconsin has created a treasure trove of companies developing new products in the fields of medical technology and life sciences," Lundin said. "I met with a group of [Wisconsin-based] angels who are currently investing, who are attuned to new opportunities and who are as accessible as they are in Chicago."

There has been little talk of creating a BIG tech corridor in the Midwest, but Lundin wants to change all of that. "This is a first step by a Chicago technology organization to build an active corridor for the exchange of resources, venture capital and opportunities between our two states. We should, as a community, begin to think of Illinois, Wisconsin, Michigan, Indiana and Iowa as an aggregated powerhouse of technology influence in the U.S."