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Can Fort Myers be turned into a tech hub?

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By Ty Russell, Reporter [CONNECT](#)

FORT MYERS, FL - The City of Fort Myers says it can win the hearts of young developers and business owners, creating a hotspot for technology jobs.

They plan to turn a city-owned property along Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard, at the Southwest Florida Enterprise Center, into a technology hub.

No one has signed up to move in yet. But leaders believe once they build it, people will come.

- VIDEO: CREATING A TECH HUB IN FORT MYERS

"If we are successful, in two years we will have this huge facility," said Mike Love, the center's director.

His plan is to spend \$5 million on the 40,000 square foot space.

Love is working with about 30 other small business owners at the center. It's meant to give startups an affordable place to kick off their businesses.

"Companies, small businesses with innovative ideas. Something that will disturb the market," Love said.

That's not the type of businesses he has right now; nearly all of them are manufacturing and industrial businesses - all but one.

The one is Mike Gookin, who invented the GPS Lock Light. It's an automatic timer that uses location to determine with a light should be on.

"We got a patent on it last year. We got into Home Depot this year," he said.

Love says businesses like Gookin's are attractive and will keep younger people working and living in Fort Myers.

A student from FGCU who works part time for Gookin is looking for a little more.

"Something like this, but maybe a little higher on the food chain," said Isaac Gainey.

A student from Florida Southwestern University believes the good jobs are far away.

"I would be more successful if I were to venture out of Florida," said Barbara Vincent.

But others say they will still try to get hired at home first.

"If that would give me that opportunity, I probably would consider staying," said FSW student Marie Baptiste.

Love says once companies start at the center, his goal is to have them buy up vacant properties along busy MLK Boulevard to stay local.

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