



California

The south will rise again?

Silicon Valley has long been the global hub for up-and-coming technologies, and a magnet for venture capital — in which it comes in second only to Massachusetts. Now, southern California is making a bid to attract the talent that currently flocks to the Bay Area. The “Silicon Beach” region is home to outposts for tech giants Facebook, Google and Snap Inc., the parent company of Snapchat, but it lags its northern counterpart when it comes to the pool of educated workers.

Southern California universities are looking to change that. In 2017, the University of California Los Angeles announced the creation of the Silicon Beach Innovation Lab, designed to help its students find paths into high-tech companies regardless of prior experience in tech.

“We have a huge number of students who are currently employed in another industry and want to change careers — people who might have been doing something else but want to learn coding or cybersecurity,” said Bruce Huang, director of the digital technology department for UCLA Extension.

Nearby, Loyola Marymount University focuses its efforts on combining southern California’s traditional industries with regional startups. LMU, which bills itself as “the University of Silicon Beach”, plans to open a 50,000-square foot campus in the heart of the region to foster collaboration between its film and television students and tech firms seeking creative talent.

Sources: (LA Times) (UCLA) (LMU) (Daily Breeze)

WHAT DID WE DO RIGHT?

California boasts \$890 per capita in VC, and state regulators eased restrictions to allow testing of self-driving vehicles without a driver on public roads.

WHAT CAN WE DO BETTER NEXT YEAR?

California can lower corporate taxes and lighten regulations on businesses.

WHERE HAVE WE MOST IMPROVED?

As of 2017, California allows rideshare drivers to operate anywhere in the state under a single business license.

Best & Brightest	C
Fast Internet	B+
Grants Advanced Degrees	B
Tech Workforce	B+
Tax Friendly	D-
Attracts Investment	A+
Entrepreneurial Activity	C
Ridesharing	A-
Short-Term Rentals	C
Sustainable Policies	C
Self-Driving Vehicles	C
Drones	A



Entrepreneurial Activity

Small businesses added more than 1.7 million new jobs from Q2/2011 to the Q4/2016, a rate of about 44 new jobs per 1,000 people.



Tech Workforce

Driven by major hubs including Silicon Valley, California boasts more than 1.6 million tech jobs, or about 42.63 jobs per 1,000 people.



Grants Advanced Degrees

Nearly 12 percent of residents over the age of 24 have an advanced degree.



Fast Internet

More than 70 percent of households have access to internet connections of at least 10 mbps, and 56 percent enjoy speeds of 25 mbps or more.

The Golden State Aims to Stay on Top in Tech with STEM Education Push

California aims to continue its tech workforce dominance with new programs that will give students a leg up in STEM fields.

FabLab, a new education center and workshop in San Joaquin County, is equipped with laser cutters, 3D printers, milling machines and circuitry, and programming tools to help central California students get the skills needed to enter the state’s high-tech workforce. The lab is designed to give students of all grade levels hands-on experience in a variety of STEM disciplines.

The San Joaquin lab is one of several scattered throughout the state. Others serve students in Sacramento, Los Angeles, San Diego and elsewhere.

After the success of Marvel’s Black Panther, which extensively featured advanced technology, Hollywood is also adding its clout to support STEM training. Disney plans to donate \$1 million to the Boys & Girls Clubs of America to fund STEM innovation centers in a dozen cities including Los Angeles and Oakland.

PHOTO CREDIT: San Joaquin County Office of Education | Sources: (The Record) (New York Times)

