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## Fort Ben and the City of Lawrence Selected as Nominee for ‘Rising Tech City’

INDIANAPOLIS, Ind. (February 19, 2019) — TechPoint, the nonprofit, industry-led growth initiative for Indiana’s technology ecosystem, announced the nominees for its 20th annual Mira Awards presented by Angie’s List and Salesforce. The Mira Awards gala—the biggest tech awards event in the state—celebrates the people, products, companies, and places chosen as ‘The Best of Tech in Indiana’.

Together, Fort Ben and the City of Lawrence were announced as one of five nominees in the Rising Tech City category, which recognizes cities, towns, regions or communities in Indiana and celebrates the projects and people behind them who have championed the location’s advancement with emphasis on tech friendliness.

“The City of Lawrence is honored to be considered for a Mira Award – the nomination recognizes Fort Ben’s viability as a technology and innovation campus with its rich history, one-of-a-kind setting, and accessibility, as well as the City’s commitment to fostering tech innovation and entrepreneurship as the true backbone of its economic development strategy,” said Mayor Steve Collier.

It may be a surprise to some to see the City of Lawrence on the list of nominees among the larger cities of Indianapolis, Fishers and South Bend and Bloomington. Though the City and the Fort Ben campus is much smaller, the concentration of businesses and amenities is mighty. The nomination honors two-decades of strategic planning and investment of local and regional leaders into the redevelopment of the former Fort Benjamin Harrison military base into a walkable, mixed-use campus that is now home to 27 technology firms within a half-mile radius.

“We are delighted to celebrate the decades of commitment to planning and placemaking that has contributed to the outstanding growth of the local tech ecosystem on the Fort Ben campus,” said Aletha Dunston, Executive Director of the Fort Harrison Reuse Authority (FHRA). “We could not be more honored about this opportunity to represent our partners on Indiana’s largest tech stage and to highlight the exciting things happening here at the Fort!”

Fort Ben and the City of Lawrence have focused on offering a natural, park-like setting with abundant free parking and historic charm. Easy connections to and from major employment hubs of the Indianapolis region, and ample amenities and housing in walking and biking distance have brought 27 tech companies to the area since 2000 for annualized growth of 150% per year.

Preservation and placemaking have been emphasized since the closure of the base with the original donation of 1,700-acres of land to form the Fort Harrison State Park and Golf Course and continues today with the recent announcement of a [Lilly Endowment grant of \\$5.85-million](#) to expand the historic military theater and establish a cultural campus at the heart of Fort Ben.

Development has been intentional to attract and retain tech talent with the creative reuse of existing structures like former Army barracks and mule barns into innovative living, dining and work spaces, creating sites for new construction, modern connectivity and infrastructure.

“The economic development impact realized from this tech ecosystem plays a vital role in the continued growth and investment for our local economy,” said Trace Yates, President and CEO of the Greater Lawrence Chamber of Commerce. “We are very pleased that this “best-kept-secret” is no longer, given the consideration for the Rising Tech City designation.”



The tech companies at Fort Ben continue to express their desire to collaborate, and the Greater Lawrence Chamber of Commerce and FHRA have worked to create and deepen relationships between companies at events like Fort Ben Tech Focus Groups and Tech Mixers, to make introductions and share information about what their firm can offer other tech partners and highlight what connections would be helpful to form with neighboring firms. These conversations and partnerships continue to develop, strengthening each company and the very fabric of the Fort.

This investment of time and energy have been strategic, as Indiana’s tech sector is on the rise. “There is little doubt that tech will continue to be an area of significant growth for Indiana, as we see local tech companies growing, out-of-state companies opening offices here, and large enterprises from other industries becoming increasingly tech enabled,” said Mike Langellier, CEO of TechPoint. “This is a special year, as we celebrate the 20th anniversary of the Mira Awards, and we look forward to recognizing the people, companies, and places that are Indiana’s current and future success stories.”

Nominees were selected by 48 independent subject matter experts who evaluated and ranked the applications. Later this month, nominees will present their cases to judging panels, after which the judges will select the winners following deliberations. Winners will be announced at a black-tie awards ceremony on Saturday, April 13, at the JW Marriott — Indianapolis.

A complete list of the nominees competing for the state’s top technology honors in the 2019 Mira Awards is available at [www.techpoint.org/mira](http://www.techpoint.org/mira).

#### **About the City of Lawrence**

The City of Lawrence is a vibrant, diverse city with small-town charm and big-city amenities. Growing at nearly twice the rate of the rest of Indiana, at 20.13 square miles it is the state’s 18th-largest city with a population of 46,001. Located northeast of downtown Indianapolis, Lawrence is in Marion County and part of the Indianapolis-Carmel SMSA. More information can be found at <http://www.cityoflawrence.org/>

#### **About Fort Ben/FHRA**

“Fort Ben” is the mixed-use campus at the center of Lawrence, redeveloped from former Fort Benjamin Harrison military base upon its closure in 1996. The Fort Harrison Reuse Authority (FHRA) is the organization tasked with the redevelopment of the area. More information can be found at <http://fhra.org/HTML/Fort-Ben-Tech-Campus/default.aspx>

#### **About Techpoint**

TechPoint is the nonprofit, industry-led growth initiative for Indiana’s technology companies and overall tech ecosystem. The team is focused on attracting talent, accelerating scale-up companies, activating the community, and amplifying stories of success. For more information, please visit <http://www.techpoint.org>

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