

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
**ChicoSTART + GrowTECH**  
**November 14, 2025**



**Celebrating + Elevating the Entrepreneurial Spirit in the North State**

## **GrowTECH FEST Makes Another Big Impact for the North State!**

**November 14, 2025 - Chico, CA:** ChicoSTART brought back GrowTECH FEST 2025, on November 6th and 7th. The event was expanded to a dynamic two-day format, making a distinct impact on Chico and the North State by utilizing two of the region's most iconic locations to accelerate the North State entrepreneurial ecosystem: Sierra Nevada Big Room and Downtown Chico.

The two-day conference was strategically split to maximize attendee experience, staying overnight in Chico and make a local impact. On Day 1 the main program was anchored at the **Big Room at Sierra Nevada Brewing Co.** kicked off with the Mayor of Chico, Kasey Reynolds, followed by industry talks, panels, and keynotes. While Day 2, was dedicated to intimate workshops, specialized in marketing, Ai, product market fit experimentation, and taking entrepreneurs through the experience of the "power of pause".

ChicoSTART's intent for GrowTECH FEST attendees was to not only walk away with tactical information, but also get the full Chico experience and support local businesses. GrowTECH FEST's After Party was held at the iconic La Salles, workshops were hosted at Stoble Workplace, The Westport Event Venue and Blue Agave Room at Tres Hombres. Attendees continued conversations and networking as they visited local craft breweries, including **The Allies Pub, Ramble West, Paradise Brew Werks, and All the Bitter** (craft non-alcoholic tasting room).

"GrowTECH FEST has always been about celebrating and elevating the entrepreneurial spirit of our region, and this year we brought that mission right into the heart of Chico," said **Eva Shepherd-Nicoll**, Executive Director of **ChicoSTART**. "With attendees representing nearly every county across our 20-plus-county region, it's clear that we're building the connected entrepreneurial ecosystem our North State needs. Over two full days of content and

experiences—from *Shark Tank* best-selling author and keynote **Michael Parrish DuDell**, to expert sessions on testing business ideas and scaling through systems, to startup challenges, prizes, workshops, and vibrant downtown networking—we gave founders, innovators, and students, the access, visibility, and inspiration to launch their next big idea right here in the North State.”

### **2025 GTF Startup Stories Challenge Winners**

**1st Place:** [Ponderosa.ai](#) (Butte County)

**2nd Place:** [LilyPay](#) (Placer County)

**3rd Place:** [Strived.io](#) (Yolo County)

### **2025 Student Lightning Round Winners**

**1st Place:** Challenge LLC (ChicoSTART Incubator, Cal Poly Humboldt students)

**2nd Place:** [Clean Nest](#) (ChicoSTART Incubator/CSU, Chico State students)

**3rd Place:** [Rescue Eats](#) (ChicoSTART Incubator/Chico State students)

**ChicoSTART looks forward to hosting GrowTECH FEST in October 2026!**

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**2025 GTF Supported By:** Mechanics Bank, Tri Counties Bank, Half a Bubble Out, Safepath Products, Transfer Flow, Inc. Carlsen Center of Innovation and Entrepreneurship, Sacramento State, Fresno State, Shutter Gold Photo Booth, Gelolanes, Eco-Clean Solutions, Sierra Nevada Brewing Co., Golden Valley Bank, Office of the Small Business Advocate (CalOSBA), Chico Chamber of Commerce, Paradise Ridge Chamber of Commerce, Orland Chamber of Commerce. Media Partners: Action News Now, Chico Enterprise Record, Outdoorz Media, KPAY, The Blaze, KZAP, Mix 95.1, KPAY Sports and KZFR

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About [ChicoSTART](#): ChicoSTART supports and enriches Northern California’s Entrepreneurial Ecosystem by providing small business, entrepreneurs and startups the resources they need to succeed. Our platform includes shared office amenities, mentoring, workshops, internships, tech talks, student to business projects, entrepreneurial events, satellite office programs, and anything else that helps our core mission of helping startups succeed. As a CA Accelerated iHub representing 20+ counties in the North State, the ChicoSTART ecosystem includes, but is not limited to, investors, technologists, entrepreneurs, students, educators, local businesses, agencies and mentors.

About [GrowTECH](#): GrowTECH is an industry lead partnership between tech and entrepreneur industry leaders and supporting community organizations modeled after the Next Gen Sector Partnerships. *Together we grow, support, and connect the thriving tech and entrepreneurial hub in Chico and Northern California. ###*