

Nvidia, San Jose mayor embrace startups at tech titan's AI gathering

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An Nvidia executive and San Jose's mayor touted Silicon Valley's artificial intelligence and innovation boom at a packed event for startups and entrepreneurs during the tech titan's [GTC 2024 gathering](#).

Tech innovators crammed into the grand ballroom of a downtown San Jose hotel Monday evening to network with each other during the Nvidia Inception Reception, hoping to pitch—and find—the next game-changer of an idea.

"The inception program is one of the most important initiatives at Nvidia," Greg Estes, vice president of developer programs at Nvidia, said during a speech to kick off the key meeting.

Nvidia executives and founders were present at the downtown San Jose inception event to provide ideas and insights for startup execs and entrepreneurs. The Nvidia leaders mingled with the heads of fledgling and infant companies who hoped to ensure their products and services would be on the tech titan's radar.

"I hope the next trillion-dollar company is in this room," Estes told the Inception Reception attendees. "It's very likely."

San Jose Mayor Matt Mahan made it clear during his speech that San Jose hopes to capitalize on the advantages and cutting-edge technologies being generated by artificial intelligence.

"As a former startup founder myself turned elected official I would be remiss if I didn't pitch you on my latest startup idea," Mayor Mahan told the assembled entrepreneurs.

Artificial intelligence can help the Bay Area's largest city solve everyday challenges and become more efficient in delivering services, the mayor declared during his presentation.

"You should partner with us to build the city of the future here in San

Jose," Mahan said. "We are working to produce incentives to create a stronger startup ecosystem downtown."

San Jose has already launched artificial intelligence to determine whether AI can help the city detect, prioritize and repair potholes. That's just scratching the surface, in the mayor's view.

"We are working to embrace and facilitate innovation," the mayor said. "We lead the country in patents per capita, including A.I. and machine learning patents. The San Jose metro last year had 10,000 AI patents, twice as many as our smaller neighbor to the north, San Francisco."

In 2023, the city of San Jose led the launch of the GovAI coalition to help shape the future of artificial intelligence in government agencies and services.

During an interview with this news organization following his speech, Mahan said multiple efforts were underway to find a home for a potential artificial intelligence incubator that would be located in downtown San Jose.

"We have to create the environment to support AI startups in San Jose," Mahan said. "The [private sector](#) has to be the primary sponsor of any AI incubators in San Jose."

One key strategy to create a vibrant artificial intelligence ecosystem in San Jose, the mayor suggested, is for the city to intensify its already strong ties and cooperative efforts with San Jose State University.

SJSU's Charles W. Davidson College of Engineering is one of the nation's top schools for computer, electronics, electrical and mechanical engineering, according to multiple closely followed surveys.

"We can go deeper with San Jose State University," Mahan said. "The talent pool at SJSU is unparalleled. We can do much more to upskill San Jose State students."

Dubbed an "AI Woodstock" by Bank of America analyst Vivek Arya, the Nvidia conference was expected to draw 300,000 participants this week.

An estimated 11,000 people packed into the SAP Center on Monday to hear the conference keynote address delivered by Jensen Huang, [chief executive officer](#) and co-founder of Santa Clara-based Nvidia.

Huang used his keynote to unveil powerful new AI chips, and during the address, he described the widening influence of [artificial intelligence](#).

"The computer is the single most important instrument in society today," Huang said. "Fundamental changes in computing affect every industry."

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