



For Immediate Release: February 10, 2016
Media Contact // Tia Capps, 423.618.5073

GIGTANK Relaunches as Year-Round Startup Accelerator, Adds 10 Gbps Internet Service

Program to focus on 3D printing, software defined networking and healthcare

CHATTANOOGA, Tenn. (February 10, 2016) – GIGTANK, a local startup accelerator and annual production of The Company Lab (CO.LAB), is launching as a year-round program May 16. The accelerator, which supports entrepreneurs developing applications and business models that leverage gigabit networks, will now go by [GIGTANK 365](#) and add focus areas in 3D printing, software defined networking (SDN) and healthcare.

In conjunction with this development, municipal power distributor EPB will provide 10 gigabit-per-second Internet service to The Company Lab (CO.LAB) at its new location in the Edney Innovation Center, where GIGTANK 365 will take place.

“Chattanooga’s advanced broadband infrastructure presents enormous opportunities for entrepreneurial innovation,” said Mike Bradshaw, executive director of CO.LAB and entrepreneur-in-residence for GIGTANK 365. “Right now, GIGTANK is one of the only accelerators in the U.S. where startups can realistically develop and test applications that leverage gigabit networks. We don’t want to confine those opportunities to just one season a year – they’re too important. GIGTANK 365 will position our startups and our city to make the most of our unique infrastructure while better preparing entrepreneurs for the new markets these networks enable.”

GIGTANK began in 2012 as part think tank, part startup accelerator. Launched in partnership with Lamp Post Group, the program challenged innovators in entrepreneurship and academia to answer the question, “If you had the world’s fastest Internet, what would you do with it?” Now a production of CO.LAB, GIGTANK regularly attracts entrepreneurs from across the world to Chattanooga to explore new ideas and business models that leverage ultra high speed, low latency networks. The program was previously held each summer from May through early August.

CO.LAB will prototype GIGTANK 365 in conjunction with its Spring Accelerator from Feb. 22 – May 31. Applications for the summer 2016 cycle of GIGTANK 365 are due March 31. Qualified candidates for GIGTANK 365 may include those utilizing tools such as big data analytics, streaming and 4K video, sensor networks, connected devices, artificial intelligence and machine-to-machine communication, as well as other advanced technologies. Preference will be given to seed-stage startups working in 3D printing, software defined networking (SDN) and healthcare. Key dates and application links are listed below.

Last September, Chattanooga was one of 15 cities selected to participate in a [\\$6 million National Science Foundation grant](#) led by US Ignite that uses the NSF-funded GENI network and Internet2 to enable city-to-city gigabit app development and sharing. Chattanooga’s inclusion in this nationwide network will allow local entrepreneurs and innovators to draw upon the best ideas from other communities in the network, such as Austin, Kansas City and Burlington, while also moving their own applications into a larger marketplace.

“Shifting GIGTANK into a year-round program is like creating a new engine for smart gigabit application development,” said Bill Wallace, executive director of US Ignite. “Chattanooga has an opportunity to become a catalyst for this whole network by continuing to develop new apps on a regular basis.”

“Over the next several years, the country is going to reach a tipping point as gigabit apps begin to flourish,” Wallace explained. “We’re seeing many companies investing in gigabit networks and next-generation applications, and the entrepreneurs who move on these changes first will have an opportunity to shape Internet use on the same scale as the early movers in the 90s.”

GIGTANK’s transition into a year-long program also creates room to build out a deeper experience for entrepreneurs working in the 3D printing, software defined networking (SDN) and healthcare arenas. These three industry verticals draw on Chattanooga’s strengths as a manufacturing hub, a nexus of several major healthcare networks and the home of one of the nation’s most advanced broadband networks. GIGTANK’s extensive network of partnerships and resources in these areas positions entrepreneurs working within them to excel. GIGTANK’s newest partner, [One to One | Personal Physician Network](#), will lead the healthcare track.

“Healthcare is constantly evolving to meet the changing needs of the consumer, who today values instant, convenient service,” said Dr. Keith Helton, CEO of One to One | Personal Physician Network. “Gigabit application development opens new doors for increasing patient access to quality care and providing a better overall experience. One to One is teaming up with GIGTANK to blend our network’s clinical and industry expertise with advanced broadband and entrepreneurial innovators. We believe this partnership positions us to better serve the needs of the patient population in the Chattanooga area and beyond.”

With the official launch of GIGTANK 365 in May, the program will run concurrently with the [CO.LAB Accelerator](#) in three cycles occurring in the spring, summer and fall of each year. Both accelerator programs will leverage the organization’s partner and mentor networks. This structure will also allow startups working in each program to collaborate with one another by sharing industry contacts and company-specific capabilities when appropriate.

“This is a major change in the structure of both GIGTANK and the CO.LAB Accelerator,” said Bradshaw. “We’re accepting applications for both programs now, including our GIGTANK 365 prototype this spring and the one that will begin in May. We’ve identified a number of homegrown startups that are working on gigabit-oriented business models already, which is why we’re making GIGTANK 365 resources available to them this spring.”

Housing for the summer cycle of GIGTANK 365 will be provided between May 25 – July 31, courtesy of the University of Tennessee at Chattanooga. See additional details below. To learn more about GIGTANK 365, visit www.thegigtank.com. Please direct all inquiries to Tia Capps at tia@colab.co or 423.618.5073.

Key Dates and Application Links

Feb. 22 – May 31 // GIGTANK 365 prototype will run concurrently with Spring 2016 CO.LAB Accelerator. Qualified candidates will be admitted on a rolling basis. Spots are available for approximately eight startups across both programs. [Click here](#) to apply for the CO.LAB Accelerator. [Click here](#) to apply for the GIGTANK 365 prototype.

March 31 // Applications for GIGTANK 365’s summer cycle are due.

May 16 – Aug. 15 // Summer cycle of GIGTANK 365 and CO.LAB Accelerator is held. Spots are available for

approximately 10 startups across both programs.

May 25 – July 31 // Free housing is available for GIGTANK 365 participants. The on-the-ground portion of GIGTANK 365 will take place while housing is available. Participants who are unable to remain in Chattanooga prior to housing availability and the dates that follow will complete the first and last portions of the program virtually.

July 27 // GIGTANK 365 Pitch Night (Stay tuned for more details.)

Oct. 4 // Chattanooga Demo Day (Stay tuned for more details.)

About GIGTANK 365

GIGTANK 365 is a boutique accelerator for startups developing ultra high-bandwidth business applications. Located Chattanooga, TN, the program invites innovators from across the globe to leverage the city's fiber optic network and robust entrepreneurial resources to launch next-generation businesses. GIGTANK 365 centers around three industry verticals – 3D printing, software defined networking (SDN) and healthcare – while keeping its doors open to inventive startups of all varieties. Held in three cycles occurring year-round, the program connects participants with on-the-ground guidance from industry experts and national thought leaders in broadband and entrepreneurship. The full experience culminates with Chattanooga Demo Day, where top startups pitch their business concepts to a large audience of investors, partners, media and supporters. GIGTANK 365 is an annual production of The Company Lab (CO.LAB). Visit thegigtank.com to learn more.

About The Company Lab (CO.LAB)

The Company Lab (CO.LAB) is a nonprofit organization that supports entrepreneurial growth in southeast Tennessee. Established as the region's front door for entrepreneurs, CO.LAB works to increase the viability of startups and strengthen the ecosystem of support behind them. In doing so, the organization helps entrepreneurs refine their business models, test their ideas with customers, pursue capital and partnerships, and connect with a community of mentors, peers, and business experts. To learn more, visit colab.co.

###