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**By David Wichner**  
ARIZONA DAILY STAR

Bob Hagen got in on the ground floor of

# Hi-tech advocate touts S. Arizona

Max Becherer / Staff

Bob Hagen keeps his laptop computer handy, even poolside at the Arizona Inn in Tucson.



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the personal-computer revolution that transformed the world, even rubbing elbows with a young Bill Gates.

Now, the semiretired Web developer is helping build Southern Arizona into a technology powerhouse.

As chairman of the nonprofit Southern Arizona Tech Council - an umbrella group for the area's six industry clusters - the 59-year-old Hagen is known as a tireless champion of high-tech economic development.

He sits on several statewide tech committees, including the Governor's Council on Innovation and Technology and the Flinn Foundation's Bioscience Roadmap Steering Committee.

Hagen has traveled the state - on his own time and his own dime - preaching the gospel of high-tech development. His efforts have not gone unnoticed.

In November, Hagen was honored with a chairman's award at the Governor's Celebration of Innovation Awards Gala in Phoenix for his "beyond the call of duty" dedication and commitment."

"I can't think of someone more deserving," said Todd Bankofier, executive director of the Tempe-based Arizona Technology Council, who called on Hagen shortly after took his post about a year ago. "He's a

**Profile**

*On The Job is a weekly feature about Tucson businesspeople - those in charge, starting out, keeping things running or hiring in today's work force.*

**Name:** Bob Hagen

**Age:** 59

**Title:** Chairman, Southern Arizona Tech Council; president, Hagen Computer Systems Inc.

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tenacious person when it comes to issues that are important to technology."

The honor was a surprise to Hagen, even though the Southern Arizona Tech Council was a co-sponsor of the event. References to the award were edited from Hagen's script for that night, Bankofier said.

Other colleagues say Hagen's mild demeanor only thinly masks his passion for high-tech advocacy.

"Bob is a tireless worker for Southern Arizona," said Richard Powell, UA vice president of research, graduate studies and economic development, who serves with Hagen on two statewide tech councils.

"He can work with people on a very controversial area and approach it in a very positive way," Powell said. "He can come across as very mild-mannered and laid-back, but he's very efficient."

Bob Breault, founder and chairman of the Tucson-based optics firm Breault Research Organization and an energetic tech advocate, noted that Hagen has toiled without compensation.

"He clearly puts in a tremendous amount of sweat equity at his own expense," Breault said. "He's always knocking on doors - that takes a lot of chutzpah and inner strength."

Hagen grew up in Tucson and got a bachelor's degree in economics from the University of Arizona in 1965, followed by a master's in business administration from the UA in 1967.

After graduating, he went to work as a computer manager for the Atomic Energy Commission for about a year, until he was drafted into the Army. He continued his computer work in the Army during the Vietnam War.

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including a year running a logistics center near Saigon.

After his discharge in 1970, he returned to work for the AEC in Albuquerque. As a deputy director of the agency's computer division, Hagen became convinced personal computing was the wave of the future.

"We had people all over the complex buying Radio Shack computers, so I knew something was going on," he recalled.

In 1983, Hagen returned to Tucson and founded an IBM dealership as a franchise of Entré Computing Centers.

During training meetings held by IBM, Hagen met Gates, who had moved Microsoft to Bellevue, Wash., from Albuquerque in 1979 but still had customers in the region. Hagen sold his profitable business in 1995 but continues to provide Web services as a consultant.

He was an active board member of the Center for Software Excellence, which in 1998 became the Information Technology Association of Southern Arizona, one the current cluster groups.

Among his greatest accomplishments with the 3-year-old Tech Council, Hagen counts the group's ability to win the first state funding for tech-cluster development in 2000, the formation of a groundbreaking supply-chain development program and support of work-force-development projects such as the Southern Arizona Institute of Advanced Technology and the Pima County One-Stop Career Center.

*\* Contact reporter David Wichner at 573-4181 or [wichner@azstarnet.com](mailto:wichner@azstarnet.com).*

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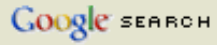


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