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## Tucson Citizen

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### High-tech delegation visits Israel

Teya Vitu

By Byline TEYA VITU

tvitu@tucsoncitizen.com

A Tucson university/ business **delegation** has let the Israeli **high-tech** world know that the Old Pueblo wants to team up with the cradle of Judaism, Christianity and the Muslim faith.

A group of seven led by Mayor Bob Walkup spent a week in Israel meeting with the who's who of technology experts there from Nov. 8 to 13.

It was the initial meeting in what Bruce Wright anticipates becoming a fruitful **high-tech** business, university and government collaboration similar to the efforts he has led in linking Tucson with Ottawa, Canada, and Manchester, England.

"The objective is to build **high-tech** partnerships with Israel," said Wright, chief operating officer at the University of Arizona Science and Technology Park. "Israel is one of the most successful nations in the world with **high-tech** start-up companies."

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And many of those companies are looking for entry markets to the United States. Wright would like to guide them away from Boston and Silicon Valley and to Tucson.

"What we found is there is an opportunity for us to link with start-up enterprises in Israel and eventually attract them to Tucson as a point of entry to the U.S. market," Wright said.

The Tucson contingent met with the biotech and optics faculties at Weizmann Institute of Science in Rehovot, Israel, the Technion Israel Institute of Technology and technology commercialization officials at Tel Aviv University, Hebrew University and Hadasah Hospital. They also met with venture capitalists, technology incubator officials and government representatives from the Israeli Ministry of Industry, Commerce and Trade.

Along with Walkup and Wright, the Tucson group included John Grabo, the **tech** park's vice president of marketing and international relations; Jim Fountain, director of the Arizona Center for Innovation; Raphael Gruener, scientist in residence at the **tech** park; Bob Breault, chairman of Breault Research Organization; Avi Maidenberg, regional director of the America-Israel Friendship League; and Larry Aleamoni, the league's incoming president and head of UA's department of special education, rehabilitation and school psychology.

"We were so busy we had no time to shop for gifts and trinkets," Wright said.

Wright said an Israeli **high-tech delegation** may visit Tucson in spring.

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Arab-Israeli tension not felt

The Tucson contingent was touring Israel's **high-tech** sectors the same week that Yasser Arafat died in Paris, but sensed none of the tensions with Palestinians, let alone any impact of its leaders' death.

"For most of Israel, you don't feel the conflict with Palestinians," said Bruce Wright, chief operating officer at the University of Arizona Science and Technology Park. "I was stunned with the unanimity with business people (for Israel) withdrawing from Gaza."

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