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## **Velocity Returns in 2025 at The Wedge in Alton**

*The partnership among TechSTL, Stakehouse and The Wedge creates an unparalleled opportunity for emerging entrepreneurs in our region.*

**ALTON, IL, Tuesday, February 25, 2025** — In a move to invigorate the bi-state region's entrepreneurial ecosystem, the popular startup workshop series, Velocity, makes its return in a reimagined format and at a new location on March 10th.

The TechSTL application-only program will now be led by Vikram Lakhwara and Danielle Deavens of Stakehouse Fund and be housed at the Wedge - a 55,000 square-foot social impact, research lab, think tank, and workspace in downtown Alton, Illinois set for its own grand opening in April.

The six-week Velocity series, sponsored by Fidelity Private Shares, will provide a comprehensive startup education at no cost to participants. The curriculum covers essential entrepreneurial fundamentals, including customer discovery, value proposition development, market sizing and competitive analysis, and fundraising strategies. As a special incentive, participating startups will receive exhibition space at STL TechWeek 2025's startup alley.

"Access to workshops like these - where founders can learn collaboratively with their peers - is key to building a healthier startup ecosystem and will ultimately lead to better outcomes for startups and, selfishly, more startups being capital ready," said Lakhwara. He further explains that this program is designed to get founders really strong at the fundamentals. Whether they're bootstrapping their business, have their sights set on an Arch Grant, preparing for the Startup World Cup, or positioning their startup to raise institutional capital, founders will look back at this as a transformative time for their startup.

"The partnership programming among Stakehouse, TechSTL and The Wedge represents a perfect alignment of vision and resources," said Chad Brigham, COO, AltonWorks. "The Wedge's state-of-the-art facility, combined with Stakehouse's fresh, new investor-drive take on the curriculum, creates a unique opportunity for emerging entrepreneurs in our region."

Developed initially in 2022 by a partnership between ITEN, T-REX, and SLDC, Velocity is a training program that was funded by the same U.S. EDA Grant that launched TechSTL. Now with a modified approach, the workshop series is taking on a new life to address current ecosystem needs. "The startup capital landscape and go-to-market timeline has changed a lot over the past few years thanks to AI, so it's necessary to also rethink our entrepreneurial training models. I'm excited to test this next iteration of Velocity to bring some fresh energy and growth opportunities to our rising ventures," Emily Hemingway shared.

The Wedge, born from AltonWorks' community revitalization efforts and powered by a \$20 million 10G fiber network, serves as the ideal backdrop for this initiative. The facility represents a convergence of technology and opportunity, housing industry leaders such as the Midwest AI Network (MAIN), SIUE's research centers, and Gateway Innovate CDFI.

Velocity will meet every Monday for six weeks (March 10, 17, 24, April 7, 14, and 28 with a break on March 31 for TechWeek and April 21 for TechWeek and Easter respectively.) The program is open to technology startup founders from ideation to MVP stages in the bi-state region. Participants will receive one-on-one mentoring sessions from training partners.

To apply: <https://techstl.com/velocity/> The deadline for applications is March 3, 2025 and space in Velocity is limited.

**About Stakehouse Fund** - *Stakehouse Fund is a Midwest-based pre-seed venture capital firm that invests in startups with at least one founder tied to one of the hundreds of universities across Missouri and its neighboring states whether they're alumni, educators, dropouts, postdocs, PhDs, or current students.*

<https://www.stakehouse.fund>

**About The Wedge** - *The Wedge is a 55,000 sq ft social impact, research lab, think tank, and workspace serving as a hub for the digital economy in the Alton Metro Region. Born out of the community revitalization efforts of AltonWorks and leveraging the assets of SIUE, The Wedge is scheduled to open in April. To learn more about The Wedge Innovation Center and its amenities, including shared workspaces, conference facilities, and a rooftop terrace.*

**About TechSTL** - *TechSTL is a membership-based nonprofit tech council serving the 15-county St. Louis bistate. Launched in 2022 by a U.S. Economic Development Administration grant awarded to the St. Louis Development Corporation, TechSTL operated under the leadership of SLDC until it exited at the end of 2023. Now with over 600 organizational members and 30,000 individuals, TechSTL is committed to catalyzing tech jobs, tech startups, and tech research across the St. Louis Metro.*

<https://techstl.com/>

**About AltonWorks** - *AltonWorks is a social impact redevelopment company focused on the revitalization of Historic Downtown Alton as a healthy, thriving, walkable city. As an intermediary organization, AltonWorks offers thought leadership, planning, convening, and connecting, adding capacity to the Region's ability to attract funding, expand social impact, catalyze economic growth, and anchor downstate recovery.*

[www.altonworks.us](http://www.altonworks.us)

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