

# In 40 years, Austin has become a major player for Big Blue

## IBM invites community, academic leaders to celebration of the diversity of its technology development in city.

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In the mid-1960s, IBM Corp. decided Austin would be a good place to build a typewriter assembly plant.

Four decades later, IBM Austin has grown into one of the most vital engineering and software development powerhouses for one of the world's foremost technology companies.

IBM built a manufacturing complex in Austin during its first 15 years here, but those plants are closed now. In their place is a work force of 6,200 people who make up what IBM describes as the largest private technology research and development operation in Texas.

Big Blue will host a reception and a series of technical demonstrations today at its office complex on Burnet Road to celebrate the diversity of its technology development here. Dozens of community and academic leaders have been invited.

The site boasts an abundance of research and development talent.

Five of IBM's top 10 patent-winning inventors are based in Austin, which led all IBM sites last year in patents issued with 640, about 18 percent of the company's total.

Austin is the main base of operations for IBM's industry leading Unix hardware and software business, and for its Power microprocessor design operation that is the brain of its Unix computers, all three of the industry's leading video game consoles and an increasing number of ultra-powerful supercomputers.

Anthony Befi, the lead executive in Austin, said the variety of top-flight hardware and software development experts here makes Austin different from many IBM sites.

"We don't do any manufacturing now," Befi said. "We focus on R&D, and we go across every discipline at IBM.

The company was able to attract and retain good people here because Austin is a great place to live and work, Befi said.

"When we want to solve some problems or expand some marketing opportunities, we can put a group of people together here that have such a diverse amount of talent that amazing things can happen."

Part of IBM's success is its relationship with the University of Texas, Befi said. Ben Streetman, dean of UT's College of Engineering, will be a special guest at today's celebration.

Befi said Austin's important role within the company will continue well into the future.

"IBM is going to continue to count on us," he said. "I want the community and our employees to know that. I want to make sure that is loud and clear."

**Courtesy of JB Goodwin**