

# Viewpoints

## An autumn marathon for entrepreneurs

**D**uring the first weekend in November, Ogden residents will rake the leaves that have accumulated in their yards. Families will snack on left-over Halloween candy. People will double check the date for setting the clocks back.

Yet, a group of entrepreneurs gathered in Ogden will have their eyes focused on a clock that doesn't measure time in either standard time or daylight savings time.

At 7:30p.m. on Thursday, Nov. 1, a 54-hour clock will start counting down the minutes. When the time on the clock expires, several new businesses will have been created during an event known as "Startup Weekend."

Startup Weekend is a national entrepreneurship event that consists of a three-day marathon where software programmers, product designers, marketers, and finance experts gather to conceptualize and actually launch businesses.

On Thursday evening, the most aggressive of the participants will rush to pick up a microphone and describe their business concept to a group of strangers. The goal is to inspire the people in the room to join their team. Teams will be formed, and over Friday and Saturday, the teams will hone their business concepts and develop businesses.

Indeed, Startup Weekends held in other cities have spawned actual businesses. As one example, the online marketing platform Zaarley was formed during a Startup Weekend in 2011, and the company has already attracted more than \$14 million in investor capital.

On Saturday afternoon the event will conclude when the teams of entrepreneurs unveil their new businesses and receive feedback, criticism, and support from a panel of accomplished entrepreneurs and successful business people.

Representatives from Google, Microsoft and other global companies will be flying to Ogden to take part in the event.

According to Alex Lawrence, Weber State University's Vice Provost for Innovation and Economic Development: "Startup Weekend is the best tech event I've been to anywhere in the world. It's amazing how the

community comes together to go from idea to functioning business in only 54 hours."

If the event was a singular event for Ogden, it would only be worthy of temporary attention. In reality, the competition is illustrative of ongoing cooperative efforts between WSU and city leaders to promote entrepreneurship in Northern Utah. Ogden Mayor Mike Caldwell says: "Ogden City is thrilled to be partnering with Weber State for this exciting event. Startup Weekend showcases our commitment to technology and our business community and we expect amazing things to come from this unique

collaboration." Lawrence adds, "Ogden is a growing, new hub for startups and technology."

Have you ever wondered what it takes to be an entrepreneur? Lawrence says, "If you are interested in entrepreneurship, startups and software, Startup Weekend is a really fun and intriguing event. The talent that will assemble in Ogden is quite diverse and the results are amazing."

For more information about the event, go to: <http://ogden.startupweekend.org/>

### Top of Utah Voices



**Michael Vaughan**

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**Commentary**

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