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## **Nationally known ‘trep Aaron Kennedy to speak Nov. 8 at Early Stage Symposium**

MADISON, Wis. – Aaron Kennedy, who founded Noodles & Co., helped to build Colorado’s high-growth image and won an Ernst & Young “Entrepreneur of the Year” award, will speak Nov. 8 at the **Wisconsin Early Stage Symposium** in Madison.

Kennedy, who earned a graduate degree from the UW-Madison, is among the advisors to the Blackstone Entrepreneurial Network, based in Denver, Colo. He served two years as the chief marketing officer for the state of Colorado, leading its branding efforts at a time when the state was poised for growth.

Early bird registration for the conference, which begins with a Nov. 6 reception highlighting women entrepreneurs and continues Nov. 7 and 8 at the Monona Terrace Community and Convention Center, is available at [wiseearlystage.com](http://wiseearlystage.com).

The Early Stage Symposium is one of the Midwest’s oldest and largest events for young companies seeking angel and venture capital investments. Applications are being accepted now from young companies that want to tell their stories to investors.

The 2018 format includes two pitch opportunities – the **Tech Council Investor Networks** track and the popular **Elevator Pitch Olympics** – as well as a repeat segment that debuted in 2016, “**Investor Intros**,” which will allow pre-selected companies brief, one-on-one meetings with targeted angel and venture investors.

Instructions for how to apply for all or a mix of the investor presentation opportunities can be found at [wiseearlystage.com](http://wiseearlystage.com) on the Presenting Companies tab. The deadline to apply is **5 p.m. Friday, Sept. 28**.

All applicants must register in advance for the conference at a discounted rate of \$169. Companies selected for the Tech Council Investor Networks track presentations will also receive a complimentary individual membership to the Tech Council’s Innovation Network for one year (a \$120 value). Team members of these companies will be eligible to attend the conference at a special team rate.

Here are the three company forums; companies may apply online for one, two or all three!

### **Tech Council Investor Networks Track – Wednesday, Nov. 7:**

These tracks will feature more than 20 companies from the Midwest representing an array of industries, such as advanced manufacturing, biotechnology, health care, information technology, medical device and mobile application sectors.

Companies selected will have many opportunities to interest investors: a five-minute presentation, networking receptions, an executive summary published in the investor-only program and an opportunity to exhibit where investors may speak directly to presenting companies. Selected companies will also be invited to participate in a pre-conference practice session with a group of mentors.

### **Investor Intros – Thursday, Nov. 8:**

Returning this year are the Investor Intros. Companies selected for the Investor Intros will have the opportunity to meet one-on-one with investors from Wisconsin and beyond. To foster this type of communication, the Investor Intros will feature pre-scheduled, 7-minute strategic meetings between investors and emerging companies. This format will resemble a “speed dating” exercise, allowing both parties to learn more about each other and explore potential relationships.

### **Elevator Pitch Olympics – Thursday, Nov. 8:**

Companies or entrepreneurs selected for the Elevator Pitch Olympics will give a 90-second pitch in front of conference attendees and a panel of six to eight investors. The investors will score the presenter on a scale of 1 to 5, focusing on whether the pitch was compelling enough to arrange a follow-up meeting, and will offer immediate feedback.

The conference will also feature:

- Panel discussions and workshops featuring leading entrepreneurs, investors and others.
- “Office Hours,” offering the opportunity to meet with subject experts on a variety of topics in small discussion groups or one-on-one.
- The 5<sup>th</sup> annual “Excellence in Entrepreneurial Education” award presentation and luncheon.
- Exhibit hall showcasing more than 40 Wisconsin companies.
- A Nov. 6 Wisconsin WOMEN reception (Women, Opportunities, Mentors, Networking, Entrepreneurs). This event is open to both men and women.
- A Nov. 7 conference reception, two luncheons, two breakfasts and other networking opportunities, including an investors-only dinner.

The Tech Council produces the conference. Sponsors so far include: [100state](#), [Aberdean Consulting](#), [Accuray](#), [ACS](#), [American Transmission Co.](#), [AT&T](#), [Aurora Health Care](#), [Baird Capital](#), [Baker Tilly](#), [Barb Luhning Graphic Recording](#), [BDO](#), [BloodCenter of Wisconsin](#), [BMO Harris](#), [Capital Newspapers](#), [Carroll University](#), [CGI](#), [City of Fitchburg](#), [Concordia University](#), [Cresa Madison](#), [Dane County Regional Airport](#), [Dedicated Computing](#), [DXC Technology](#), [Enbridge](#), [Eppstein Uhen Architects](#), [Exact Sciences](#), [Findorff](#), [First Business Bank](#), [Fluno Center](#), [Foley & Lardner](#), [Functional Biosciences](#), [Godfrey & Kahn](#), [HealthX Ventures](#), [Husch Blackwell](#), [JP Cullen](#), [M3 Insurance](#), [Madison College](#), [Madison Gas & Electric](#), [Marshfield Clinic Health System](#), [Makin' HEY! Communications](#), [Merchant & Gould](#), [Michael Best](#), [Midwest Prototyping](#), [Morgridge Institute](#), [N29 Capital Partners](#), [Neider & Boucher](#), [Northwestern Mutual](#), [Red Arrow Production](#), [Reinhart Boerner Van Deuren](#), [River Valley Bank](#), [Square 1 Bank](#), [Sun Mountain Kegonsa](#), [Tech Council board member Susan Healy](#), [State of Wisconsin Investment Board](#), [TASC](#), [Technology Innovation Center – MKE](#), [University Research Park](#), [UW-Green Bay](#), [UWM Research Foundation](#), [Venture Investors](#), [Wisconsin Alumni Research Foundation](#), [Wisconsin Economic Development Corp.](#), [Wisconsin Health & Educational Facility Authority](#), [Whitewater University Technology Park](#), [WIPFLi](#), [Yahara Software](#) and [Ziegler](#).

Learn more and register at [wisearlystage.com](http://wisearlystage.com).

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