

# Wisconsin no longer fly-over country, panel says

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A slow-but-sure growth in Wisconsin's investment climate means the state is no longer fly-over country.

This was one perspective from a panel of Wisconsin investors who spoke yesterday at the Wisconsin Entrepreneurs' Conference, a special two-day event put on by the Wisconsin Technology Council highlighting the state's entrepreneurial strengths. The conference continues today at Union South in Madison.

"Culture has changed," said George Arida, managing director of Madison-based 30Ventures. "I think that 17 years ago when I came here it was starting to change, but I think it was still a little bit of academia versus industry."

Now, he said, that sense of competition has transitioned to one of collaboration, as various programs exist to bridge the gap between these two worlds. One such program, WARF's Discovery to Product, helps turn academic research and inventions into marketable businesses.

"There are real regional strengths in Wisconsin," Arida said. "We've seen a lot of success in biotech here in the state; it's really grown," pointing to Madison-based radiation therapy company Tomotherapy as just one example.

"It's exciting to see that and be a part of it, and it's just grown from there," he said.

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