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Thesis Proposal

Question: What are the effects of the rise in tech startup companies in Portland on the creation of jobs?

Background: Based off the observation that Portland has seen an increase in startup companies within the past few years, I looked at the paper “Tech Starts: ... Job Creation in the United States” where business and job creation dynamics were contrasted between the high-tech sectors and the average private sectors. The author found that high-tech companies played a huge role in job creation and greatly offset the initial job losses from failed startups-- for the private sector, the opposite was true as net job losses were substantial. Overall, he found that tech companies (ie. companies where a large amount of employees are in STEM fields) were enormous contributors to job creation. Portland was listed as one of these areas with a high density of tech startups.

Methodology: I will collect new information from tech companies in the form of interviews with representatives of those companies. This information will be used to inform my analysis on the history and current state of tech startups in Portland. Building off the “Tech Starts” paper I mentioned earlier, I intend to narrow down the analysis of business and job creation dynamics to just Portland. The database they used was NETS and it spans the years 1992 to 2013. For gathering my sources, I was considering the NEBR, Portland Business Journal, and possibly even the Accelerator at PSU (they help startups find their footing and could be a great source of data). I want to know how many employees have been hired over time, what fields they come from (ex. STEM), how long the company has existed, or if they originated/moved from another city to Portland. Knowing the density of tech jobs in different areas of Portland would be fantastic as well.

Sources:

Hathaway, Ian. Tech Starts: High-Technology Business Formation and Job Creation in the United States. (August 2013). Ewing Marion Kauffman Foundation Research Paper. 2013. Online: <http://ssrn.com/abstract=2310617>