

# Florida Deep Tech Venture Summit Showcases State's Rise in Space, Defense, and Deep Tech Innovation

*A sold-out summit unites founders, investors, and industry to highlight Florida's rise in space, defense, and deep tech innovation.*

ORLANDO, FL, UNITED STATES, December 29, 2025 /EINPresswire.com/ -- The [Florida Deep Tech](#)

[Venture Summit](#), co-hosted by Dennis R. Pape of [Phase Shift Ventures](#) and Kyle Asman of Backswing Ventures, convened 175 Florida founders, venture and angel investors, federal innovation leaders, aerospace and defense executives, and university commercialization leaders for a sold-out, one-day gathering focused on Florida's rapidly expanding deep tech, space, and defense innovation ecosystem.

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Florida has all the ingredients to be a leader in deep tech. What's been missing is a recognition of these assets and a forum gathering Florida innovation leaders to discuss how we leverage them.”

*Dennis R. Pape, Summit  
Cohost and Managing  
Partner, Phase Shift Ventures*

Held in Lake Nona, the Summit marked the first statewide convening of its kind dedicated exclusively to deep tech and national-security-relevant innovation in Florida. Attendees traveled from across the state's major innovation corridors—including Orlando and the Space

Coast, Tampa Bay, Gainesville, and South Florida—as well as from Atlanta, New York, and Chicago. Approximately half of attendees were founders and startup teams; roughly one-quarter represented venture and federal innovation capital; and the remainder included aerospace and defense executives, university technology commercialization leaders, service providers, and media.

“Florida has all the raw ingredients to be a national leader in deep tech—world-class aerospace and defense assets, a growing venture base, and strong research universities,” said Dennis R. Pape, Managing Partner of Phase Shift Ventures and Summit co-host. “What's been missing is broad recognition of these assets, a forum for founders building investable companies around them, and an open discussion among Florida-based venture and federal innovation capital providers about how to create more of these opportunities. This Summit was about creating that platform.”

Throughout the day, speakers and panelists examined how Florida's unique combination of aerospace and defense heritage, spaceport infrastructure, federal presence, research universities, and emerging venture ecosystem is converging to support a new generation of venture-backed space and defense technology companies.

Key themes included the evolving role of capital markets in supporting national security and industrial resilience; Florida's expanding position in space, defense, and dual-use technology development; the importance of federal, university, and non-dilutive capital in scaling deep tech startups; and what it takes to build and finance engineering-driven companies in Florida's venture environment.

The Summit featured keynote remarks from Greg Autry, Associate Provost of Space Commercialization and Strategy at UCF and nominee for NASA Chief Financial Officer, who emphasized Florida's competitive advantage in the global space economy.

"Florida's competitive advantage is space," said Autry. "As launch costs fall and the low-Earth-orbit economy accelerates, Florida is uniquely positioned to lead the next phase of the innovation economy—not as a tourism state, but as a center of aerospace, defense, and frontier technology development."

Industry and capital perspectives were reinforced by leaders from Space Florida, who discussed the role of infrastructure investment, financing tools, and investor readiness in supporting both established aerospace companies and early-stage startups.

"Our role is to ensure companies at every stage—from early startups to global aerospace firms—have the infrastructure, capital tools, and pathways they need to grow in Florida," said Rob Long, President and CEO of Space Florida. "That includes not only launch facilities and infrastructure, but also helping companies become investor-ready and capital-efficient."

The Summit also featured a fireside discussion with JPMorganChase focused on the role of capital markets in national security and industrial resilience.



Florida Deep Tech Venture Summit

“Florida is at a pivotal moment,” said Rhett Jeppson, Executive Director at JPMorganChase. “The state has the talent, infrastructure, and heritage in aerospace and defense. The opportunity now is to lean into those strengths, tell the story nationally, and make Florida the natural home for the next generation of national security and dual-use technology companies.”

Panel discussions throughout the day addressed venture scalability, federal innovation pathways, university commercialization, collaboration with aerospace and defense primes, and what Florida must do to become a national hub for space, defense, and dual-use innovation.

Organizers announced plans to build on the momentum from this inaugural Summit and reconvene the community in 2026.

Dennis R Pape

Phase Shift Ventures

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