



Equity Endeavor's Eric Sonnier, left, and Broderick McClinton

COMMUNAL GIVING

Harvard students' new startup put a local twist on crowdfunding

Websites like Kickstarter and Indiegogo are great resources for musicians and artists looking to raise money for their creative projects. But for a local shop owner hoping to grow his or her business, crowdfunding isn't usually an option. Now there's **Equity Endeavor**, a new startup that uses a platform similar to other crowdfunding sites, only the emphasis is on community-based financial support for mom-and-pop shops. "We're a replacement for a small business loan," says Broderick McClinton, 27, who co-founded the site with his Harvard Business School

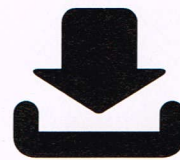
classmate Eric Sonnier, 29. The Tulane and UT grads, respectively, picked New Orleans and Austin as pilot cities for the site's September launch. Of the four capital city companies that participated, Redbird Pilates and Fitness and Freestyle Language Center reached their funding goals, both receiving more than \$10,000 in donations and proving crowdfunding can be a viable alternative to a bank loan. "People care about their local businesses, and they care enough to say it with their dollars," Sonnier says. As for its goals, Equity Endeavor hopes to eventually launch its platform in other cities, including Houston and San Antonio. —SARAH THURMOND



HEAVY DUTY

Whether you drop it or spill water on it, you'll have a hard time breaking the RangerX

What's sleek, lightweight and claims to be tough enough to survive the shock from a shrapnel explosion? The RangerX, a new tablet from Austin-based Xplore Technologies. While most commercial tablets are not equipped to withstand conditions such as sandstorms or below-zero temps, the 2.2-pound device is geared toward both military-battlefield conditions as well as any wear and tear that your typical outdoorsman may face. The RangerX also boasts a capacity of up to 192 GB in storage—the highest in its class—Verizon 4G LTE service and a brilliant multi-touch display that doesn't get unwanted glare when used outside. Intrigued? It's available on amazon.com for about \$1,300. —XANDER PETERS



DOWNLOAD THIS
The latest news on the technology front

HIGH-SPEED INTERNET turf wars heat up. Beating rival Google Fiber to the punch, **AT&T** plans to bring its fiber-optic broadband service to Austin neighborhoods this month. The Internet connection will be faster than any other broadband service in the city, allowing customers a quicker Wi-Fi connection and more space on their DVRs, among other benefits. Google Fiber will roll out its pilot program for high-speed service in 2014.

WHAT DO YOU GET WHEN you put Pinterest and women entrepreneurs together? **EMPOWER LOUNGE**, a website for women who dream of starting their own business. Founded by Austinite Misty Gibbs in 2012, the site has a format similar to the popular Internet "pin it" service, where users can click on different articles that feature tips from women in the know. Recently, the digital company launched a series of e-books on how to start a business. For more, go to empowerlounge.com.

COMING IN 2014: Bitcoin ATMs. A Las Vegas company called **ROBOCOIN** (robocoinkiosk.com) is installing ATMs across North America that will give people the ability to trade and purchase the digital currency. Vancouver was the first city to receive an ATM in October. Rollout to other major cities, including Austin, will begin next year. —BROOKE LEWIS