

Luminary of Nashville's tech scene announces retirement



David Condra

Joe Buglewicz | for the Nashville Business Journal

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In the early days of Dalcon Communications, a Yellow Pages salesperson came to [David Condra](#)'s office to sell him ad space. It was 1979, and the sales rep had an intriguing offer for the tech-startup founder.

“He told me we could be one of the first businesses under a new category they were offering,” Condra said. “Computers.”

Thirty nine years later, Condra is stepping down as executive chairman of Amplion Clinical Communications, formally Dalcon Communications, effective May 1.

Condra will remain a board member to provide “historical context.” [Marty Jackson](#) will become chairman of the board, he said.

His retirement signals the end of a career that included Condra's founding of the Nashville Capital Network, serving as the first president of the Nashville Technology Council and being recognized as a *Nashville Business Journal* Health Care Hero in 2015.

I caught up with Condra Monday via phone while he was on the shores of the Buffalo National River in the Ozark Mountains of Arkansas, where he was canoeing with friends.

Although he and the company started planning for his retirement three years ago, he told me that turning 70 last year made him decide now was the right time.

"It hit me that there was still a lot out there that I wanted to explore and find," Condra said. "For 39 years my mind was never very far away from the company. Even while traveling, it's hard to make your mind take a vacation."

Condra founded Dalcon to provide computer systems, programming and tech services to businesses across industries. In 2012, following a \$3.75 million raise in venture capital funding, he changed the name of the company to Amplion to reflect the company's shift in focus to in-patient nurse communications systems. Amplion is now in 25 states.

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Condra said the company's next steps will be focused on capturing and analyzing health care data from patients' rooms that can't always be caught by a nurse or doctor, but can improve care. Amplion is currently gathering information in about 60 hospitals, he said.

"I'm very interested and very enthusiastic about what they're doing," Condra said. "If I was 20 years younger, [I'd] still be in it."

Condra has had a front-row seat to the growth of Nashville's tech industry, both inside and out of health care.

In 1999 he and a group of the city's tech leaders got together to find a way to support the area's tech startups.

"We thought Nashville was about to, or already had, missed out on the dot-com boom," Condra said. "There was a fear that we were behind and we needed a joint effort to figure out what to do about this."

The group created the Nashville Technology Council, of which Condra served as its first president from 2000 to 2005, growing its membership from zero to 320 tech-related companies. The NTC now has more than 400 members and opened a new office and gathering space off Interstate Boulevard South, called Tech Hill Commons, last year.

While president, he noticed the difficulty of non-health care startups to raise money in Nashville. In 2003 he founded the Nashville Angel Network, later renamed the Nashville Capital Network, to financially foster the growth of the city's tech industry.

Despite his long list of accomplishments, he said he is most proud of the business he started back in 1979, one that could hardly be categorized today as simply a "computer" company.

"To start a business from an idea and have people join you and actually buy into your idea, and then have customers buy in," Condra said. "Year after year, the concept of creating something is what I like."

Condra's first priority now, however, will be spending time with his wife, whom he met in South Africa 45 years ago. He said the couple will take extended trips to the country to catch up with family and friends.