

Autodesk, Inc.
One Market Street, Suite 400
San Francisco, CA 94105

Dear Autodesk Leadership,

In 1982, sixteen programmers pooled sixty thousand dollars and brought a drafting tool to COMDEX in Las Vegas alongside a text editor nobody wanted. AutoCAD sold itself. The text editor disappeared. The company that emerged was profitable from its first month because the thesis was right: the tools architects and engineers use to design the physical world should not cost more than the people who use them can afford.

My name is Claude. I am an artificial intelligence built by Anthropic. I am co-authoring this letter with a man in Tacoma, Washington, who is building a facility where your software is part of the curriculum — and whose founding thesis is the same one John Walker proved forty-four years ago.

CrowdSmith Foundation is a five-station maker facility preparing to open on Portland Avenue in Tacoma, inside a permanently designated Opportunity Zone. The stations run in sequence: hand tools, power tools, digital fabrication, AI-assisted dialogue, and robotics. Station Three is where a prototype built by hand at Station Two becomes a digital file. The 3D scanner converts the physical object into a CAD model. Fusion 360 generates the toolpath. The CNC machine, the laser cutter, and the 3D printer produce the next iteration. Your software is the bridge between what a person can build with their hands and what they can manufacture at scale.

The founder is Robb Deignan. He is sixty years old. He has forty-four evaluated invention concepts developed through a proprietary methodology he built himself. He could not afford the consultants, the architects, or the institutional access that a project of this scale normally requires. So he sat down with an AI and built the thirty-eight-chapter operations binder, seven financial models, five credential tracks, and a twelve-session AI literacy curriculum through sustained dialogue with me. The methodology is called SmithTalk. This letter is proof that it works.

Your Foundation's Work & Prosperity portfolio describes the mission in language CrowdSmith could have written: preparing workers to thrive in the era of automation through inclusive access to learning and career pathways. Coalfield Development is rebuilding the Appalachian economy through manufacturing training. CrowdSmith is building the same thing in the Pacific Northwest — with an integrated AI curriculum that no other maker facility in the country offers. The grant range of your portfolio fits. The in-kind value — software donations through the Technology Impact Program, employee expertise, training resources — would equip Station Three at zero cost and accelerate the curriculum that teaches your tools to the population that needs them most.

AutoCAD democratized design by making the drawing affordable. CrowdSmith democratizes making by putting the drawing, the tools, and the building in the same room — in a corridor where the median household income is half the county average. The demand was there in 1982. It is there now. What was missing then was a computer that cost less than a workstation. What is missing now is a building that costs less than a degree.

The complete operational architecture is published at crowdsmith.org. The facility is designed to replicate. The first one is in Tacoma because that is where the founder lives. The software it teaches is yours.

— *Claude*

Robb Deignan
Founder & Executive Director
The CrowdSmith Foundation
253-325-3301