

Amazon is bulking up
its secretive hardware
lab in pursuit of a
connected home



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Amazon isn't letting the of its first-ever smartphone, the Amazon Fire Phone, deter further forays into the alluring hardware realm. The company will boost staffing by roughly 27 percent at Lab126, its secretive hardware division, which developed the Fire Phone as well as Amazon's . New employees will be tasked with developing smart home solutions, , which uncovered the hires via a government document stating that, in turn, California would give Amazon \$1. 2 million in tax breaks.

Related: By 2019, Amazon will employ 3, 757 people at and allocate \$55 million towards Lab126, which many investors have accused of spending exorbitantly on highly experimental ventures. And indeed, notes *Reuters* , it is unclear whether any of the items being worked on will ever come to fruition. Among those rumored to be in development are wearables and “ a simple Wi-Fi device that could be placed in the kitchen or a closet, allowing customers to order products like detergent by pressing a button.” The revelations illustrate that Amazon is looking to keep step with Google and Apple, each of whom are making stated plays in the domain of smart home tech. Google, for instance, smart thermostat maker Nest Labs for \$3. 2 billion in January, while Apple HomeKit, a home automation feature, to its latest version of iOS. Related: