



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: Wednesday, January 11, 2017**

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**Entrepreneurs, investors, world-class thought leaders heading to New Orleans in March**

*Lineup for 9th annual New Orleans Entrepreneur Week unveiled by The Idea Village; weeklong convening to include more than 100 events, culminating with The Big Idea pitch extravaganza.*

*Registration for NOEW 2017 and applications for The Big Idea are now open.*

**NEW ORLEANS** – Today, The Idea Village unveiled its plans for the 9th annual New Orleans Entrepreneur Week (NOEW), presented by IBERIABANK. A weeklong celebration of entrepreneurship, innovation, and collaboration, NOEW engages a dynamic network of business professionals, community organizations, entrepreneurs, investors, and students to support growing companies, spark conversation, and promote new thinking and new business in Louisiana. This year’s event will take place at a new campus anchored by the Contemporary Arts Center New Orleans (CAC) and the Ogden Museum of Southern Art from March 19 to March 24, 2017. Highlighting the variety of offerings found on the calendar, the NOEW 2017 theme is “where culture and innovation connect.” The Idea Village produces NOEW in partnership with Solomon Group.

“Entrepreneurship is vital in continuing to make New Orleans a city of opportunity, success, and prosperity. By supporting unique events like New Orleans Entrepreneur Week that attract the best minds in innovation, we are investing directly in the growth and longevity of New Orleans’ business community,” said Mayor Mitch Landrieu. “We are grateful for the hard work of The Idea Village and their commitment to promoting entrepreneurship in New Orleans. We look forward to hosting this signature event and continuing to drive this city as the premier laboratory for innovation and entrepreneurship.”

Registration for NOEW 2017 is now open at [www.NOEW.org](http://www.NOEW.org). NOEW is a completely free event, thanks to the support of our generous [donors](#). Individuals who pre-register will receive exclusive access to schedule updates, new events, and special offers.

“We have created NOEW to be a uniquely New Orleans festival experience designed to connect, educate, and inspire our community,” said Emily Madero, Acting CEO of The Idea Village. “NOEW 2017 will be a banner year, featuring numerous world-class thought leaders and local experts.”

This year’s calendar features more than 100 unique events – from entrepreneur showcases, to dynamic workshops and panels, to industry-specific summits and social networking events. The festival also provides many pitch opportunities for local startups through competitions organized by local community partners.

“IBERIABANK is proud to return as NOEW’s title sponsor to support The Idea Village and the work it does for our local entrepreneur ecosystem,” said Karl Hofer, Region President of IBERIABANK. “Since its inception, The Idea Village has worked with other organizations to further new business activity and innovative thinking in New Orleans, leading to job growth and wealth creation. NOEW is an opportunity to celebrate that work and to encourage the sharing of best practices.”

NOEW will culminate with The Big Idea, the world's largest crowd-driven pitch extravaganza, engaging over 3,000 people to provide capital to 10 of New Orleans' most promising new startups. This year, The Big Idea will take place on Friday, March 24, 2017 from 5:30 to 9 p.m. at the CAC. New Orleans-based entrepreneurs are encouraged to apply at <http://bit.ly/BigIdeaApp> through January 20, 2017 at 11:59 p.m. CT.

"NOEW continues to grow as a valuable asset produced for and by our community," said Victoria Adams Phipps, Executive Producer of New Orleans Entrepreneur Week. "This year, with our new location and dynamic content lineup, we hope to bring our diverse community together in ways that are unique, inclusive, and impactful. The Big Idea embodies this spirit, bringing New Orleanians of all ages together to celebrate and support early-stage local companies."

In order to be considered for The Big Idea, companies must:

- Be organized as a for-profit venture
- Be located in the 10-parish region of Greater New Orleans
- Be generating less than \$500,000 in revenue
- Be employing fewer than 5 full time employees
- Have not previously participated in The Big Idea

The Idea Village will select 20 applicants who will be featured on NOLA.com where readers will be able to vote for their favorite entrepreneurs beginning March 6, 2017. Entrepreneurs with the most votes will be selected as part of the cohort of 10 companies that will pitch in front of thousands of attendees at The Big Idea.

"We are thrilled for the community to come out and support our local entrepreneurs at The Big Idea during NOEW," said John Payne, Board Chair of The Idea Village and CEO of Caesars Entertainment Operating Company. "The annual festival serves as a reminder of the collective impact we can have when working together."

During the event, attendees can allocate \$25 voting chips to their favorite entrepreneurs' designated collection boxes; the three entrepreneurs to collect the most chips will make their pitches to a panel of celebrity judges who decide the overall winner and recipient of the \$25,000 grand prize. Additionally, one participating company will be awarded the Peter Mayer Marketing Prize, a package of identity and startup marketing services, valued at \$30,000, from Peter Mayer Advertising. In 2016, more than 3,500 people attended The Big Idea, allocating a total of \$94,000 in cash and prizes.

Voting chips for The Big Idea are now available for purchase via [www.NOEW.org](http://www.NOEW.org).

Other notable elements of NOEW 2017 include:

- **A new campus** anchored by the Contemporary Arts Center New Orleans and the Ogden Museum of Southern Art, featuring new spaces for learning, lounging, and networking. Attendees will gain complimentary access to both museums during the week with their NOEW badges.
- **12 headliners** confirmed to date
  - Lisa Atia - Brand Strategist at Blavity
  - Chef John Besh - Founder and Restaurateur of John Besh Foundation
  - Suzanne DiBianca - EVP of Corporate Relations and Chief Philanthropy Officer at Salesforce
  - Jim Coulter - Founding Partner at TPG



**THE IDEA VILLAGE**  
FOR ENTREPRENEURS AND THOSE WHO BELIEVE IN THEM

**NOEW**  
NEW ORLEANS ENTREPRENEUR WEEK  
PRESENTED BY **IBERIABANK**

- Andy Goldberg - Chief Creative Officer at GE
- Brett Goldstein - Managing Partner at Ekistics Ventures
- Kelly Hoey - Author and Investor
- Adrien Lanusse - VP of Consumer Insights at Netflix
- Patrick Lee - Co-founder of Hobo Labs; Co-founder at Rotten Tomatoes
- Cooper Manning - Host for "The Manning Hour" at Fox Sports
- Leslie Miley - Director of Engineering at Slack
- Manny Ruiz - Founder at Hispanicize Media Group
- **38 community partners hosting events during NOEW 2017:** The full list of partner organizations can be found at <http://noew.org/partners/collaborators>.
- **100 NOEW 2017 VIP Passes** are available for \$250 each and include entry into the VIP Lounge with complimentary food and drink, as well as VIP access at The Big Idea with complimentary food, cocktails, and a designated lounge area. VIP passes can be purchased online at <http://bit.ly/noewvip>.
- **The NOEW 2017 Opening Party**, a block-party style celebration featuring live music, food, specialty cocktails, and more, taking place on Sunday, March 19, 2017.

#### **ABOUT THE IDEA VILLAGE:**

The Idea Village is an independent 501(c) 3 nonprofit organization based in New Orleans that provides direct service to high impact entrepreneurs, convenes the ecosystem through New Orleans Entrepreneur Week (NOEW), and supports initiatives that strengthen our entrepreneurial infrastructure. **The IV 100**, a group of forward thinking corporations, foundations and individuals committed to New Orleans' future, funds the Idea Village. For more information: [www.ideavillage.org](http://www.ideavillage.org).

#### **ABOUT NEW ORLEANS ENTREPRENEUR WEEK:**

New Orleans Entrepreneur Week (NOEW), presented by IBERIABANK, is an annual festival celebrating innovation, entrepreneurship, and new thinking in New Orleans. Produced by The Idea Village in partnership with Solomon Group, NOEW engages a dynamic network of entrepreneurs, investors, corporations, non-profits, students, and professionals to support growing companies, spark conversation, and applaud the entrepreneurial spirit in a city like no other. NOEW 2017 will take place March 19-24, 2017 at the Contemporary Arts Center New Orleans and the Ogden Museum of Southern Art. For more information: [www.NOEW.org](http://www.NOEW.org).

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