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New Orleans Entrepreneur Week engages thousands at new campus, celebrating the intersection of culture and innovation

Free business festival awards \$482,975 in funding and services to entrepreneurs

NEW ORLEANS – Today, The Idea Village announced that the 9th annual New Orleans Entrepreneur Week (NOEW), presented by IBERIABANK, was the largest in the history of the festival with an attendance of 14,266 across 126 unique events offered throughout the week. Hosted in collaboration with 51 strategic partners, NOEW 2017 engaged entrepreneurs, investors, professionals, students, and thought leaders in six days of educational sessions, keynote speeches, panel discussions, and pitch competitions. NOEW 2017 was produced by The Idea Village in partnership with Solomon Group.

“NOEW 2017 was a phenomenal success. Through new partnerships and renewed commitments, our local business community has leaned in to support the growth of entrepreneurship in New Orleans,” said Victoria Adams Phipps, Executive Producer of NOEW at The Idea Village. “This year’s diverse lineup brought together members of our community and attendees from across the region not only to celebrate the economic progress we’ve made but also to discuss our current challenges and emerging opportunities.”

More than 200 speakers participated throughout the week’s events to discuss community issues, global trends, and their local significance. Known for highlighting local expertise, NOEW sourced 80% of its speakers from the area. It also attracted several national thought leaders who flew to New Orleans to deliver keynote addresses with topics ranging from branding strategies and corporate philanthropy to diversity in startups and issues facing women in business. This year’s keynote speakers included representatives from companies such as GE, Netflix, Salesforce, and Slack, among others.

Over the course of the week, 199 of the region’s most innovative startup ventures in arts, education, food, healthcare, technology, and water management showcased their businesses and products through the NOEW platform. For the second consecutive year, The Idea Village partnered with the Delta Regional Authority (DRA) to include entrepreneurs from across the eight-state Delta Region in the festivities. New to NOEW this year was Startup Catalyst, in partnership with Innovation Catalyst and Nexus, which offered local and regional entrepreneurs the opportunity to demonstrate and sell their products.

“NOEW has become the premier pitching and showcasing event for more than just our local entrepreneurial ecosystem,” said Emily Madero, Acting CEO of The Idea Village. “We have expanded this platform to encompass a wide region of communities who come to New Orleans as the hub of entrepreneurship in the South. Thanks to the growth and success we have achieved through strategic partnerships, NOEW is where

entrepreneurs in Louisiana and across the Southeast come to secure capital investments, seek mentorship, and search for their next customers or business partner.”

Key Highlights from NOEW 2017:

- **6 Summits dedicated to industries, population segments, and topics important to New Orleans’ future were hosted during NOEW.** The 2017 focus areas included: The City of New Orleans’ Civic Innovation Summit, Venture for America’s City as a Startup, Story Block Media’s storytelling and branding summit, Lucid’s data management and analysis summit, the Women’s Summit, and a nonprofit summit planned and produced by Committee for a Better New Orleans and Gambel Communications.
- **51 strategic partners** leveraged NOEW to host events on campus and across the city.
- **215 thought leaders spoke at NOEW 2017, including:** Lisa Atia - Creative Brand Strategist at Blavity; Lisa Chow - Gimlet Media / Host of "StartUp" Podcast; Jim Coulter - Founding Partner at TPG; Suzanne DiBianca - EVP of Corporate Relations & Chief Philanthropy Officer at Salesforce; Andy Goldberg - Chief Creative Officer at GE; Kelly Hoey - Investor & Author of "Build Your Dream Network"; Adrien Lanusse - VP of Global Consumer Insights at Netflix; Patrick Lee - Co-Founder of Hobo Labs; Co-Founder of Rotten Tomatoes; Leslie Miley - Executive in Residence at Venture for America & Director of Engineering at Slack; Manny Ruiz - CEO at Hispanicize Media Group; Bevy Smith - Host & Founder, Dinner with Bevy, and more. Eighty percent of the speakers who participated this year are local.
- **50% of the companies that participated in NOEW 2017 are women-owned businesses.**
- **Entrepreneurs received a total of \$482,975 in cash and in-kind resources.**
- Companies participating in the **Coulter IDEApitch** were the following: Acrew, Catalyst:Ed, and SuperEats.
 - Human resources startup **Acrew won \$100,000** equity investment toward its next round of funding.
- Companies participating in **Demo Day** were the following: ComplyPod, Culture Chest, Doorman Designs, eNre, ExemptMeNow, LendStand, Pine Biotech, and Scenhound.
- **10 companies participated in The Big Idea pitch competition:** Bagel Boy & Co., Capway, Culture Chest, FollowMyCal, The Host, Magic Bank, Ready Responders, Realized Designs Projects, Saint Hugh, and VR Arcade NOLA.
 - Mobile healthcare startup **Ready Responders** won The Big Idea, earning \$62,100 in funding and in-kind services including a \$25,000 grand prize, marketing assistance from Peter Mayer valued at \$30,000, and \$7,100 in voting chips.
 - Other participating Big Idea companies took home a combined **\$26,125** through crowd-funded voting.
- **16 national investment firms were represented, including:** Advance Vixeid Partners, Advent Venture Partners, Bridges Ventures, Dragoneer, Fulcrum Equity Partners, Granite Ventures, Jcage, Jefferson Capital, Laconia Ventures, Maven Ventures, Open Prairie, The Rise Fund, TPG Capital, SABIC Ventures, SSM Partners, and Valmiki Capital.

The Idea Village Announces Departure of Acting CEO Emily Madero

The Idea Village also announced today that Acting CEO Emily Madero is departing the organization and will step down to assume a new role to be made public later today.

Emily Madero joined The Idea Village in 2007. After earning degrees from Tulane University including an MBA with a focus in Strategic Management & Entrepreneurship and starting two businesses, Madero joined The Idea Village to help launch IDEAcorns, an experiential learning program for top MBAs. A role that began as a volunteer post supporting business recovery following Hurricane Katrina led to a passion for growing the local entrepreneurial ecosystem.

“It’s been a pleasure to have been at The Idea Village for the past decade and to work so closely with the many individuals who have helped to build our local startup community to what it is today,” said Madero. “I will miss being actively involved with New Orleans Entrepreneur Week and the hardworking, passionate people who make the festival possible. As we turn the page, I’m pleased that the organization is building on its recent momentum and currently sits in a very stable position, poised for great things. I’m eager to see what is in store for The Idea Village as it begins a new chapter.”

“We are thrilled for Emily as she steps into her new role where she will continue to be a champion for the city and its residents,” said John Payne, Chairman of The Idea Village Board of Directors and CEO of Caesars Entertainment Operating Company. “I cannot overstate the impact Emily has had on not only The Idea Village and the founders it supports but also the local entrepreneurial ecosystem and our community at large. Her drive, intellect, and passion for New Orleans are evident in The Idea Village’s success as a nonprofit, and we are grateful for her leadership during this transition process. We look forward to the final results of the CEO search process, and we know we are in a good place thanks to the team that we have built.”

The Idea Village Board of Directors is working with LeadChange LLC, a premier boutique executive recruiting firm, to conduct a nationwide search for a new CEO. Interested candidates should send resumes to the attention of Katie Frame at info@leadchange.net. More information about the search firm can be found at www.leadchange.net. The position specifications, including required and preferred qualifications and specific duties, will be posted on www.ideavillage.org.

ABOUT THE IDEA VILLAGE: The Idea Village was formed in 2000 by a group of New Orleans citizens who believed entrepreneurship is a catalyst for positive change. The Idea Village is an independent 501(c) 3 nonprofit organization that provides direct service to high impact entrepreneurs, convenes the ecosystem through NOEW and supports initiatives that strengthen our entrepreneurial infrastructure. The Idea Village received the Gold Excellence award from the International Economic Development Council for our Entrepreneur Season model in 2012 and was recognized as a top-three entrepreneurship ecosystem developer in 2014 by the Global Innovation Summit. For more information: www.ideavillage.org.

ABOUT NEW ORLEANS ENTREPRENEUR WEEK: New Orleans Entrepreneur Week (NOEW), presented by IBERIABANK, is the leading platform for celebrating business, innovation, and entrepreneurial thinking in New Orleans. Produced by The Idea Village in partnership with Solomon Group, NOEW elevates entrepreneurship through eight days of discussion, debate, education, competition, and celebration. For more information: www.NOEW.org.