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Entrepreneurs from Around the Country Invited to Experience New Orleans' Startup Community
Applications Open for 2nd Annual IDEAtour

New Orleans, LA (January 4, 2017) – IDEAtour, developed collaboratively last year by The Idea Village, Greater New Orleans, Inc. (GNO, Inc.), and the New Orleans Business Alliance (NOLABA), is a program designed to inspire and recruit national entrepreneurs to move their companies to the New Orleans region through an exclusive, curated experience that exposes participants to the resources, incentives, programs, and leaders of the city's entrepreneurial community. This year's IDEAtour will take place **March 23-24, 2017**, during New Orleans Entrepreneur Week (NOEW), presented by IBERIABANK.

"To know our city is to love our city," said Michael Hecht, President and CEO of GNO, Inc. "By giving interested startups a curated opportunity to see first-hand what the city has to offer and come to know the 'new' New Orleans, IDEAtour will help bring new, growing companies – and ultimately more jobs - to Greater New Orleans."

High-growth, early-stage entrepreneurs looking to move to New Orleans are invited to apply at <http://bit.ly/IDEAtour2017> until **February 3 at 11:59pm CT**. Participants will be chosen by a selection committee from the three partner organizations. Preference will be given to entrepreneurs whose startups fit within New Orleans' industry trends and culture and/or can benefit from the regional tax incentives.

New Orleans has recently become recognized as a nationally significant hub of entrepreneurship that offers competitive startup resources, a collaborative network, and a quality of life that has become attractive to many entrepreneurs. Forbes named New Orleans "America's #1 Biggest Brain Magnet," based on the city's rapid influx of college-educated residents. The city also has the #1 fastest-growing tech sector (New Geography) and was ranked among the top 10 cities for relocation (Forbes). NOEW, the annual festival that convenes the entire New Orleans entrepreneurial community, highlights this success/vibrancy, and is why it will be host to this year's IDEAtour.

"We want to create an authentic, fun, and easy way for entrepreneurs to get to know New Orleans' business community, and there is no better time or place to experience our ecosystem in action than during NOEW," said Emily Madero, Acting CEO of The Idea Village. "Last year's pilot program effectively recruited one tech company to New Orleans; our goal is to build on that momentum to bring new businesses and opportunities to the region."

Last year, Michael Underwood, founder of mobile app Scenehound, participated in the inaugural IDEAtour while considering a move to either New Orleans or Austin, but his experience during the program led him to move his startup to our city. Immediately following the IDEAtour, Scenehound was voted to showcase at The Blackstone Big Idea, and was a top 3 finalist. He subsequently applied and was accepted to The Idea Village's DIGITALMEDIAX accelerator program, and won the NOLA Media Group prize after his pitch at Demo Day, the same event he attended last year as an IDEAtour participant.

"The spirit of entrepreneurship is strong in New Orleans, and we are excited to be part of an innovative approach to introducing high growth potential companies to our city," said Quentin L. Messer, Jr., President and CEO of NOLABA. "One of our most important roles is attracting the next great company to New Orleans where it can join a cadre of like-minded businesses. New Orleans Entrepreneur Week is a hub of connectivity, and is a great place for regional entrepreneurs to connect with potential future colleagues and resources."

For more information on the program and to access the application, please email callista@ideavillage.org or visit www.ideavillage.org.

ABOUT THE IDEA VILLAGE:

Founded in 2000, 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, and supports initiatives that strengthen our entrepreneurial infrastructure. The Idea Village received a Gold Excellence award from the International Economic Development Council for our Entrepreneur Season model in 2012, and we were recognized as a top-three entrepreneurship ecosystem developer in 2014 by the Global Innovation Summit.

For more information: www.ideavillage.org

ABOUT GREATER NEW ORLEANS, INC.:

GNO, Inc. is the regional economic development organization for Southeast Louisiana. The GNO, Inc. Mission is to create jobs and wealth in the Greater New Orleans community. The GNO, Inc. Vision is for the Greater New Orleans region to fulfill its potential as one of the best places in the country to grow a company, and raise a family.



For more information: www.gnoinc.org.

ABOUT NEW ORLEANS BUSINESS ALLIANCE:

The New Orleans Business Alliance (NOLABA) is the official public-private partnership tasked with leading economic development initiatives for the city of New Orleans. NOLABA is a public-private partnership between the City of New Orleans and local private investors. Its creation resulted from a long-term effort by the business community to adopt national best practices in economic development for the growth of Orleans Parish. The 17-member Board is composed of a cross-section of New Orleans leaders, including New Orleans Mayor Mitch Landrieu and a diverse group of business professionals.

For more information: www.nolaba.org

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