

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

## The Idea Village Announces Top Pitch Competition Finalists for New Orleans Entrepreneur Week Event

*Three local startups to compete for \$100,000 in Coulter IDEApitch March 23*

**NEW ORLEANS (March 14, 2018)**—The Idea Village is proud to announce today the return of its premier entrepreneur showcase, Coulter IDEApitch brought to you by Pan-American Life Insurance Group. The pitch competition takes place on Friday, March 23, 2018, from 6–7 p.m. at New Orleans Entrepreneur Week headquarters located at the Contemporary Arts Center and The Shop at the CAC shared workspace on The Ochsner Stage.

The participating startups are New Orleans-based businesses, with high growth potential, whose founders are actively in the process of growing their company through angel and/or venture funding. Founders of three local startup companies will provide 10-minute presentations on their businesses, each of which is followed by a Q&A with an esteemed panel of experts.

“The Coulter IDEApitch has always been one of the best showcase of talent for New Orleans-based startups at New Orleans Entrepreneur Week,” said Sally Forman, Acting CEO of The Idea Village. “These companies are in the best position to grow quickly, create local jobs, and impact the community. From a platform that helps establish nonprofits and nerve-on-a-chip technology to a dating app for dog lovers, we’re excited for this year’s lineup of founders and the unique industries they represent. It’s going to be a great pitch for people to see, and it’s open to the public.”

**The 2018 Coulter IDEApitch finalists include the following local companies:**

- AxoSim – Lowry Curley
  - *AxoSim's Nerve-on-a-Chip platform is changing the way new drugs are tested using engineered human nerve tissue that looks and functions like real human nerves, allowing pharmaceutical companies to develop safer and more effective drugs before they ever do a clinical trial.*
- ExemptMeNow – Severti Wilson
  - *ExemptMeNow offers an online platform that is revolutionizing the incorporation, exemption, and compliance process for non-profit organizations, and drastically saving customers time and money.*
- Dig – Leigh Isaacson
  - *Dig is the dog person's dating app and the best way for dog lovers and dog owners who consider their dog-forward lifestyle as a principle attribute to find a compatible date.*

Alicia Syrett, Founder and CEO of Pantegriion Capital, will moderate the pitch competition. Prior to the pitch competition, Jim Coulter, founding partner of TPG Capital, will give a keynote speech brought to you by IBERIABANK.

For the third year in a row, the audience of the Coulter IDEApitch will play the significant role of determining the winner of the competition through a real-time vote. The winner will receive access to a \$100,000 investment towards their next round of funding. Previous IDEApitch participants include Audiosocket, Bioceptive, Catalyst:Ed, Kickboard, Lucid, MobileQubes, Quarrio, Servato, Spectrum Interactive, SuperEats, Theodent, Torsh, Your Nutrition Delivered, zlien, and Acrew who won in 2017.

**Panelists include:**

- Jim Coulter – Co-CEO & Founding Partner, TPG Capital
- Rebecca Blumenstein – Deputy Managing Editor, New York Times
- Tara Hernandez – President, JCH Development
- Walter Isaacson – Author and former President & CEO, Aspen Institute
- Crystal McDonald – CEO & Founder, Acrew

NOEW's full schedule and registration is now available online at [www.NOEW.org](http://www.NOEW.org). While access to NOEW is free, attendees must register and are encouraged to do so in advance online. For more information on The Idea Village, please contact at [info@ideavillage.org](mailto:info@ideavillage.org).

**ABOUT THE IDEA VILLAGE:** The Idea Village was formed in 2000 by a group of New Orleans citizens who saw entrepreneurship as a catalyst for 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](http://www.ideavillage.org).

**ABOUT NEW ORLEANS ENTREPRENEUR WEEK:** New Orleans Entrepreneur Week (NOEW), presented by JPMorgan Chase & Co., 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 discussion, debate, education, competition, and celebration. For more information: [www.NOEW.org](http://www.NOEW.org).



**ABOUT JPMORGAN CHASE & CO.:** JPMorgan Chase and its bank predecessors have been doing business in New Orleans for more than 180 years. The bank has more than 2,500 employees in Louisiana and more than 2 million customers statewide. Chase has been ranked the State's #1 SBA lender for five consecutive years. Since Hurricane Katrina in 2005, JPMorgan Chase has invested \$40 million to nonprofits working in Louisiana, including \$6.5 million statewide in support of Workforce Readiness and \$2 million in support of Small Business Development.

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**CONTACT:** Ali Carlisle, [ali@ideavillage.org](mailto:ali@ideavillage.org) + 502.445.3265  
Kelsey Petry, [kpetry@bondmoroch.com](mailto:kpetry@bondmoroch.com) + 504.323.8134