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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Industry Leaders and The Idea Village Launch Oil & Gas Accelerator Program In New Orleans

Name Seasoned Executive and Private Equity Investor Hank Torbert as Entrepreneur-in-Residence

(New Orleans) August 3, 2015 – The Southeast Louisiana Energy Initiative (SELI), an association of energy industry executives dedicated to supporting the growth, expansion, and development of the oil and gas industry in Southeast Louisiana, has partnered with [The Idea Village](#) to launch ENERGYx, a 12-week business accelerator for 3-5 Louisiana-based oil and gas startups. Private equity investor Hank Torbert will lead the inaugural program as an Entrepreneur-in-Residence (“EIR”).

According to Greater New Orleans, Inc.’s *The Transformative Possibility of the New “Energy Boom” in Southeast Louisiana*, the state is in the midst of an energy and petrochemicals boom and that the sector is critical to diversifying the State’s economy. “Energy-catalyzed investments in petrochemicals, advanced manufacturing, and the energy industry, totaling in excess of \$21 billion will likely be the largest jobs creator in Southeast Louisiana for years to come.” Given the energy sector’s significance to Louisiana, SELI and The Idea Village are committed to creating an ecosystem that will foster the proliferation of energy startups.

Chip Goodyear, the former CEO of BHP Billiton and one of the organizers of SELI, said, “The goal of ENERGYx is to identify and support the next generation of energy startups in the region. Given Hank’s extensive experience working with oil and gas ventures and his vast network of leading industry experts, he will play an integral role in helping ENERGYx companies position themselves for growth.”

Mr. Torbert, a partner at RLMcCall Capital Partners, has spent the last 20 years in private equity and corporate finance. He has deep industry experience in oil and gas, alternative energy, transportation and technology, and he has played a key role in the launch and expansion of numerous businesses in industrials and other sectors. His specialties include private equity, business development, operations management, corporate restructuring, investment selection and analysis, due diligence, and financial engineering. Over the last few years, he has supported and mentored startups and early-stage ventures through his EIR roles at Georgetown University’s McDonough School of Business and The Idea Village.

“ENERGYx will give participating founders access to seasoned industry executives and influencers from all aspects of the energy sector, including, investors, operators, regulators, and other experts,” said Mr. Torbert. “My focus will be mentoring and enabling these startups so that they can scale and be positioned to thrive in the industry.”

In addition to the weekly one-on-one meetings with Mr. Torbert, the ENERGYx cohort will also leverage strategic group meetings over the course of the program covering everything from the state of the market to optimizing operations and scaling up. These meetings will include presentations from John Westwood of Douglas-Westwood; Mark Peters of *Offshore and Oil & Gas Financial Journal*; Tom Ambrose and Michael LeBourgeois of NGP Energy Technology Partners; James McFarland and Eric Smith of the Tulane Energy Institute; Michael Hecht of GNO, Inc.; and numerous others.

ENERGYx will conclude in December, when participants present their business to the members of SELI. Based on those presentations, select founders will be afforded the opportunity to matriculate into The Idea Village’s CAPITALx program. CAPITALx, which is centered on connecting startups to investors, will culminate during the 8th annual New Orleans Entrepreneur Week, taking place March 11-18, 2016, and participating oil and gas entrepreneurs will be eligible for a \$75,000 cash prize, courtesy of SELI.

“This program is strategically positioned to leverage our rich history in the oil and gas industry and establish the New Orleans region as leading entrepreneurial hub for energy entrepreneurs,” said Tim Williamson, Co-founder and CEO of The Idea Village.

Applications for ENERGYx are open on [The Idea Village’s website](#) through Friday, September 4th.

ABOUT THE SOUTHEAST LOUISIANA ENERGY INITIATIVE:

The Southeast Louisiana Energy Initiative is an association of energy industry executives located in Southeast Louisiana who have come together to support the growth, expansion, and development of the oil and gas industry in the region.

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

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