

NEW ORLEANS CITY BUSINESS

Back to in-person: New Orleans Entrepreneur Week returns

By: Leah Clark, Contributing Writer ◉ March 21, 2022 0

When planning began for the 11th annual New Orleans Entrepreneur Week (NOEW), The Idea Village CEO Jon Atkinson had one objective in mind: to bring the event back to attendees in person.

Now, with the wait over, he has done just that: NOEW returns this week with in-person experiences. This comes after the event was held virtually in 2021 and canceled weeks before in 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

"We are excited to be coming back in person this year and celebrate the tremendous amount of success that's been had in the last 12 months," Atkinson said. "It's an exciting opportunity to convene, to educate [and] to bring the community together around what's new and what's next in business in New Orleans."

Originally founded as the "IDEAcorps Challenge" in 2010, NOEW is a week-long festival of events, summits, parties and panels that allow local entrepreneurs, industry leaders, startup companies, businesses, investors and business-minded creatives to expand their networks and celebrate various forms of entrepreneurship and innovation in New Orleans. Hosted by the non-profit business accelerator The Idea Village, over 50 NOEW events are free, open to the public and will heavily feature the 12 startups participating in the 2022 VILLAGEx growth accelerator program cohort.



Cha Wa will play the NOEW wrap party on Friday at The Ace Hotel. Photo courtesy New Orleans Entrepreneur Week

Each day will feature a theme that encourages attendees to re-imagine the future of the economy of New Orleans. NOEW 2022 kicks off Monday with the theme "Celebrating Our Ecosystem" to spotlight the innovation and growth of local entrepreneurial work. On Tuesday, "Our Diversity Is Our Strength" will feature discussions on diversity, equity and inclusion in entrepreneurship. Wednesday's theme of "Emerging Industries + Where NOLA Can Lead" will focus on unique ways the geography and culture of New Orleans can put local businesses at an advantage in the global economy. Two emerging industries featured as mini-summits are #ClimateTech and Culture + Tech, which are some of the aspects of NOEW 2022 that Atkinson is most excited about.

"We really wanted to take a look at where should New Orleans play. Where should New Orleans be really looking at in terms of these trends and emerging industries for the future?" Atkinson said about choosing the themes. "We have been talking about over the last 10-plus years creating an industry and specifically an export industry around resilience...[but] we haven't started really thinking how we export solutions to climate change."

On Thursday, the theme is "Built by NOLA – Local Innovation and Leadership/Future of Work" as it will be a busy day of discussions on changes in future work environments and economies. Also, job opportunities will be available with a free job fair featuring local technology and entrepreneurial companies.

To close out the week, the theme "The Next 20 Years" on Friday will include a wrap-up party and feature the highly-anticipated IDEApitch, a live competition where three leading companies from The Idea Village's VILLAGEx 2022 accelerator program will compete for the main investment prize of \$400,000. The two runner-ups will each receive a \$175,000 investment.

These investments come from the founders of local startup companies Lucid and Levelset and IDEApitch alumni Patrick Comer and Scott Wolfe as well as their investors. The three companies competing on Friday are the networking platform for music creators Jamm Around, the data-driven platform for socially conscious consumers Cluey Consumer, and the museum and cultural institution NFT marketplace Iconic Moments.

"We've actually had companies in the [VILLAGEx growth accelerator program] who had the idea for the business they were going to start standing in the back of the room at IDEApitch," Atkinson said. "It's a really good opportunity to start that journey. One of the things I think about is sort of this core purpose of NOEW is to provide that inspirational capital to say 'you can do it and you can do it here.'"

Numerous events will be held throughout the city, with the main stage ones taking place at Hotel Saint Vincent on Magazine Street, Hotel Peter and Paul on Burgundy Street, Gallier Hall on Saint Charles Avenue and Ace Hotel New Orleans on Carondelet Street. Each of the venues have suffered in some way during the pandemic as travel and tourism plummeted.

During these events, attendees will hear from numerous speakers that are thought-leaders and experts hailing from the region as well as from around the nation. Speakers featured during NOEW events include Comer of Lucid alongside managing director of Illumen Capital Daryn Dodson, and director of climate investments & partnerships of Second Muse Chante Harris. Other featured speakers are Michael Lynton, chairman of Snap, Inc., Jamie Lynton, chair of THE CITY, and Jessica Norwood, founder and CEO of Runway Project.

The week also features NOEW in Your Neighborhood events independently produced by partnered organizations within the New Orleans entrepreneur community. These events include pitch competitions, town halls, panels and networking sessions and will be held on Monday and Tuesday. New Orleans art and culture will also be incorporated during NOEW with DJ sets and live music throughout the week. A free multi-media art installation will be held on Wednesday and Thursday at Gallier Hall.

In 2021, NOEW proceeded with a virtual experience that broadcasted from iconic New Orleans music venues and included over 120 speakers. NOEW 2022 incorporates some elements from the previous year — such as livestreams — to provide attendees with safe environments to convene. All venues will have limited seating and strictly follow COVID-19 protocols by the City of New Orleans. Also, attendees are asked to register online for both virtual and in-person events.

NOEW 2022 is sponsored by numerous businesses such as the New Orleans Tourism and Cultural Fund, Halliburton Labs, Tulane Innovation Institute, Pan-American Life Insurance Group, Greater New Orleans, Inc. and more.

For over 20 years, The Idea Village has supported local startups with the resources they believe are needed to launch them and New Orleans as a whole into business around the globe. Companies linked to The Idea Village recently experienced over \$2 billion in acquisitions this year, which is something that they hope will continue to into the future.

"We've really focused NOEW on living at the intersection of innovation and culture and trying to speak to both our entrepreneurial community but also our culture bearers and our creatives," Atkinson said. "That unique intersection, I think, is what makes NOEW special. It's also what makes our entrepreneurship scene special. It's what makes our startup community special."

tweet



Share



Tagged with:

2022

NEW ORLEANS ENTREPRENEUR WEEK