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**St. Tammany Economic Development Corporation and Southeastern Louisiana University  
Strengthen Partnership to Support Local Businesses**

*St. Tammany EDC to Serve as Satellite Office to Increase Availability to Technical Assistance*

**Covington, LA** — In a signing ceremony held last week, St. Tammany Economic Development Corporation (St. Tammany EDC) and Southeastern Louisiana University (SLU) extended their cooperative endeavor agreement (CEA) to expand resources and support for businesses across the Northshore. This collaboration, which builds on years of partnership, aligns their respective business resource programs — STartUP Northshore (SUNS), led by St. Tammany EDC, and the Louisiana Small Business Development Center at Southeastern (LSBDC-SLU), led by SLU — to provide coordinated, comprehensive support for the region's growing business community. This collective effort took place during National Small Business Week – a time dedicated to recognizing and showing appreciation for the entrepreneurial community and the innovation that fuels the nation's economic prosperity.

Present at the signing were Chris Masingill, Chief Executive Officer of St. Tammany EDC, Dr. William S. Wainwright, President of Southeastern Louisiana University, Wayne Ricks, Director of the Louisiana Small Business Development Center (LSBDC-SLU), and Vincenzo Caronna, STartUP Northshore Program Manager.

“We’re proud to mark both National Small Business Week and Economic Development Week by reaffirming our partnership with Southeastern Louisiana University to expand and align the business support services available to entrepreneurs across the Northshore,” said **Chris Masingill, CEO of St. Tammany EDC**. “By aligning our STartUP Northshore efforts with the Louisiana Small Business Development Center, we’re creating more coordinated entry points for businesses to access capital, technical assistance, and entrepreneurial education. We believe this partnership is a model for how institutions can work together to drive economic prosperity at the local level.”

“This renewed partnership goes beyond coordination — it’s about shared leadership in advancing entrepreneurship across the Northshore,” said **Dr. William S. Wainwright, President of Southeastern Louisiana University**. “By working in concert, LSBDC-SLU and STartUP Northshore are building a more connected, accessible, and effective ecosystem — one that ensures entrepreneurs across the Northshore have access to the resources, guidance, and community they need to thrive.”

This enhanced partnership is rooted in a shared commitment to build a vibrant and supportive entrepreneurial ecosystem across St. Tammany, Tangipahoa, and Washington Parishes. Under the new agreement, St. Tammany EDC will serve as an official satellite office for LSBDC-SLU, expanding physical access to one-on-one counseling and technical assistance from LSBDC advisors.

The joint venture is designed to deliver specific outcomes, with a focus on creating stronger businesses, fostering job growth, and contributing to the economic resilience of the parish. By aligning their resources and expertise, STartUP Northshore and LSBDC-SLU will work together on business referrals, co-hosted workshops and trainings, and regional communication strategies that make navigating resources easier and more intuitive for entrepreneurs.

“The collaborative work between Southeastern’s Small Business Development Center and the St. Tammany Economic Development Corporation is a tremendous asset to our community,” said **Dr. Tará Lopez, Dean of the College of Business at Southeastern Louisiana University**. “The cooperation between our organizations is a game changer for the entrepreneurial and economic development ecosystem in our region. It is gratifying to renew that commitment as we are celebrating 100 years of Southeastern’s impact.”

“Together, we’re not only expanding access to one-on-one business support — we’re strengthening the connective tissue of the Northshore’s entrepreneurial ecosystem,” said **Wayne Ricks, Director of LSBDC-SLU**. “By embedding our services at St. Tammany EDC and aligning our efforts with STartUP Northshore, we can offer more targeted, place-based support to the small businesses that fuel regional growth.”

“Ecosystem building isn’t something any one organization can do alone — it takes alignment, trust, and shared purpose,” said **Cenzo Caronna, Entrepreneur-in-Residence and Program Manager of STartUP Northshore**. “This partnership helps break down silos and creates a clearer path for entrepreneurs to access the right support at the right moment. It’s a powerful step forward in our work to foster a more connected and resilient innovation culture across the Northshore.”

This enhanced partnership reflects a growing momentum to formalize and scale regional entrepreneurial support — pairing technical assistance, business coaching, capital access, and ecosystem development into a cohesive model of service delivery.

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**About St. Tammany Economic Development Corporation:** As the lead economic development organization for St. Tammany, St. Tammany Economic Development Corporation serves as the comprehensive resource center for business services throughout the parish. St. Tammany Economic Development Corporation’s services include business retention, site selection, workforce development, research and data services, state and local incentives, business attraction, talent retention, certified site development, relocation support, and marketing St. Tammany. Since the organization’s launch in 2018, St. Tammany Economic Development Corporation facilitated business expansion and attraction announcements representing over \$291.9 million in capital investment and 2,299 new and retained jobs in St. Tammany Parish. For more information about St. Tammany Economic Development Corporation, please visit [sttammanyedc.org](http://sttammanyedc.org).

**About Louisiana Small Business Development Center at Southeastern Louisiana University (LSBDC-SLU):** Southeastern Small Business Development is a partnership program funded by U.S. Small Business Administration, Louisiana Economic Development, and Southeastern Louisiana University. Our Center supports the five parishes along the I-12 corridor. Since opening in 2003, the LSBDC at Southeastern Louisiana University has helped over 6,100 entrepreneurs and small businesses, supporting more than \$480 million in capital formation, the launch of over 500 new businesses, and the creation or retention of over 6,000 jobs across the region. For more information about Louisiana Small Business Development Center, please visit [southeastern.edu/admin/sbdc/](http://southeastern.edu/admin/sbdc/).

**About STartUP Northshore:** STartUP Northshore is cultivating a thriving entrepreneurial ecosystem through strategic partnerships with leading organizations in the startup community, including the Louisiana Small Business Development Center at Southeastern Louisiana University and The Idea Village, to deliver first-class programming for entrepreneurs and second-stage companies. STartUP Northshore is supported by a regional collaboration among St. Tammany Corporation, Tangipahoa Economic Development, and Washington Economic Development Foundation. Through this initiative, the next wave of local entrepreneurs from all three parishes gain access to immersive education, dynamic networking opportunities, and mentorship from industry leaders, experienced founders, and capital investors—all delivered on the Northshore. STartUP Northshore is managed by St. Tammany Corporation. For more information about STartUP Northshore, please visit [startupnorthshore.com](http://startupnorthshore.com).

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