



**WORLD TRADE CENTER®
NEW ORLEANS**

Serving the State of Louisiana

MEDIA CONTACTS

Meaghan McCormack, World Trade Center of New Orleans
mmccormack@wtcno.org | o: 504-619-9837 | c: 504-343-6577

Anna Corin Koehl, BMF
akoehl@bmfcomms.com | o: 504-524-3342 | c: 504-491-7224

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

New Partnership Helps Louisiana Businesses Make Global Connections

*The World Trade Center of New Orleans in partnership with Port of New Orleans, Port of South Louisiana, Louisiana Economic Development, Greater New Orleans, Inc., and the New Orleans Business Alliance launch **Louisiana Global Connect***

New Orleans, LA – Economic Development partners including the World Trade Center of New Orleans (WTCNO), the Port of New Orleans, Port of South Louisiana, Louisiana Economic Development, Greater New Orleans, Inc., and the New Orleans Business Alliance announce the launch of **Louisiana Global Connect**, a coalition aimed to help bridge the gap between small and medium-size businesses and global resources and networks.

Small and medium-size businesses represent over 85% of Louisiana’s export economy, and yet there is no efficient system or program to connect them to broader, global opportunities. New Orleans alone receives over 700,000 international visitors annually, however, Louisiana’s trade economy is compromised because there is no coherent system to measure and match international interest with one of the many local businesses.

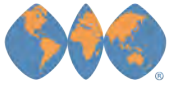
Global Connect will strengthen Louisiana’s businesses and local trade economy by creating a comprehensive system to help strengthen and streamline the way in which we currently approach and manage visitors from overseas interests.

“Even though Louisiana’s trade economy is booming, we realized this gap existed and we need to create one entry through which international business visitors can more efficiently connect to broader opportunities provided by the entire trade ecosystem,” said Caitlin Cain, CEO of the World Trade Center of New Orleans. “Prior to Global Connect, Louisiana’s trade network comprised of multiple players each responding individually to requests from overseas groups which resulted in a disjointed approach and lost opportunity for our local businesses.”

“Most people know about the trade advantages of Greater New Orleans, including the top port system in North America,” said Michael Hecht, Greater New Orleans, Inc. President and CEO. “What they might be less aware of is our ‘secret advantage’ – a level of partnership between organizations that is unrivaled in the nation. This partnership is the essence of Global Connect.”

The World Trade Center of New Orleans will serve as the connector for VIP delegations and visitors interested in learning more about trade opportunities with businesses in New Orleans and throughout Louisiana. Partner organizations who have a vested interest in connecting investment opportunities and international business visitors will pay an annual fee and serve on a committee to prioritize use of monies.

“The Port of New Orleans recognizes that collaborative partnerships are essential to achieving our mission to drive regional economic prosperity,” said Brandy D. Christian, Port of New Orleans President and CEO. “As a modern multimodal gateway for global commerce, the Port looks forward to working with our economic development partners in connecting Louisiana’s businesses to international trade opportunities.”



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About the World Trade Center of New Orleans

Founded as the International House in 1943 and as the International Trade Mart in 1945, these two predecessor organizations merged in 1985 and are now known as “The World Trade Center of New Orleans”; it is the oldest of over 300 World Trade Centers across the globe.

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