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**Greater New Orleans, Inc. to Form Operational Partnership
with World Trade Center New Orleans**

Alignment will create a stronger, more impactful focus on international trade for Louisiana

NEW ORLEANS – The respective boards of the World Trade Center New Orleans (WTCNO) and Greater New Orleans, Inc. (GNO, Inc.) have approved an operational partnership between the two organizations. WTCNO will move into GNO, Inc., both organizationally and physically, effectively forming a dedicated “International Trade” division within GNO, Inc.

“The formation of ‘The World Trade Center at Greater New Orleans, Inc.’ is a strong signal to the world that Greater New Orleans and Louisiana are doubling-down on international trade,” said Michael Hecht, President & CEO of GNO, Inc. “Our combined organizations will be more robust and impactful than before – and at the same time more efficient. Faced with the opportunity and challenges of fast-changing global geopolitics, this enhanced capacity will be now even more important. I would like to offer my gratitude to the many committed board members of both organizations who worked to make this organizational vision a reality.”

Founded over 75 years ago as The International House, to promote international trade following World War II, WTCNO was the first of what are now more than three hundred World Trade Center organizations in nearly one hundred countries across the globe. Over the years, WTCNO has hosted dignitaries including the heads of states from around the world, and has been integral in fostering peaceful international relations through diplomacy and free trade.

“The operational partnership between our two organizations is a game changer and a win/win/win,” said Paul Aucoin, President & Chairman of the WTCNO. “It’s a win for the World Trade Center, a win for GNO, Inc and a win for our Louisiana businesses. I applaud both boards for their determination and selflessness to make the right decision, in the right direction, for our respective organizations.”

GNO, Inc. is the leading economic development organization for Greater New Orleans. With a history dating back to 1902, GNO, Inc. has received multiple awards as one of the top economic development organizations in America. GNO, Inc. focuses on two broad areas: Business Development – attracting companies, jobs and wealth; and Business Environment – creating a better environment for business investment. GNO, Inc. is a strong supporter of international trade; in its 10-year action plan, *GNOfuture*, “International Trade & Logistics” is featured as the first business development sector.

“This collaboration demonstrates a commitment to building a stronger trade and logistics sector for our region, which is the historical foundation of our economy,” said Richard Cortizas, Chairman of Greater New Orleans, Inc. “By sharing resources, the organizations will be able to

embark on a richer suite of activities that bolster trade levels and bring additional support to growth initiatives.”

With direct GNO, Inc. support, existing WTCNO programs and services will now be significantly enhanced, and conducted statewide for Louisiana, including business development, business missions, trade policy, trade committees, as well as awards and events, like the Eugene J. Schreiber Award, and Louisiana International Trade Week.

“The World Trade Center at Greater New Orleans, Inc. will coordinate and drive international economic development in our state and region,” said Ed Webb, CEO of the WTCNO. “Our decision provides both organizations with access to talent and scale while making Louisiana’s economic outlook stronger and its future brighter!”

The combination of WTCNO with GNO, Inc. will yield benefits for all. For WTCNO, it will allow the organization to better serve its mission, for all of Louisiana; enhance relevance and impact for members; and preserve and grow the WTCNO legacy. For GNO, Inc., it will grow its international trade capacity; drive additional jobs and wealth; and ensure sustainability of a key institution in the trade ecosystem. Finally, for Greater New Orleans and Louisiana, the merger will help make the nonprofit ecosystem more efficient; and, will help reassert global trade competitiveness.

“This merger is a huge positive step for Louisiana’s global trade focus and leadership,” said Greg Rusovich, who will serve as inaugural chair of the Trade Strategy Task Force for the combined entities. “It provides our region with the organizational depth, resources and knowledge to become a dominant force in international trade and port development. Global trade is crucial to our state’s economic vitality, and we now have the organizational bandwidth and shared focus to ensure future growth and prosperity.”

The model of “WTCNO @ GNO, Inc.” is based on other successful partnerships, such as in Houston, where the World Trade Center is housed at the Greater Houston Partnership. WTCNO will begin to operate out of GNO, Inc. in Spring 2022.

“Both the World Trade Center and GNO, Inc. have a rich history of economic development for the region, and the shared resources and assets will enhance services in a synergistic manner that will supercharge the international trade and commerce space so crucial to our region and state’s economic health and prosperity, said Tom Spiers, Chair of the Louisiana International Trade Foundation. “The impact of this partnership will resonate well beyond both organizations’ traditional geographical footprint.”

About Greater New Orleans, Inc.

GNO, Inc. is the regional economic development organization for Southeast Louisiana. GNO, Inc.’s mission is to create a Greater New Orleans with a thriving economy and an excellent quality of life, for everyone. More information can be found at www.gnoinc.org.

About the World Trade Center 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,” the oldest of over 300 World Trade Centers around the globe (www.wtca.org). The World Trade Center strives to bring together professionals in the regional, national, and international trade and maritime communities. For more information, please visit www.wtcno.org