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Contact: Timothy Billiot, 985.590.0207
tbilliot@sttammanycorp.org
www.startupnorthshore.com

Award-Winning Louisiana Startup Pitch Competition Returns in 2025

STartUP Northshore Announces the 2nd Annual NSpire Startup Slam, Presented by Chevron

MANDEVILLE, La – STartUP Northshore today announced that the NSpire Startup Slam business pitch competition will be returning to the historic Columbia Theatre for the Performing Arts in Downtown Hammond for its second run on Thursday, January 9, 2025. This electrifying competition, now an award-winning event, will once again bring together local entrepreneurs to compete for what has previously been \$25,000 in cash plus over \$35,000 in in-kind services.

The 2025 NSpire Startup Slam, Presented by Chevron, builds upon the success of the inaugural event in 2023, which earned the prestigious Gold Award from the International Economic Development Council (IEDC) for excellence in the "Special Event" category. This means that out of all the applicants for the "Special Event" category both domestically and internationally with a similar population size, this event received first place for its devotion to entrepreneurial success and community impact.

To learn more about the free event, STartUP Northshore, and to apply, visit www.startupnorthshore.com/nspire or contact Program Manager, Cenzo Caronna, at vcaronna@sttammanycorp.org. **Entrepreneurs can apply for the chance to compete in this live, shark-tank style pitch competition until Friday, November 8, 2024.**

"We are immensely proud to bring back the NSpire Startup Slam for its second year," said **Chris Masingill, CEO of St. Tammany Corporation**. "This competition has quickly become a cornerstone of our efforts to showcase the incredible innovation and entrepreneurial spirit thriving on the Northshore. We're calling on all local entrepreneurs to seize this opportunity to gain visibility, secure critical resources, and take their businesses to the next level."

This pitch competition reinforces STartUP Northshore's investment in building programs that cultivate local entrepreneurs by delivering world-class programming, networking opportunities, access to capital and mentorship from esteemed industry leaders, investors, and founders at predominantly no cost to the startups.

"Chevron is thrilled to expand our partnership with STartUP Northshore and serve as the Presenting Sponsor of the 2025 NSpire Startup Slam," said **Leah Brown, Public Affairs Manager for Chevron's Gulf of Mexico Business Unit**. "This competition aligns perfectly with our commitment to fostering innovation and supporting sustainable economic growth in the communities where we live and work. We believe in



the potential of the Northshore’s entrepreneurs. The NSpire Startup Slam offers them a unique opportunity to showcase their ideas, secure critical funding, and access the resources they need to succeed. Chevron is proud to be a part of it.”

A maximum of three finalists will be selected to pitch their business to a live audience and a panel of judges at the 2025 NSpire Startup Slam for a comprehensive prize package that has previously included cash paired with high-quality in-kind services, mentorship opportunities, and access to a network of investors and industry professionals valued at over \$60,000. All three finalists will receive a cash prize of at least \$2,500.

"Tangipahoa Economic Development is a proud partner of STartUP Northshore, and we're excited to welcome the return of the NSpire Startup Slam to downtown Hammond, America," said **Ginger Cangelosi, Executive Director of Tangipahoa Economic Development**. "This event is more than just a competition—it’s a catalyst for economic growth and community empowerment, showcasing the talent and creativity that make the Northshore a thriving entrepreneurial hub."

"At the Washington Economic Development Foundation, we are committed to fostering economic growth across our region. The NSpire Startup Slam, as part of the broader STartUP Northshore initiative, plays a crucial role in empowering local entrepreneurs and small businesses to turn their visions into reality," said **Henry Harrison, Board President of Washington Economic Development Foundation**. "We are proud to support this dynamic event that not only highlights the entrepreneurial spirit of our communities but also drives meaningful economic impact across the Northshore."

The NSpire Startup Slam is open to any business that is based or is willing to locate their base of operations on the Northshore (St. Tammany, Tangipahoa, or Washington Parish) for at least two years and actively participate in the STartUP Northshore entrepreneurial ecosystem. Startups from all industries, backgrounds, and locations are invited. The venture must be legally incorporated and in business for five years or less, or existing businesses creating a new division or entity, or generated less than \$1,000,000 in annual revenue in 2023. Nonprofit organizations and previous NSpire Startup Slam winners are not eligible to enter.

NSpire Startup Slam applicants will be evaluated on core criteria that includes concept and business model, market viability, scalability, traction, investment readiness, presentation skills, as well as the ability and commitment to generate a significant positive impact on the region.

“Winning the Nspire Startup Slam was a huge turning point for me and Kinkz,” said **Alana Scott, Founder of Kinkz Hair Products and winner of the 2023 NSpire Startup Slam**. “With the grant, I was able to invest in some really exciting opportunities, and the in-kind services helped me create strategies that have already made a real impact. Honestly, one of the hardest things about being a business owner isn’t just the financial strain—it’s trying to juggle everything on your own. It can get really lonely. But after winning this competition, I finally got the help I needed to push Kinkz forward in ways I couldn’t before.”



NSpire Startup Slam will include an exhilarating live battle of innovation to be held at the historic Columbia Theatre for the Performing Arts in Downtown Hammond on Thursday, January 9, 2025, **with a networking reception at 4:30 p.m. and the event kickoff at 6:00 p.m.** Rising entrepreneurs will showcase their groundbreaking ideas, connect with industry leaders, and compete for a robust prize package.

STartUP Northshore is made possible through the financial support and partnership of our 2025 NSpire Startup Slam presenting sponsor, Chevron, as well as Tangipahoa Economic Development Foundation, Washington Economic Development Foundation, Cleco Power, Hancock Whitney Bank, and the Northshore Community Foundation.

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About STartUP Northshore

STartUP Northshore is a three-year entrepreneurial ecosystem pilot program with the purpose of catalyzing entrepreneurship, innovation, and business formation on the Northshore through strategic partnerships with recognized entities in the startup community to deliver first-class programming for entrepreneurs and second stage companies. STartUP Northshore is supported through the collaboration of St. Tammany Corporation, Tangipahoa Economic Development, and Washington Economic Development Foundation. Through this initiative, the next wave of local entrepreneurs from all three parishes will gain access to immersive education, networking opportunities, access to capital and mentorship from esteemed industry leaders, investors, and founders, all of which come together to form a critical support system that will set their business up for success. STartUP Northshore is managed by St. Tammany Corporation. For more information, visit: www.startupnorthshore.com

