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**PETER FRENCH NAMED PRESIDENT OF
CAFÉ COMMERCE**
*Social Entrepreneur to Head New
Business and Entrepreneurship Center
in Downtown San Antonio*

SAN ANTONIO – Accion Texas Inc. today announced the selection of Peter French as president of Café Commerce, the City of San Antonio’s new one-stop small business and entrepreneurship development center.

The creation of Café Commerce was recommended by a taskforce of local business owners and advocacy organizations convened by Mayor Julián Castro for the purpose of brainstorming methods and strategies for promoting small and new business growth in San Antonio.

French will have wide-ranging responsibilities, including overseeing all programming, partnership development, community outreach, financial operations, donor cultivation, and day-to-day management of Café Commerce.

San Antonio Mayor Julián Castro said French will help Café Commerce fulfill one of the visions of SA2020: stimulating and fostering a more robust entrepreneurial climate in the Alamo City. “We’ve created the kind of entrepreneurial ecosystem in San Antonio where people with creative ideas can get access to phenomenal resources and launch vibrant small businesses,” Castro said.

“It is critical to the success of Café Commerce that we deliver a ‘for entrepreneurs, by entrepreneurs’ experience to our customers,” said French, who brings diverse business experience and an entrepreneurial mindset to the role of president. “Café Commerce is economic development 2.0. We’re focused on developing people first.”

Café Commerce is slated to open on June 18, with Mayor Julián Castro, Accion Texas President and CEO Janie Barrera – whose organization recently won a five-year contract with the city to operate Café Commerce – and other municipal and business leaders presiding over the much-anticipated launch.

“Peter is an absolute dynamo and we are thrilled to have him on board,” Barrera said. “He has owned and operated a number of successful small businesses throughout the San Antonio area. He also happens to be a social media genius and highly innovative thinker and problem solver. He combines the exact mix of good old-fashioned ‘roll-up-your-sleeves’ business savvy and 21st century visionary skills that we need to make Café Commerce a success.”

ABOUT PETER FRENCH

A 1998 business graduate of Trinity University, French has devoted his career to innovation and entrepreneurship. He serves as director of operations for Plum Creek, a 2,200-acre, award-winning, mixed-use community near Austin. French is the co-founder of LoomisBurton LLC, a real estate development and consulting company, and founder of FreeFlow Research, a nonprofit applied research organization promoting the advancement of San Antonio's innovation, entrepreneurship, and Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (STEM) economy. He also serves on the board of directors of the 114-year-old French Oil Mill Machinery Company of Piqua, Ohio.

French is a founding member of Leadership Organization of Professionals (LOOP), a founding trustee of the San Antonio chapter of The Awesome Foundation, and serves as an SA2020 ambassador. He is a long-time member of the Austin-San Antonio Corridor Council Economic Development Committee, and a past vice chairman of San Antonio's Midtown Tax Increment Reinvestment Zone. French is a husband, father of three, and an accomplished photographer.

ABOUT CAFÉ COMMERCE

Occupying 10,000 square feet on the first floor of the San Antonio Central Library, 600 Soledad St., Café Commerce is a one-stop entrepreneurship and small business resource center. Café Commerce will blend technology, peer-to-peer mentorship, educational curriculum, and other programming and partnerships to make entrepreneurship easier, and speed the delivery and efficacy of small business support resources to those who need them.

At the time of launch, programming will include US Sourcelink, a web-based clearinghouse of business support resources, The Ice House Entrepreneurship Program, a cutting-edge entrepreneurial education curriculum that emphasizes problem solving, critical thinking, opportunity identification, and fosters the development of the entrepreneurial mindset, and 1 Million Cups, a weekly program that offers two local entrepreneurs the opportunity to present their startups to a diverse audience of mentors, advisors, and entrepreneurs. All three are flagship programs from the Ewing Marion Kauffman Foundation, a worldwide leader in the field of entrepreneurship and business.

ABOUT ACCION TEXAS INC.

Established in 1994 in San Antonio, Accion Texas Inc.'s financial and business-support services help entrepreneurs strengthen their businesses, stabilize and increase their incomes, create employment and contribute to the economic revitalization of their communities.

Accion Texas manages the largest nonprofit microloan portfolio in the nation and is the largest member of the Accion U.S. Network. It is committed to providing capital to entrepreneurs who do not have access to loans from commercial sources and to providing educational services to help them succeed. Since its inception, Accion Texas has made nearly 15,000 loans totaling more than \$165 million. Accion now operates in 21 offices in eight states – Alabama, Arkansas, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, Missouri, Tennessee and Texas. For more information, call 888-215-2373 or visit www.acciontexas.org.