



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

March 1, 2016

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Cafe Commerce Launches Inaugural Venture Challenge

\$20,000 Venture Challenge SA will reward entrepreneurial achievement with seed funding

San Antonio – Cafe Commerce, San Antonio's first-stop entrepreneurship resource center, has launched an open challenge for startups and small businesses in Bexar County with its new Venture Challenge SA initiative.

Venture Challenge SA will award up to \$20,000 in seed funds for developing or growing business ventures in San Antonio. Open to entrepreneurs of all stages and industries, Venture Challenge SA encourages entrepreneurs to map their milestone goals in three areas: developing their team, product and customer markets. The program is sponsored by The Hartford, which has offices on Wiseman Boulevard in San Antonio.

"This is the perfect opportunity for entrepreneurs or small business chief officers to challenge themselves to take their ventures to the next level," said Nadia Auch, President of Café Commerce. "We want entrepreneurs to know that they are not alone. If you show up, we'll help you reach your business goals."

Diane Cantello, vice president of Corporate Responsibility at The Hartford, said "The Hartford is excited to team with LiftFund for this valuable opportunity to recognize businesses that are poised for growth. As part of our Communities with HART program, our joint efforts with LiftFund celebrate the vital role small businesses play in the local economy. Together we are helping foster entrepreneurship and providing resources for small-business owners to have the knowledge and know-how to succeed."

Entrepreneurs must register for Venture Challenge SA by March 31 at <http://venturechallengesa.org/>. Participants will then have until April 25 to complete a Pitch for Success packet. They will have access to Café Commerce resources and support as they work toward their milestone goals.

"Venture Challenge SA is an exciting new endeavor because it has its own novel model: it challenges entrepreneurs from all levels to aim high to achieve their next growth milestone," said local restaurateur Lisa Wong, owner of Rosario's and Acenar restaurants, and a member of the Café Commerce advisory board.

Café Commerce board and community judges will select the highest-performing aspiring entrepreneurs to make a pitch to a panel of local judges on May 25. Judges will allocate the funding, which will be awarded at a ceremony open to the public on June 9 at 4:00 p.m.

For further information about collaborating, sponsoring or participating in Venture Challenge SA, contact Nadia Auch at nadia.auch@cafecommercesa.org.

About Café Commerce

Occupying 10,000 square feet on the first floor of the San Antonio Central Library, 600 Soledad Street, Café Commerce is the first stop entrepreneurship and small business resource center. Café Commerce blends technology, peer-to-peer mentorship, educational curriculum, and other programming and partnerships to make entrepreneurship easier, and, to speed up the efficacy of small business support resources.

About The Hartford

With more than 200 years of expertise, The Hartford (NYSE: HIG) is a leader in property and casualty insurance, group benefits and mutual funds. The company is widely recognized for its service excellence, sustainability practices, trust and integrity. More information on the company and its financial performance is available at www.thehartford.com. Join us on Facebook at www.facebook.com/TheHartford. Follow us on Twitter at www.twitter.com/TheHartford_PR.