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**Economic Development Council of Okaloosa County Unveils
Startup Okaloosa Virtual Incubator to Assist Local Entrepreneurs**

Okaloosa County, Fla. (July 17, 2020) – The Economic Development Council of Okaloosa County (“EDC”) announced today that it has created a new, on-line resource tailored to assist aspiring entrepreneurs, startups and small business owners. Dubbed *Startup Okaloosa*, the virtual incubator can now be found at www.startupokaloosa.com.

Structured as an information portal, the site links to traditional and non-traditional funding partners, key advisory organizations, real estate options (including local co-working spaces) and educational resources. The site also includes curated news articles featuring timely information deemed relevant to entrepreneurs and small business owners, as well as announcements of local networking and educational events.

“With 66% of our businesses having between one and four employees, entrepreneurs and small business owners are truly the backbone of our local economy. We felt it important – especially in light of the economic downturn we’ve experienced as a result of COVID-19 – to develop a resource to aid individuals who are either beginning, or restarting, their entrepreneurial journey,” said Nathan Sparks, EDC Executive Director.

As *Startup Okaloosa* evolves over time, targeted video content including interviews with local entrepreneurs will be added, along with other features designed to be of benefit to the intended audience. Community partners and organizations who interface with existing and aspiring entrepreneurs are encouraged to share the resource freely with their respective networks.

“We intend for *Startup Okaloosa* to be a community resource, not just another EDC program. To that end, the site will feature relevant content from our partners. We encourage organizations like the Chambers of Commerce and the SBDC to share items they feel will provide value to the startups and small businesses we are seeking to serve,” said Katie Sharon, EDC FY 2020 Chair.

About the EDC

Founded in 1989, the Economic Development Council of Okaloosa County (EDC) is a 501(c)6 non-profit, public-private partnership serving Okaloosa County, Florida and its nine municipalities (Cinco Bayou, Crestview, Destin, Fort Walton Beach, Laurel Hill, Mary Esther, Niceville, Shalimar and Valparaiso). As the community’s lead economic development organization, the EDC is committed to fostering economic diversification through comprehensive strategies and initiatives. In addition to its public partners, the EDC enjoys broad support from more than 100 leading private sector businesses representing a wide range of industry sectors.

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