

THE CREATIVE BLOC

COLLABORATIVE ENTITY LAUNCHES IN BATON ROUGE

STORY BY HALEY SUMMERS

With film production on the rise in Louisiana, it's no surprise that Baton Rouge is soon to be home to another media-producing entity. The Creative Bloc, a by-product of Launch Media, is a collaborative workspace designed for creative professionals.

"We want to have a space where photographers, graphic designers, videographers, writers, producers and other professionals can come together during the creative process and bounce ideas off each other," said John Jackson, president and executive producer of Launch Media. According to Jackson, there is industry demand for space where collaboration is the name of the game. "A lot of creative professionals are one-man bands or belong to small companies, so having a place where they can vet ideas and share resources will be beneficial for them."

Jackson is no stranger to understanding what works. Launch Media's Baton Rouge headquarters is currently located at Celtic Media Centre, the largest studio in Louisiana. Conversely, The Creative Bloc is geared towards smaller projects. In an industry that often caters to sizeable productions, there is a demand for small-production space.

"There are a lot of studios, like Celtic, that focus solely on large films," said Jackson. "Creative Bloc is really more for small films and commercial television. We'll cater to people wanting to produce documentaries, indie films, television broadcasts, projects like that."

The idea behind The Creative Bloc was a long time in the making. According to Jackson, Launch Media always planned on expanding beyond Celtic.

"At the end of 2012, we were growing and we knew that we needed a new space. We looked at the changes in the industry, our own needs and the needs of other industry professionals and found what we believe is the best answer for everyone," he explained. "Creative Bloc is ultimately a business park for creative professionals. It's a space for Launch Media to keep doing



Front of the Creative Bloc Building in Baton Rouge.



The green room.



The production studio.



Office/tenant space.

what it's been doing for 10 years, just in a way that is a little different than what we've done before."

The space isn't completely renovated yet; however, The Creative Bloc already has a few tenants. NOVAC, a media-arts non-profit based in New Orleans, saw the space as an opportunity to do programming, seminars, workforce development, programming for high schools and workforce training.

Jackson expressed enthusiasm, saying, "We're excited about our partnership with NOVAC and expanding beyond just being a for-profit entity into also having a non-profit component. We hope to have a lot of interns where we can recognize talent and cultivate it through NOVAC, and the other resources that Creative Bloc brings in."

NOVAC is excited, as well. Darcy McKinnon, executive director, stated, "We're thrilled to be moving into Creative Bloc this fall. It is going to give us a flagship presence downtown, a partnership with other leading media organizations in the city, and access to the industry-leading resources in the facility. We're excited to host courses there and expand our offerings to the community with the support of the partners at Creative Bloc."

Jackson is hopeful that this won't be the last expansion that Launch Media experiences. "I believe this idea has legs and I think there is potential for it to be replicated in other cities." **LFV**

The Creative Bloc is located in downtown Baton Rouge. There is still some tenant availability and construction should be complete by the end of September.