

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Jeff Shackelford, Director

816/235-6661 or [jeffshackelford@digitalsandboxkc.com](mailto:jeffshackelford@digitalsandboxkc.com)

## **DIGITAL SANDBOX KC EXPANDING TO ST. JOSEPH**

Funding and coworking space for startups in northwest Missouri

KANSAS CITY, MO (June 21, 2017) — St. Joseph gained national recognition in 2016 for being a [top metro for startup growth](#). Now, thanks to a partnership between [Digital Sandbox KC](#), [Innovation Stockyard](#) and other St. Joseph partners, entrepreneurs in northwest Missouri will have a shared work space and funding to pursue their startup business plans.

"Through our partnership with Missouri Technology Corporation, Digital Sandbox KC has been very successful in continuing to feed the pipeline of early-stage, high-potential startups in Kansas City," says Jeff Shackelford, Digital Sandbox KC director. "This is an opportunity to start to stretch the program further across Missouri to help drive even more Missouri-based early-stage entrepreneurs towards success."

The new initiative, partially funded by the Missouri Technology Corporation, will utilize Digital Sandbox KC's proof-of-concept program to target early-stage entrepreneurs in St. Joseph with concepts that can rapidly grow a business into a significant employer. In addition to project development funds, the Innovation Stockyard, located inside the Kit Bond Incubator in St. Joseph, will offer recipients of Sandbox grants space in the Innovation Stockyard's new coworking center, set to open this summer.

"By using our new planned coworking space inside the Kit Bond Incubator to house more early-stage St. Joseph and northwest Missouri entrepreneurs, we will be filling an existing gap in the eco-system, maximizing our existing resources and driving an increase in the quantity and quality of early-stage entrepreneurs in northwest Missouri," said Ronan Molloy, Innovation Stockyard president.

Launched in February 2013, the Digital Sandbox KC has worked with more than 400 entrepreneurs and early-stage companies across the metro area.

Results for Digital Sandbox KC thus far have included:

- More than \$1.7M in project funding grants
- 85 proof-of-concept projects funded for KC-area startups
- More than 480 new jobs created with more than \$12 million in payroll
- \$38,265,600 in follow-on funding

"We're excited to be working with St. Joseph and the northwest part of the state," says Shackelford. "There are a lot of creative folks in that area with promising business ideas that, with some help, can turn into rapidly growing companies that create many jobs for northwest Missouri."

St. Joseph has a long history of entrepreneurship in its business community.

“St. Joseph’s entrepreneurial spirit is well-known, from the invention of the saltine cracker to the formation of revolutionary animal health vaccines that save pet and livestock lives daily,” said R. Patt Lilly, St. Joseph Chamber of Commerce president and CEO. “We are excited to bring Digital Sandbox KC’s innovative programming and expertise to St. Joseph to continue our focus on growing business and jobs in our community.”

A public kick-off celebration for the new program will take place on June 28, from 4 – 6 p.m. at Jack’s in St. Joseph. The restaurant is located at 620 Edmond Street, St. Joseph, Missouri.

Sandbox funding may cover up to \$15,000 in project expenses for contracting, legal support, equipment and other market validation, prototyping and beta testing needs. The deadline for applications for the St. Joseph program is August 23.

Visit [www.digitalsandboxkc.com/programs/stjoe](http://www.digitalsandboxkc.com/programs/stjoe) for more information and a list of current Sandbox companies.

###

#### About Digital Sandbox KC

Digital Sandbox KC is an unprecedented partnership among private companies, universities, entrepreneurial support organizations and government agencies across the Kansas City region designed to spur the creation of high growth companies. Digital Sandbox KC provides proof of concept resources including market validation, prototyping and beta testing support for development of digital technologies within new and existing businesses. More information and the Sandbox’s annual report can be found at [www.digitalsandboxkc.com](http://www.digitalsandboxkc.com).

#### About Innovation Stockyard

Innovation Stockyard, located in the Christopher S. “Kit” Bond Incubator on the campus of Missouri Western State University, is a one-stop business incubator for those who want to start or grow any business, but specializing in the animal sciences field. We offer business and scientific consulting—and facilities—to help bring your idea to market. More information can be found at [www.innovationstockyard.com](http://www.innovationstockyard.com).