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50 FLORIDA COMPANIES HONORED

Florida Companies to Watch Inaugural Event Celebrated Companies that Create Growth and Foster Innovation

Awards Event Recognized Companies That Positively Impact Florida's Future

ORLANDO, Fla. (February 24, 2011) – On the evening of February 17, 2011, fifty companies from 18 Florida counties earned a place in Florida's inaugural class of "Companies to Watch" at the Rosen Shingle Creek in Orlando, FL. The accolade, presented by GrowFL, the Florida Economic Gardening Institute at the University of Central Florida and ACG Florida, in association with the Edward Lowe Foundation and funding support from The Governor's Office of Tourism, Trade and Economic Development, recognized the state's privately held businesses that employ up to 99 employees and have between \$750,000 to \$50 million in annual revenue or capital.

The "Florida Companies to Watch," which were named after evaluating more than 310 nominations for the awards, represent industries ranging from alternative energy development to food production and industrial gear makers to information technology firms. The combined impact of the fifty chosen companies is \$419 million in total annual revenue; 1,972 full-time equivalent employees and 510 new net jobs created compared to 2009. From 2006 through 2010, these companies generated \$1.4 billion in revenue and added 1,153 employees (both in Florida and out of state), reflecting a 162 percent increase in revenue and 141 percent increase in jobs for the five-year period. That translates into a 32 percent annual revenue growth and 28 percent annual growth in employees.

This first time event boasted over 500 attendees who came together to celebrate the spirit of entrepreneurship in Florida. The winners came from across the state and from across multiple industries. "You can see a really good sampling of industry in Florida... companies that represent everything from technology to health science, from engineering to broadcasting, companies that manufacture things, companies that develop software. It's proof that Florida has a very strong and very diverse economy," says Penny Lewandowski, Director of Entrepreneurship Development at the Edward Lowe Foundation.

With major sponsorship support from the Florida High Tech Corridor Council, the Florida Business Incubation Association, Fowler White Boggs, P.A. and the University of Central Florida, the "Florida Companies to Watch" awards program is an initiative developed by the Cassopolis, Mich.-based Edward Lowe Foundation. The foundation hosts similar programs in Michigan, Indiana, Colorado, Wisconsin, and North Carolina. Additional sponsors include Gulf Power Company, Nperspective, Osceola County Economic Development Department and the University of South Florida.

"Florida Companies to Watch takes a whole-business approach, identifying companies across the state that represent Florida's future, not just major metropolitan areas," says Dr. O'Neal. "It shows the economic potential of the entire state as demonstrated by the successes of second-stage companies. Being selected for the Florida Companies to Watch awards program provides growing businesses the credibility and recognition that distinguish them among their competitors. This statewide event lauds the success of business leaders who have taken their operations to the "second-stage" of growth and hold the potential to continue to create new jobs in their communities and industries, thereby making a difference in regional communities"

For List of Winners – See Next Page

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COMPANIES TO WATCH -- ADD TWO

LIST OF 2011 WINNERS:

<u>COMPANY</u>	<u>COUNTY</u>	<u>COMPANY</u>	<u>COUNTY</u>
A.G. Findings & Mfg. Co. Inc.	Broward	Impact Lighting Inc.	Orange
Aerostar Environmental Services, Inc.	Duval	IMS ExpertServices	Escambia
Airon Corporation	Brevard	Industrial Lighting Products, Inc.	Seminole
Alinean, Inc.	Orange	Innovative Data Solutions, Inc.	Orange
Analytics Partners	Duval	JVI Appraisal Division, LLC	Seminole
Ark Naturals Products for Pets atLarge, Inc.	Collier	Keystone Water Company	Highlands
Avalex Technologies Corporation	Sarasota	Lakeside Medical Centers	Pinellas
B3 Solutions, LLC	Escambia	Media Vista Corporation	Collier
Bari Furniture	Duval	Millennium Luxury Coaches	Seminole
Bit-Wizards	Seminole	NRI	Palm Beach
Blue Streak Couriers	Okaloosa	OmniPoint	Hillsborough
Carter-Health	Duval	OptiGrate Corp	Orange
Compass Solar Energy	Orange	Pharmaworks	Pasco
DGG Taser and Tactical Supply Inc	Escambia	Phoenix Ink Corporation	Sarasota
E3 Spark Plugs	Duval	PlusOne Solutions, Inc.	Orange
eBridge Solutions	St. Johns	Power Grid Engineering, LLC	Seminole
Engineered Lining Systems	Hillsborough	Pro Poly of America, Inc.	Marion
Engineering & Computer Simulations (ECS)	Duval	ReStockIt.com	Broward
Enporion	Orange	SCB Marketing	Brevard
FreightCenter	Hillsborough	Securboratorion Inc.	Brevard
GiftrAP Corporation	Pasco	THAT! Company	Lake
H2 Performance Consulting Corporation	Martin	The DiSTI Corporation	Orange
Haynes Corporation	Escambia	The Kimball Companies	Orange
Hixardt Technologies Inc	Collier	The Launch Pad	Pasco
	Escambia	VaxDesign Corporation	Orange

ABOUT THE EVENT ORGANIZERS

About GrowFL and the Florida Economic Gardening Institute

GrowFL is the official Economic Gardening Technical Assistance Pilot Program for the State of Florida and a program of the Florida Economic Gardening Institute. Created in 2009 to stimulate investment in Florida's economy by providing technical assistance for expanding businesses in the state, the Florida Economic Gardening Institute is headquartered at the University of Central Florida under contract with The Governor's Office of Tourism, Trade and Economic Development. Additional information is available at www.GrowFL.com.

About ACG Florida

ACG Florida is a statewide collaboration of the four Florida chapters of the Association for Corporate Growth - Orlando, North Florida, South Florida and Tampa Bay. ACG is the global community for middle market M&A dealmakers and business leaders focused on driving growth. ACG members have access to data, content and networking to access capital, make deals and drive corporate growth. Founded in 1954, ACG has grown to more than 13,000 members organized in 55 chapters throughout North America, Europe and Asia. For more information, please visit <http://www.acg.org/florida>

About the Edward Lowe Foundation

The Edward Lowe Foundation inspired the creation of the Companies to Watch program to celebrate second-stage entrepreneurs and their companies. Established in 1985, the Edward Lowe Foundation is a Michigan-based nonprofit organization that supports entrepreneurship through recognition, education and research with a focus on second-stage companies—those that have moved beyond the startup phase and seek significant, steady growth. The foundation also

encourages economic gardening, an entrepreneur-centered strategy providing balance to the traditional approach of business recruitment. For information about the Edward Lowe Foundation, visit www.EdwardLowe.org.

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