



Media Contact:
Jessica Karsten
jkarsten@knoxvillechamber.com | 865.246.2603

For Immediate Release

Knoxville Chamber Announces 2016 Pinnacle Award Winners

More than 700 people gathered at the Knoxville Convention Center on May 13 to celebrate the finalists and winners of the 12th Annual Pinnacle Business Awards, presented by FSG Bank

The gala kicked off with a reception and silent auction, sponsored by Radio Systems Corporation. Attendees then transitioned into the convention center's ballroom to enjoy dinner and the awards program, emceed by WBIR-TV's Robin Wilhoit.

Companies and individuals were recognized in nine award categories, which highlight the range of businesses that make up Knoxville's thriving, vibrant economy, and honor contributions to business enterprise and the greater community.

2016 Pinnacle award winners:

The **Impact Award**, sponsored by Publix Super Markets, honors a business that displays a commitment to making East Tennessee a better place to live and work through the development and support of community projects or programs. This year's finalists were Gerdau, Wampler's Farm Sausage Company, Inc., and WBIR-TV.

This year's winner is **Gerdau**. Gerdau and its employees seek to add value to every community it operates in, and the Lonsdale neighborhood is no exception. It established the Lonsdale Community Advisory Committee in 2006 to bring together neighborhood leaders, elected officials, and city officials. Concerns that are discussed at those meetings provide the basis for many of Gerdau's outreach initiatives. Over the last 10 years, the company has donated land for a community garden, sponsored the "Food for Kids" program at Sam E. Hill Preschool, and donated \$10,000 to purchase computers, printers, and iPads for the Lonsdale Homes Community Technology Center. Gerdau employees also created a mitten tree program for Lonsdale Elementary. Its most recent initiative is a playground to provide neighborhood children a safe place to play in the wake of the death of Zaezion Dobson.

The **Innovator Award**, presented by Proton Power, is given to a business that has developed a new technology, innovative product or service, or applied a business system or service in an innovative way. The finalists this year were AMS Corporation, Electric Power Research Institute (EPRI), and Magnum Venus Products (MVP).

AMS Corporation took home this year's award. Also known as Analysis & Measurement Corporation, AMS provides testing services, equipment, and training to the worldwide nuclear power industry in areas of process instrumentation and control system testing, reactors diagnostics, predictive maintenance, and aging management. The company was born out of the research performed by its owner and president, Dr. Hash Hashemian, at the University of Tennessee and Oak Ridge National Laboratory. The company was the winner of the 2010 Pinnacle Award for Mid-size Business Excellence.

The **Small Business Excellence Award**, sponsored by Sword & Shield Enterprise Security, is presented to a business with 50 or fewer employees that has consistently grown its workforce and revenue and overcome obstacles including access to capital, operational efficiency, control of expenses, customer loyalty, and distribution. Finalists in this category were Axle

Logistics, LLC, Mac's Pharmacy, and Pyxl, Inc.

This year's recipient is **Mac's Pharmacy**. Mac Wilhoit founded Mac's Pharmacy in 1989, taking over the location of the former Morris Drug on Washington Pike. In 2009, he opened a second location to serve the Powell-Claxton community, and in 2012 he launched Mac's TLC Solutions, a closed-door pharmacy serving long-term care communities in Knox, Anderson, Loudon, Sevier, and Blount counties. Last July, he purchased Lowe's Drug in Maryville, which enabled him to expand into home medical equipment. Mac's offers medication therapy management, immunizations, compounding, and provides

The **Minority-Owned Business Excellence Award**, presented by Covenant Health, recognizes a minority-owned business that has produced outstanding business results and growth and overcome the obstacles of race or ethnicity. This year's finalists were H&T Enterprises, Inc., Sandra G's, and Spanish Language Solutions, Inc.

Spanish Language Solutions, Inc. received this year's award. An immigrant from Spain, Coral Getino started translating scientific articles in the 1980s as part of her research, doctoral thesis, and postdoctoral work at Oak Ridge National Laboratory. She launched Spanish Language Solutions in 2004, and it has been built on the global economy and the influx of Hispanics to East Tennessee. The company provides translation, interpretation, editing, instruction, and assessment services.

The **Woman-Owned Business Excellence Award**, presented by Cannon & Cannon, is given to an outstanding woman-owned business that is independently owned, operated, and controlled by a female. The winner demonstrates the ability to compete in a non-diverse field. Graphic Creations, Inc., Microbial Insights, Inc., and The Pavilion at Hunter Valley Farm were finalists for this category.

This year's winner is **Microbial Insights, Inc.** Founded in 1992 by Dora Ogles-Taggart, Microbial Insights is a biotechnology laboratory that specializes in DNA testing in order to quantify microbial communities. Over the last 24 years, the company has grown to become the leader in DNA-based technologies for the environmental restoration industry. The laboratory's clients include environmental consulting companies, government agencies, and regulatory personnel who collect and ship samples to Microbial Insights for analysis.

The **Business Excellence Award** is divided into a mid-size category for businesses with 51-200 total employees, and a large company category for those with 201 or more employees. These awards are presented to businesses headquartered in East Tennessee, or those with a significant presence in East Tennessee that have shown remarkable profitability, growth, and stability and are recognized regionally, nationally, and/or internationally in their respective business sectors.

Finalists for the **Mid-Size Business Excellence Award**, sponsored by Harper Auto Square, were JOSEPH Construction, Master Dry Foundation & Waterproofing Specialists, and Strata-G, LLC

Master Dry Foundation & Waterproofing Specialists took home this year's award. A locally-owned and family-operated business that moved from London, Kentucky to Knoxville in 2009, Master Dry provides basement and crawlspace waterproofing, foundation and structural repair, and a newly-launched concrete services division. Since moving to Knoxville, the company has grown from five employees to more than 90, and has grown revenues significantly since launching seven years ago. The company is currently expanding its facility from 14,000 square-feet to 50,000 square-feet and projects triple-digit revenue growth this year. This is the second Pinnacle Award for Master Dry Foundation and Waterproofing. The company won the Small Business Excellence Award in 2014

Finalists for the **Large Business Excellence Award**, sponsored by LBMC, PC, included MasterCraft, Tennessee Orthopaedic Clinic, PC, and Weigel's.

This year's winner is **Weigel's**. The company started 85 years ago as a small dairy producing raw milk in 10-gallon cans and selling it for nine cents a gallon. Weigel's has transformed to meet its customers' needs, from a dairy farm to a drive-in milk depot called Weigel's Jug O Milk, to its current convenience store concept. Today, the family-owned business has 63 convenience store locations stretching from Greenville to Crossville and employs 850 people.

The **Young Entrepreneur Award**, presented by FSG Bank, is presented to a young professional, 40 years of age or younger

as of May 13, 2016, who lives and works in East Tennessee and has achieved success while overcoming obstacles, to become one of tomorrow's top leaders. The winner will have started or is at risk in ownership of his/her business and will have moved the company from early growth to some maturity. This year's finalists were Brandon Bruce of Cirruspath, Todd and Lindsay McCormick of PhotoBarn, and Courtney Herda of Smarter Searches.

The 2016 recipient is **Brandon Bruce**, chief operating officer and co-founder of Cirruspath, a productivity software development company. Bruce and co-founder Ryan Huff launched Cirruspath because they were tired of jumping back and forth between Gmail and Salesforce CRM, to update customer records. Cirruspath is now one of the fastest growing start-ups in Knoxville with 55 employees. Since launching in 2011, Cirruspath has grown from zero to 3,500 customers and has 100,000 users of its Cirrus Insight application, which connects Salesforce CRM to Gmail, Outlook, Office365, iPhone, iPad, and Android. The company employs 35 people here in Knoxville and another 20 in Irvine, California, and it recently signed a 5-year deal with over \$100 million total contract value.

The **James A. Haslam II Chairman's Leadership Award**, presented by Prestige Cleaners, is given to a longtime business leader that exhibits strength in character, resolve, and a commitment to the community, and has demonstrated exemplary success in the regional business community.

This year's honoree is **Ken Lowe**, chairman, CEO, and president of Scripps Networks Interactive.

Scripps Networks Interactive is a leading developer of lifestyle content in the home, food, and travel categories for television, digital, mobile, and publishing. The company's portfolio is comprised of television and Internet brands HGTV, DIY Network, Food Network, Cooking Channel, Travel Channel, and Great American Country, which collectively engage more than 190 million U.S. consumers each month. Scripps Networks' reach now also touches 170 countries.

Under Lowe's leadership, Scripps Networks Interactive is now generating \$3 billion in revenue each year, and the publicly-traded company's valuation at the end of April was approximately \$8 billion.

The gala concluded with a champagne toast to the winners, sponsored by Scripps Networks Interactive.

The production of the 2016 Pinnacle Business Awards was made possible by assistance from All Occasions Party Rentals, Bandit Lites, M&M Productions USA, Above the Rest Balloon & Event Designs, and Photographfee. Media sponsors for the event included the *Knoxville News Sentinel*, *Greater Knoxville Business Journal*, and NewsTalk 98.7. BigWheel was the software provider for the event.

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