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— EST. 1869 —

Media Contact:

Jenny Woodbery

865-246-2603

jwoodbery@knoxvillechamber.com

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Feb. 27, 2015

Young Entrepreneurs Academy Expands Program to Knoxville

Program Partners with Knoxville Chamber to Establish First Site in Tennessee

Knoxville, Tenn. – The Young Entrepreneurs Academy, (YEA!), is an innovative program that transforms local middle and high school students into real entrepreneurial successes. YEA!, along with the Knoxville Chamber, is excited to announce its local program will be coming to Knoxville this fall. The program, which takes place over a seven-month period, will be presented by Pilot Flying J and hosted by the University of Tennessee's Haslam College of Business. This will be the first YEA! program offered in the state of Tennessee.

"We are excited to bring the YEA! program to the Knoxville area," said Mike Edwards, president and CEO of the Knoxville Chamber. "Making sure today's students are prepared for tomorrow's workforce is one of our top priorities. This program provides an opportunity for students to not only learn about business, but also get hands on experience in launching one. Top that off with the classes being hosted at the nationally recognized Haslam College of Business on the state's flagship campus, and it is evident the kids who participate in the program are going to be a part of something exceptional."

YEA! is a cutting-edge program that takes students between the ages of 11 and 18 through the process of starting and launching a real business or social movement over the course of an academic year. By the end of the class, students own and operate fully-formed and functioning businesses, which may be carried on after their graduation from the program. YEA! aims to teach students at an early age how to make a job, not just take a job. It is the ONLY pre-college program developed by an entrepreneur, at a university, with support from a major entrepreneurial foundation, the Kauffman Foundation and the United States Chamber of Commerce.

Gayle Jagel developed the YEA! program in 2004, while serving as the director of the Office of Special Programs at the University of Rochester. In 2008, YEA! spun-off from the university to create its own not-for-profit corporation, YEA! Inc. The program is currently introducing sites in colleges, universities, and high schools across the country.

The program requires students to attend three hour classes over 30 weeks from October 2015 through April 2016. In this time, students will brainstorm and form their enterprises, make pitches to real investors, obtain funding, file their DBAs, and by the end, actually launch their own business or social movement. Business mentors and local entrepreneurs across a variety of industries will support the students throughout the program. All of the learning is real and experiential.

"The entire community needs to be on board with the Knoxville Chamber's plans to launch the program this fall," said Jagel. "We encourage local business leaders to become involved with the program and to act as mentors to the budding

entrepreneurs.”

By partnering with YEA!, both large and small businesses can volunteer their time as business mentors, field trip hosts, guest lecturers, graphic designers, web developers, attorneys, and more. Community support strengthens the program, and the academy strengthens the community.

Learn more about the program by visiting www.knoxvillechamber.com/YEA.

Knoxville Chamber

The Knoxville Chamber is the region’s leading business organization with more than 2,000 members that employ more than 276,000 individuals. More than 80 percent of Chamber members are small businesses with 50 or fewer employees. It fulfills its mission of *Driving Regional Economic Prosperity* by recruiting new businesses and supporting existing companies, and manages Innovation Valley, a regional economic development initiative. The organization actively advocates on the behalf of the business community. Members receive marketing, networking, professional development benefits, and many other cost-effective services. For more information visit www.knoxvillechamber.com.

The Young Entrepreneurs Academy (YEA!)

The Young Entrepreneurs Academy (YEA!) is a groundbreaking and exciting year long class that transforms middle and high school students into real, confident entrepreneurs. Throughout the class, students develop business ideas, write business plans, conduct market research, pitch their plans to a panel of investors, and actually launch and run their own real, legal, fully formed companies and social movements. Founded in 2004 at the University of Rochester with support from the Kauffman Foundation, the Young Entrepreneurs Academy today serves thousands of students in communities across America. For more information about the Young Entrepreneurs Academy, please call 585.272.3535 or visit www.yeausa.org.

U.S. Chamber of Commerce Foundation

The U.S. Chamber of Commerce Foundation (USCCF) is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit affiliate of the U.S. Chamber of Commerce dedicated to strengthening America’s long-term competitiveness by addressing developments that affect our nation, our economy, and the global business environment.

The U.S. Chamber Foundation and Campaign for Free Enterprise are national sponsors and partners of YEA!, helping to promote the spirit of enterprise among today’s youth and tomorrow’s future leaders.

The Young Entrepreneurs Academy (YEA!) & U.S. Chamber of Commerce Partnership

In 2011, the United States Chamber of Commerce and Campaign for Free Enterprise became a national sponsor and partner of the Young Entrepreneurs Academy to help promote the spirit of enterprise among today’s youth and tomorrow’s future leaders. Through coordination with its network of local chambers of commerce, the U.S. Chamber has helped communities across the country adopt the YEA! program. Together, the Young Entrepreneurs Academy and the U.S. Chamber of Commerce are celebrating the power and promise of young people in business and encouraging the next greatest generation to make a job, not just take a job.

Start as a student and finish as a CEO!©