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Knoxville Chamber Announces Finalists for 2016 Pinnacle Business Awards

The Knoxville Chamber is pleased to announce 24 finalists for the 2016 Pinnacle Business Awards, sponsored by FSG Bank. This is the 12th year the Chamber has held the prestigious award ceremony acknowledging and celebrating business excellence in Knoxville.

“A Pinnacle Business award is one of the most prestigious honors a local business, entrepreneur, or organization can receive,” said Mike Edwards, Chamber president and CEO. “We are proud to recognize businesses and businesspeople that are positively impacting our region by contributing to the local economy and community.”

More than 170 companies were nominated in eight different award categories recognizing outstanding local businesses and businesspeople.

Members of the Chamber’s board of directors are divided into committees and are charged with vetting and scoring the applicants. Selections are based upon information submitted during the application process by the nominated companies, and any information available to the general public. Final scoring of the applicants is completed independently by each member of the selection committees on a secure website. Scores are tallied by an independent agency and presented to the Chamber for awarding.

The finalists for the 2016 Pinnacle Business Awards are:

The **Small Business Excellence Award, sponsored by Sword & Shield**, honors an East Tennessee small business that has 50 employees or less company-wide. The winner will demonstrate the ability to overcome obstacles as well as a historical index of growth in revenues and workforce.

Finalists

- **Pyxl** – A full-service digital marketing firm that designs and develops custom websites, web applications, and mobile apps that balance technology and design and offer an effective user experience.
- **Axle Logistics, LLC** – A non-asset based, third-party logistics company with a focus on providing safe, reliable, and advanced transportation services to a wide variety of customers throughout the continental U.S., Canada, and Mexico.
- **Mac’s Pharmacy** – A locally-owned, independent pharmacy that is committed to improving the health of its customers through medication therapy management, immunizations, compounding, and diabetes education and services.

The **Business Excellence Awards** are divided into a mid-sized category for businesses with 51-200 total employees, and a large category for those companies with 201 or more employees. The Business Excellence Awards recognize East Tennessee businesses that have shown remarkable profitability, growth, and stability. Companies must have a significant presence in East

Tennessee and be nationally or internationally recognized in their respective sectors.

Finalists – Mid-Sized Business Excellence Award, presented by Harper Auto Square

- **JOSEPH Construction Company** – Headquartered in Knoxville, the company offers construction and reconstruction services to a variety of clients. Since its beginning in 1972, JOSEPH has built millions of square feet of space throughout East Tennessee, including new construction, renovations, and maintenance projects.
- **Master Dry Foundation and Waterproofing Specialist** – A locally-owned, family-operated business providing basement and crawlspace waterproofing, foundation and structural repair, as well as its new concrete services division. In 2015, the company saw 185 percent growth in sales and added 41 full-time employees to its team.
- **Strata-G** – A company that boasts a highly-qualified team of science and engineering professionals that provide a wide range of services resulting in the sustainability of energy and the environment. Strata-G has 152 local employees.

Finalists – Large Business Excellence Award

- **MasterCraft** – Located in Vonore, Tenn., the company is a global dealer, developer, and manufacturer of ski, wakeboard, and luxury-performance powerboats. Mastercraft has 524 local employees and recently became number one in market share amongst its competitors.
- **Tennessee Orthopaedic Clinic, PC** – Twenty-five physicians, many with sub-specialty certifications, are the core of Tennessee Orthopaedic Clinics, serving patients in six counties with a number of specialties including trauma, total joint replacement, and sports medicine. It currently employs 250 staff members.
- **Weigel's** – A local convenience store serving East Tennessee with an array of product offering, including farm-fresh goods from its dairy and fresh-baked goods from its bakery. Weigel's currently has 850 employees and operates 63 store locations.

The **Woman-Owned Business Excellence Award** is given to an outstanding woman-owned business in East Tennessee. Companies must be at least 51 percent owned by one or more women, and one or more women must control daily management operations.

Finalists

- **Graphic Creations** – A printing company offering services that range from business cards to printing and installing large wall art murals at the Knoxville Convention Center.
- **Microbial Insights, Inc.** – A biotechnology laboratory specializing in DNA testing to quantify microbial communities.
- **The Pavilion at Hunter Valley Farm** – A full-service event venue and floral design shop that hosts weddings, corporate retreats, holiday parties, banquets, and other gatherings.

The **Minority-Owned Business Excellence Award, sponsored by Covenant Health**, recognizes companies that have achieved notable growth and are at least 51 percent owned by an ethnic minority.

Finalists

- **H&T Enterprises, Inc.** – A company that provides facility and grounds maintenance, janitorial, HVAC, fleet management, and energy management for large commercial and federal facilities.
- **Sandra G's** – A full-service alterations shop that specializes in wedding and special-occasion attire.
- **Spanish Language Solutions, Inc.** – A top-quality language service firm based in the Knoxville that facilitates access to services, business, education, and communication for people who read or speak another language.

The **Young Entrepreneur Award, sponsored by FSG Bank**, acknowledges the importance of the entrepreneurial spirit. This award recognizes young professionals, 40 years of age or younger as of May 13, 2016, who started or are at risk in ownership of a non-franchise business in East Tennessee. The winner will have overcome obstacles and moved their business from early

to growth to some maturity.

Finalists

- **Brandon Bruce, COO and co-founder of Cirruspath** – Started from scratch in 2011, the company is the leader in developing productivity software for organizations that use Salesforce. Its flagship application is called Cirrus Insight.
- **Courtney Herda, CEO of Smarter Searches** – Herda founded her company in 2012, which has quickly grown into a successful creative digital marketing agency providing marketing and advertising solutions for business of all sizes in an incredibly diverse range of industries.
- **Todd and Lindsay McCormick, owners of PhotoBarn** – The duo consisting of a photographer and realtor launched their custom, handcrafted photo products on Groupon in 2011, and now boasts a unique product line and a large, nation-wide customer base.

The **Impact Award, sponsored by Publix**, is awarded to a non-charitable, East Tennessee business that is committed to making the region a better place to live through the development and support of a community project or program. The recipient should demonstrate the ability to improve community conditions that significantly impact the region.

Finalists

- **Gerdau** – Located in the Lonsdale community, the steel mill is committed to improving the neighborhood through various outreach programs. This includes Gerdau's creation of the Lonsdale Community Advisory Committee, which seeks to address and impact issues like drugs, crime, neighborhood cleanup, and environmental concerns.
- **Wampler's Farm Sausage Company, Inc.** – The Lenoir City-based Wampler's Farm Sausage Company implements a company-wide policy of environmental responsibility by positively impacting animals, people, and the environment. Some of the company's many community projects include the Knoxville Zoo Solar Power Project and the Wampler Family Site for the Child Advocacy Center.
- **WBIR-TV** – With the goal of never saying "no" to a community or non-profit initiative, WBIR-TV donates over \$5 million per year of in-kind commercial air time for local Public Service Announcements (PSAs) promoting local events. Additionally, in 2015 the local news station launched "Connecting Hearts," a program that pairs local volunteers with at-risk area seniors, offering weekly companionship and grocery delivery.

The **Innovator Award, sponsored by Proton Power**, is presented to an East Tennessee business that has developed a new technology, innovative product or service, or has applied a business system or service in an innovative way.

Finalists

- **AMS Corporation** – A research-based provider of testing services, equipment, and training to the worldwide nuclear power industry in areas of process instrumentation and control system testing, reactor diagnostics, predictive maintenance, and aging management.
- **EPRI (Electric Power Research Institute)** – A non-profit organization that conducts applied research and development to ensure society has safe, reliable, affordable, and environmentally-responsible electric power.
- **Magnum Venus Products** – A supplier of advanced composite application equipment that applies all types of liquid materials in the manufacturing process, from adhesives for gluing bumpers onto cars, to filament winding machines for making storage tanks and oil pipes. The company is also a key partner in the Institute for Advanced Composites Manufacturing Innovation (IACMI).

In addition to the eight awards listed above, the Chamber honors one outstanding business leader each year as the **James A. Haslam II Chairman's Leadership Award** recipient. The 2016 honoree of this award is **Ken Lowe, chairman, president, and CEO of Scripps Networks Interactive**. This award is presented to a longtime Knoxville business leader that exhibits strength in character, resolve, commitment to the community, and exemplary success in business.

The winners will be announced and recognized at the Pinnacle Business Awards on May 13 at the Knoxville Convention Center. The black tie-optional gala will feature a silent auction and reception starting at 6 p.m., followed by a dinner and awards

program. The evening will conclude with a champagne toast to the winners.

Above the Rest Balloon & Event Designs, All Occasions Party Rentals, Bandit Lites, and M&M Productions will provide production assistance for the event.

Table sponsorships are available and can be secured by contacting Michelle Kiely (mkiely@knoxvillechamber.com). Individual tickets can be purchased online at www.pinnacle2016.eventbrite.com.

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