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**REGIONS BANK PARTNERS WITH KNOXVILLE CHAMBER TO PRESENT PINNACLE BUSINESS AWARDS**

*Nominations for 2018 awards open now through Dec. 10.*

**KNOXVILLE, TENN. (Wednesday, Oct. 11, 2017)** – The Knoxville Chamber is proud to announce a multi-year partnership with Regions Bank for the annual Pinnacle Business Awards gala. The prestigious, black-tie event celebrates regional business excellence and honors outstanding contributions to enterprise.

“Regions Bank is passionate about the advancement of the communities we serve,” said Michelle Walters, Regions Bank East Tennessee and North Carolina Area President. “We are proud to partner with the Knoxville Chamber in recognizing the regional businesses and business professionals who are also committed to positively impacting our community through their ingenuity, innovation, and investment.”

“A Pinnacle Business Award is one of the highest honors available to area businesses,” said Mike Edwards, president and CEO of the Knoxville Chamber. “Recognition as a finalist or winner demonstrates that organization or individual’s dedication to driving regional economic prosperity and making Knoxville the nation’s best place to locate, operate, and grow.”

The Knoxville Chamber is now accepting nominations in nine categories for the 2018 Pinnacle Business Awards, presented by Regions Bank. The categories highlight the range of businesses

that make up the thriving Knoxville-area economy and honor contributions to the greater community.

The categories and criteria are:

### **Impact Award**

This award is presented to an East Tennessee business (non-charitable) that displays a commitment to making the region a better place to live through the development and support of a community project or program. The Impact Award winner should be able to demonstrate the ability to improve community conditions that make a significant contribution or impact on our region. Such contributions might include: improving education, improving healthcare, pursuing environmental excellence, performing community service, and influencing other organizations to partner for these purposes.

### **Innovator Award**

This award is given to an East Tennessee business that has developed a new technology, innovative product or service or applied a business process or service in an innovative way. The winning organization must be able to quantify its growth and provide a detailed explanation of the new product, service, process or system. The nominee should provide a description of implementing innovative solutions to achieve operational efficiency and business results.

### **Minority-Owned Business Excellence Award**

This award is presented to a successful East Tennessee minority-owned business which is independently-owned, operated, and controlled by minority group members. Minority group members are defined as U.S. citizens who are Asian, Black, Hispanic or Native American. Ownership by minority individuals means the business is at least 51 percent owned by such individuals and the management and daily operations are controlled by those minority group members.

### **Woman-Owned Business Excellence Award**

This award is presented to a successful East Tennessee woman-owned business which is independently-owned, operated and controlled by a female or females. The enterprise must be at least 51 percent owned by one or more women and its management and daily business operations must be controlled by one or more women.

### **Small Business Excellence Award**

This award is presented to an East Tennessee small business that has consistently grown its workforce and revenue. Nominees should be businesses started in the Knoxville region and have 50 employees or less company-wide. The winner should demonstrate its ability to

overcome obstacles including access to capital, operational efficiency, control of expenses, customer loyalty and distribution of products or services and should provide a historical index of growth in revenues and workforce.

### **Business Excellence Awards**

Awarded to a company headquartered in East Tennessee or a company with a significant presence in East Tennessee, that has shown remarkable profitability, growth and stability. Nominees must be recognized regionally, nationally and/or internationally in their respective business sector, while demonstrating leadership in the sector as well. Nominated companies should have made significant investments in facilities and employees. There are two winners in this category, one for companies with 51-200 employees company-wide and another for companies with 200+ employees company-wide.

### **Young Entrepreneur Award**

This award is presented to a young professional, 40 years of age or younger as of May 4, 2018, who lives and works in East Tennessee and has achieved success while overcoming obstacles, to become one of tomorrow's top business leaders. The winner has started or is at risk in ownership of their business. They should have used technology or new business practices to move a company from early growth to some maturity.

Nominations are accepted through Dec. 8. Nominated companies and individuals must complete the online application by Jan. 5 to be eligible for an award. Three finalists in each category are identified by judging committees, comprised of the Chamber's board of directors, and notified mid-February. Winners are revealed during the 14th Annual Pinnacle Business Awards gala on May 4 at the Knoxville Convention Center.

To nominate a deserving business or young entrepreneur, visit [KnoxvilleChamber.com/Pinnacle](http://KnoxvilleChamber.com/Pinnacle).

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[Click here to download the 2018 Pinnacle Business Awards Nomination Assets.](#)