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Miedema, Steele Receive Awards at EDC Annual Meeting

Thomas E. Gamble Excellence in Education and Volunteer of the Year awards presented

Brevard County, Florida (October 22, 2015) - The Economic Development Commission of Florida's Space Coast (EDC) is pleased to announce its 2015 recipients of the Thomas E. Gamble Excellence in Education for Economic Development and Volunteer of the Year awards. The winners were announced last night at the EDC's Annual Meeting held at the Titusville Playhouse.

Established by the EDC in 2007, the Thomas E. Gamble Excellence in Education for Economic Development award is presented to an individual who has improved the field of education and/or the way students are served. The recipient has made long standing, consistent, and highly valued contributions to further education missions through community efforts on the Space Coast.

The EDC presented the award to **Dr. Linda Miedema, Vice President for Academic Affairs and Chief Learning Officer for Eastern Florida State College.**

As Chief Learning Officer at EFSC, Miedema provides academic leadership for an array of instructional programs and services. She is behind recent efforts to launch new Bachelor degree programs at Eastern Florida State College, which now offers a total of nine baccalaureate degrees.

In 2012, as she watched the aviation cluster around Melbourne International Airport grow to new heights, she noticed a void in the availability of an established training program for aviation mechanics. So she helped create one. Out of this effort, an Associate's degree in Aviation Maintenance Management and a post-secondary vocation program in Aircraft Airframe and Power plant Mechanics were born. Now local aviation companies have a pool of skilled workers to help meet their employment needs. Her ability to connect the dots between industry and education has made her an outstanding advocate for economic development.

In addition, EDC staff has the unique opportunity to nominate an EDC investor as its Volunteer of the Year. The criterion for this award consists of donating a significant amount of energy and expertise in a way that has assisted economic development initiatives.

This year's recipient of the EDC's Volunteer of the Year Award was **Jason Steele, Director of Government Affairs for Smith & Associates.**

Economic development has been a large part of Steele's career for over three decades. He rose through the ranks of the public and private sectors to become a fixture in Florida government and public policy circles, eventually serving in the Florida House of Representatives. He is a previous member of the Committee on Tourism and Economic Development and Transportation. Today, Steele serves on three economic and industry

focused boards – Enterprise Florida, Space Florida and the EDC of Florida’s Space Coast. This past year, he was an advocate in the team effort to keep Harris Corporation’s headquarters in Brevard County.

“To be most successful, our approach to economic development has to be widespread,” said Lynda Weatherman, president and chief executive officer, Economic Development Commission of Florida’s Space Coast. “With an education advocate reaching out to make the business – academia connection stronger and a volunteer that continues to promote Brevard County’s business story across various public and private networks, our economic development efforts have been enhanced across many industries. Our economic landscape thrives on the time and talent these community partners provide to this EDC and we greatly appreciate their contributions.”

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About the Economic Development Commission of Florida’s Space Coast

The Economic Development Commission of Florida’s Space Coast (EDC) is dedicated to attracting new business and investment and expanding existing industry throughout the Space Coast, influencing change on government laws and regulations affecting economic development, promoting the Space Coast to encourage new investment, supporting efforts of Space Coast military installations, and relaying new programs and procedures to assist manufacturing and high tech companies. The EDC is a private, not-for-profit coalition whose stakeholders are business leaders committed to the economic growth and stability of Florida’s Space Coast. Visit www.SpaceCoastEDC.org.