

CONTACT:

Trudy McCarthy, Sr Director, Marketing & Strategic Initiatives

(321) 638-2000

TMccarthy@SpaceCoastEDC.org

GrowFL 2017 *Florida Companies to Watch*® Awards Applications Now Being Accepted

Second-Stage Businesses Compete to Earn Prestigious Honor

Brevard County, Fla (March 14, 2017) The Economic Development Commission of Florida's Space Coast, in partnership with [GrowFL](#), is pleased to once again recognize companies for demonstrating exceptional entrepreneurial leadership, leading to the creation of quality jobs within our communities.

GrowFL, Florida's leading organization in cultivating second-stage growth companies, is now accepting applications for its 7th annual *Florida Companies to Watch*® awards program. Eligible companies must be privately held, [second-stage](#) commercial enterprises. Qualifying companies must also be headquartered in the state of Florida, employ between 6 and 150 people, and earn between \$750,000 and \$100 million in annual revenue.

"We are excited to again present this prestigious awards program to honor exemplary second-stage businesses who have become an integral part of Florida's economic landscape," says Dr. Tom O'Neal, GrowFL Executive Director. "We received a record number of nominations last year and expect the same in 2017. This, in itself, says a lot about the drive and motivation of entrepreneurs throughout our state."

"Second stage companies are an essential part of our economy and this statewide initiative provides an exclusive platform to showcase their success," stated Lynda Weatherman, president & CEO of the Economic Development Commission of Florida's Space Coast. "Brevard County is home to some of Florida's best cities to start a business, and provides companies an environment conducive to success. Several companies representing Brevard County have received this recognition in previous years and we are certain our community will once again be recognized."

GrowFL is a statewide economic development organization certified by the National Center for Economic Gardening through the [Edward Lowe Foundation](#), a national, nonprofit organization that supports entrepreneurship through research, recognition and educational programs. The foundation focuses on second-stage companies — those that have moved beyond the startup phase and seek significant, steady growth. GrowFL, in turn, helps second-stage companies in Florida overcome obstacles and leads them towards prosperity by providing strategies, resources and support designed to prepare them for next level success. A typical *Florida Companies to Watch*® class is comprised of businesses who collectively gross over \$450 million in annual revenue, add more than 350 new jobs per year, average a 30% increase in earnings, and experience almost 20% growth in employees annually.

Applications can be submitted through May 6, 2017. The 2017 *Florida Companies to Watch*® awards ceremony will be held on Saturday, October 14th at the Straz Center for the Performing Arts in Tampa, Florida. For more information or to submit an application, please visit GrowFL.com/flctw17.

GrowFL is generously supported by FloridaMakes, Wells Fargo, University of Central Florida, Orange County, The Corridor, Traction in Florida, Carlton Fields, Engineering & Computer Simulations, Florida Power & Light, NanoPhotonica, OUC – The Reliable One, SCB Marketing, Florida Angel Nexus, Brand Advance, Florida Virtual Entrepreneur Center, Blue Sentry, CenterState Bank, Clifton Larson Allen, Enterprise Florida, Florida Capital Advisors, IQ Orlando, Merit Advisors, LP, Nperspective – CFO Services, SunTrust, TriNet, USF CONNECT, U.S. Trust/Bank of America, WithumSmith+Brown, and AMTIS.

###

About the Economic Development Commission of Florida's Space Coast

The [Economic Development Commission of Florida's Space Coast](http://www.SpaceCoastEDC.org) (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.

About GrowFL

GrowFL was created in 2009 as an economic development program focused on assisting second-stage growth companies prosper in the state of Florida. By providing strategies, resources and support to second-stage companies for next level growth through Strategic Research, Peer Learning and Leadership Development, GrowFL helps companies overcome obstacles to growth and leads them towards prosperity. Based on the philosophy of Economic Gardening® - to grow existing businesses in a community, region or state – GrowFL, the Florida Economic Gardening Institute, is a critical component to the state's economic development strategy and Florida's entrepreneurial ecosystem. GrowFL is a statewide economic development organization certified by the National Center for Economic Gardening through the Edward Lowe Foundation. GrowFL has assisted more than 900 companies through the Strategic Research and CEO Roundtable programs and recognized 300 successful entrepreneurs through the annual awards program, Florida Companies to Watch. Learn more at GrowFL.com.