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GrowFL Now Accepting Applications for 2018 Florida Companies to Watch® Awards

Second-Stage Businesses Compete to Earn Prestigious Honor

Space Coast, FL (May 25, 2018) – The Economic Development Commission of Florida's Space Coast (EDC) in partnership with GrowFL, Florida's leading organization in support of second-stage growth companies, is pleased to announce applications are now being accepted for the annual Florida Companies to Watch® awards program. The event, now in its eighth year, honors 50 select second-stage companies from throughout the state for developing valuable products and services, creating quality jobs, enriching communities, and creating new industries throughout Florida.

Eligible applicants must be privately held, second-stage commercial enterprises. Qualifying companies must also be headquartered in the state of Florida, employ between 6 and 150 employees, and earn between \$750,000 and \$100 million in annual revenue. A selection panel of judges representing areas of finance, technology, entrepreneurship and small business will select honorees that have demonstrated past and future growth opportunities, entrepreneurial leadership, product innovation, community responsibility and competitive business practices.

"GrowFL's Companies to Watch Awards continues to shine light on the talent and economic progress of our second-stage companies on the Space Coast, and throughout the state," said Lynda Weatherman, president and CEO of the EDC. "I'm excited to see what companies will be recognized this year, and I'm certain Brevard County will again have a strong presence, highlighting our county's strengths in innovation and prosperity."

"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 2018. This, in itself, says a lot about the drive and motivation of entrepreneurs throughout our state."

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 are open through July 9, 2018. The 2018 Florida Companies to Watch awards ceremony will be held on Saturday, February 9, 2019 at the Straz Center for the Performing Arts in Tampa, Florida. For more information or to apply for Florida Companies to Watch, please visit www.GrowFL.com/flctw18

GrowFL is generously supported by FloridaMakes, Wells Fargo, University of Central Florida, Orange County, Research Park at Florida Atlantic University, The Jim Moran Institute for Global Entrepreneurship, USF CONNECT, The Corridor, SCB Marketing, Traction in Florida, Blue Sentry, Coastal Cloud, Florida Power & Light, NanoPhotonica, OUC – The Reliable One, WithumSmith+Brown, PC, AMTIS, Custom Manufacturing & Engineering, Engineering & Computer Simulations and QuantumFlo.

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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.

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 thousands of companies through the Strategic Research and CEO Roundtable programs and recognized 350 successful entrepreneurs through the annual awards program, Florida Companies to Watch. Learn more at www.GrowFL.com