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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Helene Caseltine, Economic Development Director

INDIAN RIVER CHAMBER HONORS LOCAL COMPANIES

Centennial Businesses Also Recognized

The Indian River County Chamber of Commerce celebrated the achievements of local companies at its annual Industry Appreciation Awards luncheon on October 29, at the [Indian River State College Richardson Center](#). In keeping with the Vero Beach Centennial theme, the Chamber also recognized four local businesses as Centennial Businesses – those in business for 100 years or more.

[Carter Associates](#), who designed our canal system that's still in use today, opened their doors in 1911. [DuBose & Sons Jewelers](#) started their business in 1912. Dr. J. C. DuBose was Chairman of the Vero Beach Board of Trade, a pre-cursor to the Indian River Chamber, from 1924 to 1933. [Peterson Groves](#), which owns one of the oldest citrus packing houses in the county, started their operations in 1913. The [Indian River Press Journal](#) rolled out their first paper in 1919 and is now part of the *USA Today Network*. Anna Valencia-Tillery, with [White Glove Moving, Storage and Delivery](#), served as Miss Centennial to hand out these special awards.

The Chamber recognized [Indian River Home Care](#) as Small Company of the year, while [Blue Dog](#) and [Windsor](#) were honored as the Chamber's 2019 Mid-size and Large Company of the Year, respectively, based on employment levels. [Florida Power & Light](#) sponsored the event.

Bill Penny, President/CEO of [Marine Bank & Trust](#), and Chairman the [Chamber's Economic Leadership Alliance](#) opened the event, welcoming guests and addressing the

sold-out crowd as Master of Ceremonies. Melody Ipolito, with [Adams Media Group](#) and Chair of the Awards Committee, announced the architectural awards.

Helene Caseltine, the Chamber's Economic Development Director, explained that "our Industry Appreciation Awards program is an important component of the [Chamber's](#) overall business retention program and our goal of job creation. "We show our appreciation to local businesses that have made a positive impact in our community during the past year, either through architectural enhancements or by way of community involvement and economic impact. It was even more special this year as we honor our Centennial Businesses – this is quite an accomplishment!"

The Chamber's Company of the Year award recognizes local businesses that stimulate the Indian River County economy, make contributions back to the community, provide quality year-round employment, and have an overall positive impact on our county.

[Windsor](#), established in 1989, was recognized as Company of the Year for a business with more than 75 employees. Its sales and revenue have increased 950% from 2017 to 2018. The company contributes over \$2-million in annual taxes each year plus, with 150 full-time employees, generates \$6.45-million in annual wages. The company and its employees are active supporters of numerous local charities, and host the annual Windsor Charity Cup polo event to benefit the local and national Alzheimer's and Parkinson's organizations. Jane Smalley from Windsor accepted the award.

[Blue Dog](#), with 45 employees, was recognized as the Chamber's Mid-sized Company of the Year. The company was established in Indian River County in 2013, providing merchant services to businesses across the country, with a special focus on small business. Their mission is to be the Best Friend to Your Business. Blue Dog has experienced a 138% increase in sales and revenue plus a 138% increase in market share over the past year. The company's civic involvement includes donations of cash, in-kind services and volunteer hours to 34 charities each quarter. Ron Dichter, CEO of Blue Dog, accepted the award,

[Indian River Home Care](#) was recognized as the Chamber's 2019 Small Company of the Year. Margot Kornicks founded Indian River Home Care in 2011, and they have already seen an 8% increase in sales and revenue in the past year, plus a 10% increase in market share. Margot and her team of 14 employees donate time and funds to a number of local non-profits, include the United Way Day of Caring, the Vero Beach

Wine & Film Festival, and Friends After Diagnosis. Margot Kornicks, Founder and President of Indian River Home Care, accepted the award.

A new award category this year recognized a veteran-owned Business of the Year, with similar criteria as Company of the Year.

The award was presented to John Matthews, President of [John Michael Matthews Fine Jewelry](#). John opened his business in 1989. He is a highly decorated Veteran, having served in the U. S. Marine Corp from 1968 to 1974, including a tour of duty during the Vietnam War. He is still very active in local military organizations and events. The company is committed to giving back to their community. Each year they sell the Vero Beach Christmas ornament which serves as a fundraiser for the Garden Club. The company is a major sponsor of the Miss Hibiscus Pageant and donates thousands in cash and jewelry throughout the year to numerous non-profits as auction items for their fundraisers. John also served as Chairman of the Vero Beach Centennial Parade. The award was presented to John Matthews, President of John Michael Matthews Fine Jewelry

The Chamber's Minority Business of the Year was presented to [Dental Partners of Vero Beach](#). As defined by *Florida Statute*, a minority business is one that is 51% owned by a person with racial, ethnic, or gender makeup or national origin. Dental Partners has been providing dental care to residents of the Treasure Coast since 1980. The company has grown to 17 employees, and adds nearly \$200,000 to our tax rolls each year. They have seen a 25% increase in sales and revenue over the past year. The company and its employees are involved in a number of local non-profits. Plus, they started a program called "Dental Partners Give Back", which has provided over \$18,000-worth of free dental services to those in our community who cannot afford dental care. Leah Schwibner, the company's Marketing Director, accepted the award on behalf of Dr. Jenna Katz Schwibner, CEO of Dental Partners of Vero Beach.

The Entrepreneur of the Year award recognizes firms less than five years old that show increased growth and a true entrepreneurial spirit, while overcoming challenges and becoming a good corporate citizen. The Chamber's 2019 Entrepreneur of the Year is Tiffany Sweeney, president of [Decor Envy](#). Tiffany started her business in 2016 with 2 employees, and has grown to 7 employees in just 2 years. She invested \$250,000 to begin renovations, which took 12 months longer than she anticipated. She finally opened her doors for business in 2017 and made up for lost sales by hosting a series of "Meet & Greet" and seminars throughout the year. Tiffany's ultimate goal is to increase

revenues by \$250,000 each year, while developing strong business relationships with local builders and her retail customers.

The Chamber's Manufacturer of the Year award considers growth of the company, quality of the jobs, its economic impact, and sales that are primarily outside our region or state, making them a contributory company. The 2019 Manufacturer of the Year was presented to [MC Miller](#). MC Miller manufactures corrosion control equipment, primarily for the oil and gas industry, and has been doing so for over 73 years. Nearly all of their products are shipped outside Florida, and 40% are exported outside the U.S. The company has seen a 15% increase in sales and market size over the past year. MC Miller provides its 37 employees an array of benefits, including family leave, a retirement bonus, medical and dental benefits, and continuing education opportunities. Lori Gargiule, on the MC Miller Board of Directors, accepted the award on behalf of the company's President and CEO, Joe Mekus.

Architectural Recognition awards were also presented, highlighting new construction and renovations. Award criteria includes: impact on the immediate area; the building's unique features; and the building or project being "user friendly". The following architectural projects were recognized:

NEW MULTI-FAMILY RESIDENTIAL

Johns Island Workforce Housing on 6th Avenue

NEW SINGLE-FAMILY RESIDENTIAL

Harmony Reserve on 33rd Street, just west of 58th Avenue

GREEN AWARD

Phase II of the Vero Beach Dog Park, off Indian River Drive East, on the barrier island.

NEW CONSTRUCTION

Commercial Building Construction

Large - Big Shots Golf on U.S. 1 in Vero Beach

Small - VB Home on Beachland Boulevard

Non-Profit Building Construction

Large - Star Suites Hotel on Aviation Boulevard

Small - Gifford Youth Achievement Center's new classroom building on 43rd Avenue

New Government Building (a tie)

City of Vero Beach Grand Pavilions at Riverside Park

Town of Indian River Shores Community Center

New Project Construction

Vero AutoHaus, on 12th Street

COMMERCIAL RENOVATION

Commercial Building Renovation

Small - Orchid Island Dog Spa & Resort on north Old Dixie Highway

Large - Piper Aircraft/Building 9

Project Renovation

Jetsons Appliance Center in downtown Vero Beach

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