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Horizon Council and Lee County Economic Development announce 2016 Industry Appreciation Award winners

FORT MYERS, Fla., Aug. 25, 2016 – The Horizon Council and the Lee County Economic Development Office are pleased to announce the recipients of the 25th annual Industry Appreciation Awards. The winners were announced during the annual awards luncheon held today at the Hyatt Regency Coconut Point in Estero.

IBERIABANK was awarded The Business Citizenship Award for demonstrating financial, volunteer and active involvement in philanthropic organizations that help create a better quality of life in Lee County. Since entering the Lee County market in 2009, IBERIABANK has been a strong supporter of the community, offering employee volunteer hours, branch fundraising activities and direct financial contributions. In 2015, IBERIABANK gave to a variety of causes, from health care to education, donating more than \$50,000 to local charitable organizations.

Wicked Dolphin received The Emerging Business Leader Award, given to a relative newcomer to Lee County experiencing marked growth while introducing inventive products, services or business practices. Since its doors opened in July 2012, Wicked Dolphin Distillery has grown from two employees to 15 full-time and 16 part-time employees. Revenues grew more than 73 percent from 2014 to 2015, and sales for 2016 are projected to be up by 60 percent. The company attributes its huge success to earning big industry awards for its authentic handcrafted rum.

Bailey's General Store is the recipient of The LocalLEE Grown Business Award, recognizing a company that was founded in Lee County and is distinguished by its operational excellence and commitment to the vibrancy of Southwest Florida's business climate. Providing groceries, hardware and gift items to the Sanibel-Captiva community since 1899, Bailey's General Store is one of the oldest locally-owned companies in Lee County. Still operated by Bailey family members, the company now has 100 full-time employees and has added a second location at the Sundial Resort on Sanibel. Bailey's also created Sanibel Captiva Catering Company, which employs an additional 10 Lee County residents.

Gary V. Trippe earned The Bruce T. Gora Legacy Award, created in the late Bruce T. Gora's award honoring an individual that has exhibited superior leadership and inspiration to others, not only in the

business community, but to the community as a whole. Trippe started Oswald Trippe & Co. in the garage of his Fort Myers home in 1981. The company grew to be the largest independent insurance agency in Southwest Florida, employing over 200 employee-owners, at the time of its sale to BB&T in 2009. Trippe is a remarkable business leader who has more than 30 years of community leadership to his credit. His legacy continues even in retirement with his work with the nonprofit, Disabled Veterans Insurance Careers, which this Vietnam veteran co-founded and chairs.

“All of these winners have unique stories and experiences that truly reflect the diversity and spirit of Lee County’s businesses culture,” said Dr. Lawrence Antonucci, chair of the Horizon Council. “As we celebrate 25 years, we can look back proudly on how each of these businesses has contributed to and continue to contribute to our community.”

The Horizon Council is a public-private board established in 1991 to advise the Lee Board of County Commissioners on economic development issues. The Council has over 70 members representing six cities; chambers of commerce; economic development and trade organizations; community, business, and education organizations; along with various officers and at-large members. The Lee County Economic Development Office provides business assistance to retain existing businesses, encourage entrepreneurship and attracts new businesses so that Lee County has a strong economy, thriving communities, and broadly shared prosperity. For more information, visit www.LeeCountyBusiness.com or 239-338-3161.

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Note: Photos are available by request. Please email Betsy Clayton at bclayton@leegov.com