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PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

PEDA Announces 2018 Economic Development Awards

Erie, PA (October 2, 2018) – During its annual fall conference, held this year at the *Bayfront Convention Center*, the Pennsylvania Economic Development Association (PEDA) honored a number of organizations for their demonstration of outstanding accomplishments in economic development.

On behalf of the PEDA Awards Committee, Chair Pamela Shupp, Executive Vice President of the Greater Reading Chamber Alliance, congratulated award recipients, thanking them for “their efforts to move Pennsylvania in a positive economic direction. Economic development organizations are inventing new programs and strategies to respond to the rapidly changing business and community environments. The unique and innovative ways they are transforming communities is something we are pleased to celebrate and recognize. These awards, conferred by their peers from across the Commonwealth, are an acknowledgment of their important contributions.”

A summary of awards presented is as follows:

- **Marketing Innovation Award**

“First Frontier Blair County” Marketing and Communications Program

Recognizing global market shifts impact all communities, Altoona Blair County Development Corporation (ABCD) initiated several data driven strategic working group discussions with a goal of ensuring appropriate resources and attention continued to be given to the right projects and activities required to attract and retain talent. These discussions showed a holistic “place-based” approach needed to be taken and, after feedback revealed a strong positive interest in how the community was founded and the role of the Allegheny Mountains in the movement of goods and people westward from the eastern cities, the “First Frontier Blair County” campaign (the “campaign”) was born.

ABCD reinvented all narrative positioning around the campaign and created a new video and social media channels to communicate directly to individuals – one-on-one – the authentic story of how their community was founded. Through the subsequent creation of a video series (focusing on people positively impacting and experiencing the community in a variety of ways), a blog and an ambassador program comprised of business leaders and individuals who’ve adopted the campaign’s language and logo, an impact has already been felt. In the past twenty four months, 1.24M people have been directly reached, over 4,000 followers have connected on social media platforms and a number of relocations (business and individual) and business expansions have been documented to have been

influenced by the campaign during the decision-making process. Learn more at www.abcdcorp.org.

- **Program of the Year Award**

LindenPointe Entrepreneurship Academy and Accelerator Program

The “eAcademy”, as it’s known, is an innovative approach to economic development focusing on young, emerging human capital, which connects talented students with local businesses, professional networking contacts and educational institutions. The project provides local high school seniors with a unique, year-long, immersive experience to develop leadership and entrepreneurial skills as well as confidence to be successful in an ever-changing, global economy.

The program is a collaborative effort between the eCenter @ LindenPointe, the City of Hermitage, eleven local school districts, the Pennsylvania Department of Community and Economic Development, the U.S. Appalachian Regional Commission, local foundations and private businesses. Over the program’s initial four years, it has graduated 100 participants, most of whom attend college. Learn more at www.ecenterlindenpointe.com.

- **Project of the Year Award**

The Stourbridge Project

Located in Honesdale, this project was designed to drive investment in the infrastructure, talent development and programming essential to grow the professional and technical services businesses and job opportunities in the rural Wayne County community. Despite limited resources and a lack of traditional economic engines, such as higher education institutions and large corporations, a collaborative approach allowed for the adaptive reuse of a former 1928 elementary school into a technology-focused business incubator with free co-working space, which is open to the public during business hours and has 24/7 access for members.

Outside of annual operating funds, grant and local match investments for this project exceeded \$1.95M, which was secured from a variety of sources. Interest within the community and by entrepreneurs to locate in the building are high and, as marketing is ramped up, programming will continue at the site and expanded to remote parts of the county through collaboration with the library system, businesses and other community-based organizations. Learn more at www.stourbridgeproject.com.

About Pennsylvania Economic Development Association

PEDA's mission is to promote sound economic development policies, provide leading-edge economic development education and nurture an effective statewide economic development network to foster the economic growth of the Commonwealth.

PEDA's membership is comprised of county and regional economic developers, state government economic development employees, workforce development professionals, utility and transportation executives, industrial development authority directors, operators of industrial and technology incubators, chamber of commerce executives, municipal directors of community and economic development, engineering and construction executives, economic development finance professionals, commercial and industrial developers, and local, county and state elected officials. For further information, visit www.peda.org.