

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE...

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Nominees sought for the 2009 Excellence in Entrepreneurship Awards throughout Southern and Eastern Kentucky

In today's trying financial times, analysts predict that small businesses and entrepreneurs can play a more important role than ever before in growing the economy of Southern and Eastern Kentucky.

This in mind, nominations are being sought for the 2009 Excellence in Entrepreneurship Awards (EIEA). These awards seek to celebrate success in entrepreneurship by recognizing businesspeople and entrepreneurs in 55 Kentucky counties who have created and are managing a successful enterprise.

The Excellence in Entrepreneurship Awards program is sponsored by Eastern Kentucky University's (EKU) College of Business and Technology, Kentucky Highlands Investment Corporation, and The Center for Rural Development. It honors Southern and Eastern Kentucky entrepreneurs for their economic success, community contributions, and operational achievements in a business or non-profit organization.

Nominations will be received in four categories:

- **Business** (in existence five or more years with greater than 25 employees)
- **Small Business** (in existence five or more years with 25 or less employees)
- **Start-Up** (in existence less than five years)
- **Not-for-Profit Entity** (in existence at least six months)

Nominees are judged on the economic success of the enterprise, contributions to the community, job creation, and operational achievement as measured by innovative business practices, superior safety achievement, and superior technology.

To download a copy of the 2009 EIEA nomination form, please visit www.eiea.eku.edu. A nomination form may also be downloaded from The Center for Rural Development's website, www.centertech.com, by clicking on the Excellence in Entrepreneurship link.

Nominations may be submitted by any individual or business and must be received by the EIEA nomination committee on or before the **June 1 deadline**. Interested parties can also e-mail the committee at cbt.eiea@eku.edu, or call the EKU College of Business and Technology at (859) 622-1409.

This year's finalists and award recipients will be recognized at a luncheon on Monday, Sept. 14, at The Center for Rural Development in Somerset.

"We've seen that small companies comprise the engine that drives most of our economy," Dr. Robert Rogow, dean of EKU's College of Business and Technology, said. "We want to do whatever we can through our partnership to foster small-business development and recognize those who've been successful in developing companies in Eastern and Southern Kentucky."

"The world economy is in a state of flux and will be for the foreseeable future," added Jerry Rickett, president of Kentucky Highlands Investment Corporation. "Entrepreneurial businesses—both nimble and innovative—are best able to adapt to the rapid market changes and be successful."

"The EIEA program celebrates the region's best hope for long-term economic viability, a strong entrepreneurial spirit, and the people who embrace that spirit," Rickett said.

Lonnie Lawson, president and CEO of The Center for Rural Development, said supporting business and entrepreneurship is at the heart of The Center's mission to provide leadership that stimulates innovative and sustainable economic development solutions throughout the region.

"If The Center is to accomplish its mission, it's critical that we support our business leaders," Lawson said. "We must do everything we can to assist, encourage, and recognize these people for their successes, because this success will help stimulate and build our region's economy for years to come."

The EIEA program was established in 2001 to celebrate success and honor excellence in entrepreneurship throughout Southern and Eastern Kentucky.

Last year's EIEA winners were:

- **For-Profit Business:** Terry E. Forcht, founder/president/CEO, Forcht Group of Kentucky, Corbin, Ky.

- **For-Profit Small Business:** Steve Taylor, president, EST Tool & Machine Inc., Brodhead, Ky.
- **Start-Up Business:** Bryan and Scott Floyd, brothers and owners of Floyd Industries, LLC, Liberty, Ky.
- **Not-for-Profit Entity:** Debbie Long, executive director, God's Food Pantry of Pulaski County, Somerset, Ky.

To view in-depth video presentations on each of last year's winners, visit www.kyea.org.

To be eligible for the Excellence in Entrepreneurship Awards competition, nominees must reside in or have their business or organization located within the following counties: Adair, Bath, Bell, Boyd, Boyle, Breathitt, Carter, Casey, Clark, Clay, Clinton, Cumberland, Edmonson, Elliott, Estill, Fleming, Floyd, Garrard, Green, Greenup, Harlan, Hart, Jackson, Jessamine, Johnson, Knott, Knox, Laurel, Lawrence, Lee, Leslie, Letcher, Lewis, Lincoln, McCreary, Madison, Magoffin, Martin, Menifee, Metcalf, Monroe, Montgomery, Morgan, Owsley, Perry, Pike, Powell, Pulaski, Rockcastle, Rowan, Russell, Taylor, Wayne, Whitley, or Wolfe.

The Center for Rural Development—the Center of Excellence for rural Kentucky and the nation—provides economic and community development programs to residents in a 42-county primary service area of Southern and Eastern Kentucky, and is home to several statewide and national technology-based programs. For more information on programs available through The Center, visit www.centertech.com.