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## **NEWS**

### **ANNUAL AWARDS PRESENTED BY CHAMBER**

**Vero Beach, FL....** The annual meeting of the [Indian River County Chamber of Commerce](http://www.indianriverchamber.com) was held January 24, 2018 at the Vero Beach Country Club. The program was led by outgoing 2017 Chairman of the Board Jeff Schlitt, Schlitt Services, 2018 Chairman Robert Paugh, Bill Bryant & Associates, and Chamber President Penny Chandler.

Mr. Schlitt highlighted a few of the Chamber's 2017 accomplishments. He reported that the Chamber hoisted 79 business events in 2017 with over 3,000 people attending. The Chamber's Leadership Indian River program has now graduated 226<sup>th</sup> people and has 7 scholarships available to local participants. Schlitt also reported that-

- The Chamber has continued concerns for our community about the safety of the proposed high speed rail project, and believes that local taxpayers should not foot the bill for railroad safety improvements.
- The Chamber's economic development office provided customized recruitment packages to over 50 new business prospects. They facilitated jobs grants to new and existing companies. ACS Financial, a new business, anticipates 30 new jobs. Blue Dog Business Services, a local expanding business plans to add 15 new jobs to their existing workforce of 27. The Chamber assisted a wealth

management company that moved their corporate headquarters to Vero Beach in 2017.

- Tourism digital marketing campaigns reached over 100m impressions on sites like Facebook, Instagram, Trip Advisor, Visit Florida, and Expedia and 1 million digital commercials ran in the Canadian Transit Commission.

The Chamber recognized **Jay Barwick from Barwick Entertainment as the 2017 Young Professional of the Year.**

The **2017 Jack Chesnutt Ambassador of the Year Award** was presented to **Melody Ipolito, Kmetz Nuttall Elwell Graham CPA's.**

The Chamber's **2017 Volunteer of the Year** was presented to **Denise Boehning, Coastal Waterways Design & Engineering.**

**Indian River County Commissioner Joe Flescher was named the Chamber's 2017 Tourism Advocate of the Year.** Commissioner Flescher served as chairman of the Tourist Development Council from 2012 until 2016. During his 5 years as Chairman of TDC, Commissioner Flescher built consensus among the team of tourism associates, and did whatever was possible in an effort to retain tourism funding for even the smallest of our local tourism partners.

The **2017 Carolyn K. Eggert Economic Development Award** was presented to **Peter Robinson of the Laurel Agency.** Robert Paugh presented the recognition and stated Robinson "is a strong advocate of the Chamber's economic development activities. He understands the benefits that good jobs bring to our community and to the county's tax base."

In 1992, Robinson was president of the Chamber's Council of 100. He served on the County's Economic Development Council and as its chairman from 2015 to 2017. The Laurel Agency are current Economic Leadership Alliance investors.

Paugh stated that "Peter Robinson is a great example of the leadership and commitment demonstrated by the late Commissioner Eggert to create and maintain quality, year round jobs for the residents of Indian River County.

The prestigious ***Alma Lee Loy Community Service Award*** was presented to **Sue Tompkins**. Sue Tompkins has a long history of professional involvement, achievement and philanthropy in Indian River County. Her service to our community shows a history of skill, kindness, philanthropy and integrity.

The Alma Lee Loy Community Service Award was established by the Chamber in 1995 to recognize citizens of Indian River County who distinguished themselves professionally through excellence and privately through commitment to the community at large. Since its inception, winners of this award have been community leaders known for their self-less service to our community.

Comments from Indian River County community leaders were provided about the years of volunteer and philanthropic service Ms. Tompkins has given to Indian River County.

Education Foundation of Indian River County Executive Director Cynthia Falardeau shared that "Sue Tompkins enthusiasm has been the catalyst to encourage others to support philanthropy in Indian River County." Scott Alexander, President of Northern Trust said "Indian River County is a better community as a direct result of Sue's tireless work on its behalf."

Jeff Pickering, Chief Executive Officer of Indian River Community Foundation, stated that "Sue Tompkins exemplifies the type of engaged and invested leader that all

nonprofits need.” Local attorney John Moore said that “Sue Tompkins represents the complete person, community servant and professional. She emulates all of the best qualities of the award’s namesake, Alma Lee Loy.”

Kerry Bartlett, Vice President of the Foundation for VNA of the Treasure Coast, stated that “Sue Tompkins was a founding member of “Women and Philanthropy,” a group from which Indian River impact 100 was born. Since its inception in 2008, impact 100 has distributed more than \$3.3 million to local nonprofit organizations.”

Longtime community leader and volunteer Becky Allen also shared the significance of Ms. Tompkins on Impact 100. Ms. Allen stated “Sue is a very dedicated, thoughtful leader who used her skills and experience to initiate the branding of Impact 100 as a powerful women's movement.”

Local attorney Ford Fegert commented that “Sue is a leader and driving force in many organizations, perhaps none more so than the Visiting Nurse Association of the Treasure Coast, our community's very own VNA and Hospice. It is her passion and our entire community is the better for it.”

Ms. Tompkins has been engaged with the United Way of Indian River County for almost twenty years serving in various leadership positions. Michael Kint, Executive Director of United Way of Indian River County, said that “Tompkins involvement was emphasized in 2015-16 when she co-chaired the annual campaign as part of a team of seven dynamic women who raised more than \$3 million, a first in United Way Indian River County’s history.”

In presenting the award to Ms. Tompkins, Ms. Chandler stated “Sue’s service to our community shows a history of skill, kindness, philanthropy and integrity. We are proud to recognize her efforts.”

Alma Lee Loy, for whom the recognition is named, said that “Sue gets things done for this community. She has high professional standards and ethics, and has spent decades focusing her philanthropic efforts in ways that improve our community.”

During 2018, the Chamber’s work plan includes: bringing programs and services to help Vero Beach and Indian River County businesses. Mr. Paugh reported that “Job creation and retention are the top Chamber priority with several exciting projects in the pipeline.” He said the Chamber has new tourism marketing initiatives to attract quality overnight visitors. Mr. Paugh commented on the coming retirement of Chamber President Penny Chandler and the process currently underway to name a successor to the position. Chandler has served as the executive at the Chamber for over 22 years.

The [Indian River County Chamber of Commerce](http://www.indianriverchamber.com) is a county-wide organization representing nearly 900 Vero Beach and Indian River County businesses. Located in Vero Beach, the Chamber provides services, benefits and leadership for positive growth and change. For more information about the Chamber visit the website at [www.indianriverchamber.com](http://www.indianriverchamber.com) or call 772-567-3491.

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