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### **BDB Forms Education Branding Task Force to Create Awareness for County's Educational Assets**

West Palm Beach, Fla. (December 14, 2012) --- Before a panel of six of the County top educators, Kelly Smallridge, President of the Business Development Board of Palm Beach County (BDB) announced that the organization has created a task force to identify the strongest selling points about Palm Beach County's K-20 schools and showcase them through a marketing strategy now under development to both internal and external audiences.

"The quality of education in Palm Beach County has always ranked among the top two or three issues companies seriously consider when they evaluate our county as a location for their business," said Smallridge. "We have remarkable schools, colleges, trade academies and universities in the county, and it's surprising that the perceptions about our academic profile are typically different from the reality. We need to change that comprehensively with creative, effective messaging directed at both internal and external audiences." The task force, headed by BDB board members Carey O'Donnell and Kenneth Kahn, includes more than 40 business leaders and educators in the county.

The announcement was made December 13 at the BDB's Upper Level Breakfast before 150 local business leaders and the panel of participating educators who shared eye-opening data and their views about the county's graduation rates, how technology is changing the way we teach and learn, the challenges placed on schools as a result of the current economy, and aligning the needs of businesses with the curriculums at our educational institutions. The panel included Wayne Gent, Superintendent, Palm Beach County School District; Dr. Kevin Ross, President, Lynn University; Dr. Dennis Gallon, President, Palm Beach State College; Jennifer O'Flannery Anderson, Ph.D., Florida Atlantic University; Dr. Tom Duncan, President, Northwood University; and Bill Fleming, President, Palm Beach Atlantic University.

O'Donnell, Creative Director at the O'Donnell Agency, moderated the panel discussion. In her opening remarks she noted that "Education is the bedrock of our economic development efforts in Palm Beach County and is literally the new currency with which we maintain our competitive edge and cultivate human capital here."

BDB Chairman, Rex Kirby, President and General Manager of the Southeast Division of Suffolk Construction, closed the meeting by lauding the depth of choice and high-quality educational opportunities available in Palm Beach County. "I walk away as a business leader knowing that my company enjoys the benefit of a well-educated and prepared workforce," said Kirby.

About the BDB: The Business Development Board of Palm Beach County is the official public/private economic development organization for Palm Beach County and Enterprise Florida. Founded in 1982 as a not-for-profit corporation, our primary purpose is to attract and retain new industry, business investment, high quality jobs and workforce development through corporate relocations, expansions and international trade. During the past five years, the BDB has assisted companies that have created more than 9,000 direct jobs with average salaries greater than \$57,000, resulting in more than \$493 million in capital investment to Palm Beach County and an economic impact that exceeds \$3.47 billion. Additional information can be found at the BDB's Web site, [BDB.org](http://BDB.org).